

**RAINFOREST
TO ROCKIES**

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

MAY 2025



DESTINATION
BRITISH COLUMBIA®





LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Destination British Columbia acknowledges with gratitude the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam Indian Band), Skwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation) on whose shared territories we operate our main office.

We respectfully recognise that we carry out our work on the territories of Indigenous Peoples throughout BC. We honour our ongoing and developing relationships with First Nations (status and non-status), Inuit, and Métis Peoples. We are on a path of learning and are committed to working together.

As an organization, we are committed to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People's Act*, the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*, the *BC Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, and the *Declaration Act Action Plan*. We are working with the Government of BC, Indigenous Tourism BC, and the tourism industry to develop and implement actions of reconciliation. This includes the development of an action plan for Destination BC and collaboration with Indigenous communities interested in the benefits of tourism.

THANK YOU

Thank you to our tourism partners who participated in the process of co-creating this destination development strategy by engaging in workshops, providing feedback, and forwarding follow-up insights and information.

PROJECT TEAM

Destination BC lead:

Višnja Milidragović – Senior Program Advisor, Destination Development

Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport lead:

Jody Young – Senior Policy Analyst, Tourism Sector Strategy Division

Indigenous Tourism BC lead:

Jordie Johnson – Manager of Communications, Engagement and Special Projects

Regional leads:

Yvonne Chow – Senior Program Advisor, Vancouver, Coast & Mountains

Mike Overend – Director of Destination Development and Stewardship, Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association

Chris McCurry – Director, Destination Development & Sustainability, Kootenay Rockies Tourism

Amy Thacker – Chief Executive Officer, Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association

Contributing consultants:

Louise Browne – Louise Browne Associates

Suzanne Denbak – Cadence Strategies



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHY A STRATEGY?

The [Invest in Iconics Strategy](#) is a long-term plan to sustainably grow tourism revenue in British Columbia (BC) by developing globally compelling travel routes and place brands. Now part of [Destination BC \(DBC\)'s 2023-2025 Corporate Strategy](#), as part of the Compelling Reasons to Explore BC strategic pillar, Invest in Iconics supports geographic and seasonal tourism growth through six Iconic area and route brands, which includes SEBC, along with two additional [Iconics](#) for Vancouver and Area and Destination Ski. These Iconics are all part of the Super, Natural British Columbia® brand family, which forms the core product offering for international travellers, helping them to easily understand what the province has to offer when compared to global competitors.

Together, the Iconics represent all of BC in all seasons, which guides not just our promotion of BC moving forward, but also our destination and

experience development efforts. To help guide aligned and strategic implementation of the Invest in Iconics Strategy on the ground, a destination development strategy for each of the primary Iconics will be created to identify high-potential opportunities for tourism partners.

This *Rainforest to Rockies* Destination Development Strategy, in particular, outlines how we can bring the *Rainforest to Rockies* to life on the ground for visitors, the industry, and communities. With emphasis on the three focus areas identified in the [Iconics Destination Development Framework](#), *encounters*, *experiences*, and *touchpoints*, it serves to help the brand succeed on the ground through guiding the development of an enhanced visitor experience. It identifies experience development opportunities aligned to deliver on the brand positioning and sets out key priorities to make that happen.

FIGURE 1: ICONICS DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES WORK IN TANDEM WITH THE DESTINATION BRANDS AND MARKETING ACTIVITIES TO GROW TOURISM SUSTAINABLY.



1.2 HOW IT ALIGNS

We recognize that considerable work is already underway at a range of different levels and locations across the province as part of the implementation of the [regional and planning area destination development strategies](#) that were co-created by various partners throughout BC. These strategies and plans focus on progressing a broad range of themes, including transportation, workforce development, infrastructure, product development, and visitor service provision, all of which continue to be important considerations for destination development.

A key distinguishing feature of destination development within the context of the Invest in Iconics Strategy is the focus being primarily on the visitor experience. Recognizing the destination development work already underway, we have sought to build on the achievements to date and find ways to ensure that this *Rainforest to Rockies* Destination Development Strategy elevates, supports, and, where necessary, recalibrates destination development activities already in progress, in order to enable them to better align with *Rainforest to Rockies*.

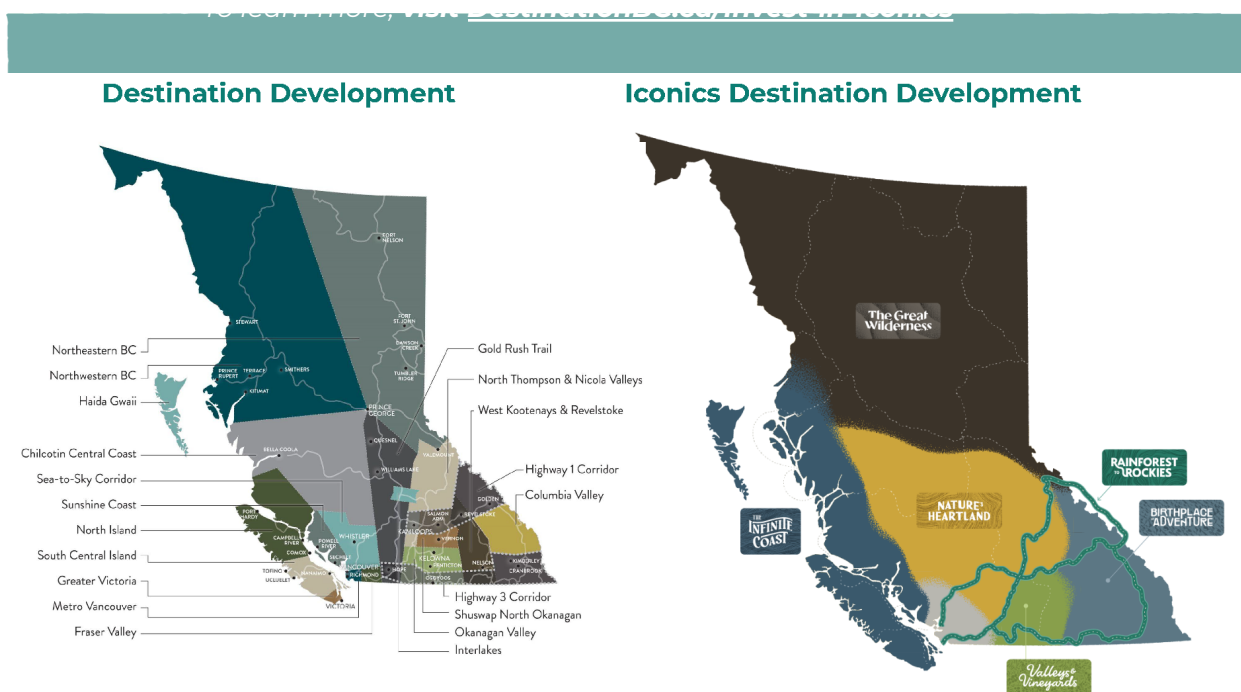


FIGURE 2: WHILE THE REGIONAL AND PLANNING AREA DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOCUS ON PROGRESSING A BROAD RANGE OF THEMES, ICONICS DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT FOCUSES ON ENHANCING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE. USE [DESTINATION BC'S PLANNING AREA LOOK-UP TOOL](#) TO SEE WHICH PLANNING AREA OR REGIONAL DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY APPLIES TO YOUR COMMUNITY, AND VISIT [DESTINATIONBC.CA/INVEST-IN-ICONICS](#) FOR MORE DETAILS ON THE ICONICS.

1.3 WHO IT'S FOR

The *Rainforest to Rockies* Destination Development Strategy is primarily intended for partners within Destination BC (DBC), Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC), the Regional Destination Management Organizations (RDMOs—Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism (CCCTA), Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA), Kootenay Rockies Tourism Association (KRTA), and the Vancouver, Coast & Mountains tourism region (VCM)) as well as the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport (TACS), all of whom are involved in destination development, experience development planning, visitor servicing, and destination management.

Beyond these partners, the goal is that the opportunities presented by the *Rainforest to Rockies* Destination Development Strategy, will enable all those directly involved in the tourism ecosystem, as well as those in government roles supporting the sector, to adopt a consistent, coherent, and cohesive approach to experience development for the *Rainforest to Rockies* journey. This could include Indigenous communities, tourism businesses, local governments, Community Destination Management Organizations (CDMOs), Sector associations, development corporations, not-for-profit and community groups, among others.

1.4 HOW IT WAS DEVELOPED

In keeping with our collaborative approach, we worked with ITBC, TACS, and RDMO partners (CCCTA, TOTA, KRTA, VCM), to host a series of co-facilitated virtual workshops with more than eighty participants from across the tourism sector. This included BC Parks, Parks Canada, the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation (JEDI), as well as representatives from various tourism businesses, local chambers of commerce, community DMOs, not-for-profit groups operating in the cultural and outdoor recreation space, and local governments. Strategic follow-up conversations with RDMO partners helped to validate engagement outcomes (and refine **development priorities** ([Section 6](#))).

Throughout this collaborative and iterative strategy development process, insights were gathered on:

- Compelling story themes that will resonate with visitors in the global marketplace
- Experience development opportunities that will bring these story themes to life across the route
- Touchpoints that will help visitors navigate their way along the route and deeper into the stories of place

As engagement is ongoing, we continue to hold space in this strategy for the inclusion of Indigenous community perspectives and further insights, guided by ITBC.

BRAND POSITIONING STATEMENT

THE ICONIC CANADIAN JOURNEY BETWEEN THE PACIFIC OCEAN & THE CANADIAN ROCKIES, WHERE EVER-CHANGING LANDSCAPES UNFOLD AT EVERY TURN.

2. REALIZING THE POTENTIAL OF *RAINFOREST TO ROCKIES*

2.1 THE *RAINFOREST TO ROCKIES* PROPOSITION

The route is characterized by changing landscapes, from coastal and temperate rainforests, rolling hills, valleys, rugged mountain ranges, to rushing rivers, lakes, grasslands, sagebrush deserts, paleontological sites, parks, protected areas, as well as growing networks of trails and other infrastructure to access and interpret nature. Small, mountain and farm towns, Indigenous, settler, and immigrant heritage experiences, arts and culture, and farm and culinary experiences combine with a network of world-class destination resorts linking the bookends of the Pacific Ocean and the Canadian Rockies west to east.

The route is anchored by the major urban centre of Vancouver and the Lower Mainland—a gateway for The **Highway 3** Corridor is characterized by a series of small towns and cities each with their own personality. With local artisans and

international visitors—with the regional centre of Kamloops being the rough halfway-point along Highway 5 (south to north) and Highway 1 (west to east, as far as the Alberta border). The urban experience is predominately in the west (Metro Vancouver, Fraser Valley, Sea-to-Sky Corridor), while nature-based offerings are available throughout.

Parks, mountains, lakes, rural towns and villages, river-based activities, and all-season resort communities (which also support multi-seasonal activities such as mountain biking) are scattered evenly along the **Highway 1** Corridor and are also available along the southern stretch of **Highway 99** (Sea-to-Sky Corridor). The Shuswap and Kootenays are major destinations for lake-based activities. artists, historians, and culinary and outdoor enthusiasts living aspirational lifestyles there, welcoming communities offer visitors a chance to

slow down and interact with locals to learn about their lives and values. What particularly sets Highway 3 apart is a growing number of Indigenous experiences on offer, combined with outdoor adventure activities in all seasons for all levels of ability, all easily accessible from a lively community with active tourism operators.

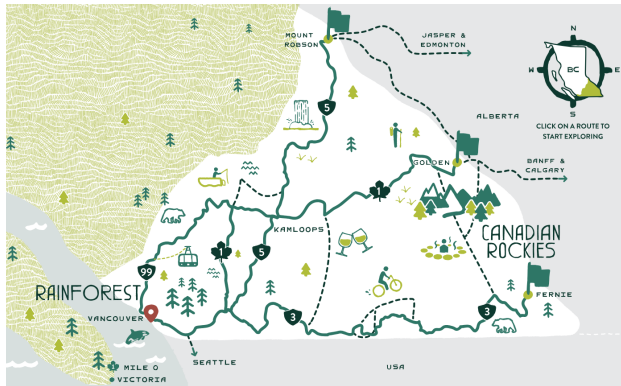


FIGURE 3: A CONCEPTUAL MAP OF RAINFOREST TO ROCKIES, PRESENTED AS PART OF THE 2023 CONSUMER BRAND LAUNCH TO BUILD TRAVELLER AWARENESS ABOUT THE MAIN HIGHWAY ROUTES OF THE ICONIC JOURNEY. NOTE THAT NOT ALL AREAS DEPICTED WERE INCLUDED IN DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT ENGAGEMENT AS THEY WILL BE INCLUDED IN ENGAGEMENT FOR OTHER ICONICS MORE RELEVANT TO THOSE AREAS.

GEOGRAPHIC GROWTH OPPORTUNITY

By offering a density of experiences along and in close proximity to these primary routes, we can slow travellers down as well as motivate them to extend their itineraries beyond more popular, more frequented locations. The opportunity here is to encourage visitors to go farther, whether to complete the route or

complete larger sections of it by being drawn to lesser-known places that will deepen their experience.

For example, a growing number of Indigenous cultural experiences and touchpoints along the route are a particular motivator for international travellers. From purpose-built cultural centres (new and proposed) to decolonized museum exhibits and interpretive signage, visitors can experience stories and lessons in stewardship. These opportunities add depth and meaning to the journey and are globally distinct and unique to these First Nations.

The key is to recognize the opportunity we have here with international travellers to get them to travel farther (i.e. beyond the bookends) even if it is during more peak periods. Many parts of the province connected to *Rainforest to Rockies* have capacity and room to grow and we can leverage the appeal of more opportune weather in early, mid-, and late summer to bring in higher-yield travellers. Of course, some international travellers will continue to be drawn to less busy shoulder seasons (fall and spring), which can, and should, still be supported through experience development as this will also encourage regional travel and work toward improving quality of life for residents year-round.

2.2 VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND THE IDEAL TRAVELLER

The Invest in Iconics Strategy brings together branding and destination development by integrating marketing efforts with the creation of immersive, memorable experiences for visitors in destination. This integration will be achieved through shining a light on the attributes that make the places and communities along *Rainforest to Rockies* distinctive and compelling to those visitors we want to motivate to come here, while having efforts in destination and in market reflect the aspirations and values instilled through our provincial (parent) brand, *Super, Natural British Columbia*.

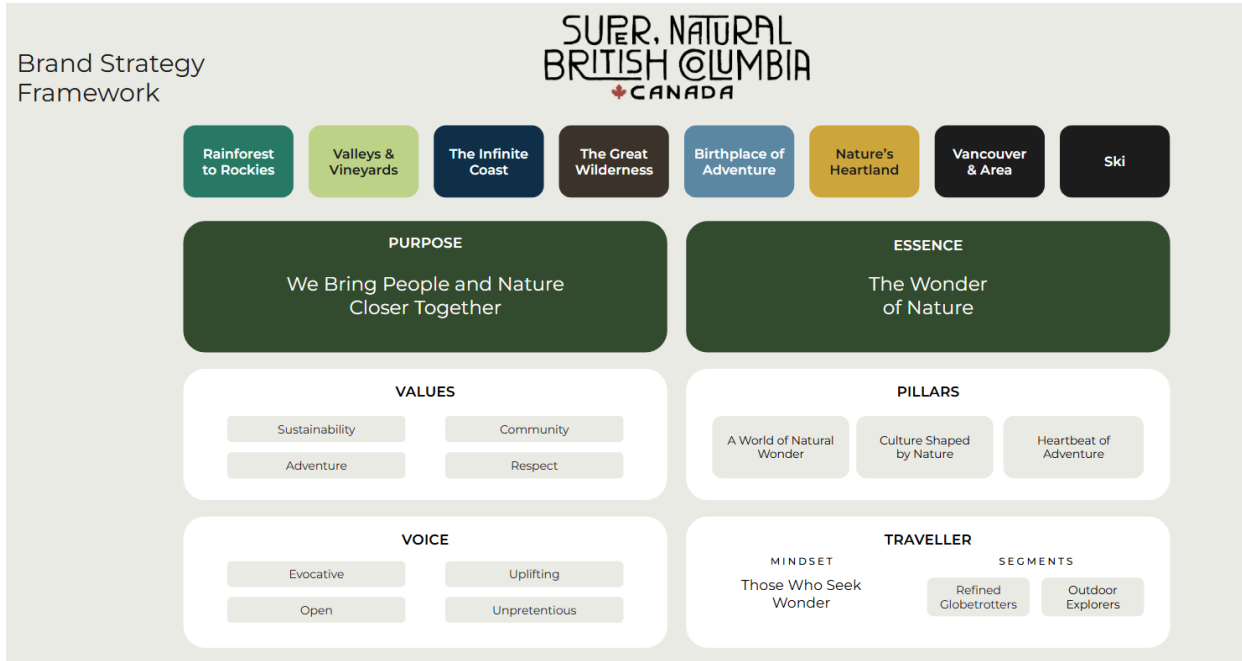


FIGURE 5: THE SUPER, NATURAL BRITISH COLUMBIA BRAND FAMILY

As part of the brand development process for our parent brand, we define a “traveller mindset,” which speaks to the values that we share with our ideal traveller and how we can connect to their deeper motivations through our creative expression—that is, it gives us guidance as to who we are building the brand as well as developing experiences for. Together with the brand pillars developed for each Iconic (refer to the *Rainforest to Rockies* Thematic Framework in [Section 5.2](#)), which stem from the parent brand pillars, we can create sharpness in our

messaging and differentiate the Iconics from one another as well as from competing destinations.

From a more tactical perspective, the audience we are targeting for *Rainforest to Rockies* is the “Refined Globetrotter,” as guided by [Destination Canada’s Traveller Segmentation Program](#), a segment that is also defined as a “highly engaged guest,” meaning travellers in this segment not only travel often and spend more, but more importantly, also align with our brand values.

REFINED GLOBETROTTERS

“We prioritize travel above all, indulging in world-class destinations, gourmet dining, and exclusive experiences. We are experienced travellers who are always on the lookout for new, unique places to cross off our list. We immerse ourselves in history, museums, and the authentic charm of new places, ensuring smooth travel with all-inclusive packages and expert-guided tours.”

- Seek culture and relaxation
- Expect luxury and premium amenities
 - Support local economies
- Choose premium accommodations
- Prefer curated, expertly planned itineraries

For more details, refer to [the full traveller segment profile for the Refined Globetrotter](#), noting that the primary and secondary markets Destination BC will be targeting are USA (California) and UK, and Australia, Mexico, and China, respectively



SEA-TO-SKY HIGHWAY
Photo: Hubert Kang



3. DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT FOR *RAINFOREST TO ROCKIES*

3.1 GOALS OF THE INVEST IN ICONICS STRATEGY

Through new and compelling place and route brands, we will inspire more travellers to visit more places in the province, at more times of the year. In order to define how we will achieve this, [Destination BC's Corporate Strategy 2023-25](#) identifies goals for Invest in Iconics under the “Compelling Reasons to Explore BC” pillar.

Corporate lever: Compelling Reasons to Explore BC					
GOAL	People travel year-round, and to lesser-known places	People living in BC value visitor economy	People love travelling BC	Tourism businesses are profitable	Indigenous voices, values, and presence continue to be amplified in all our work
MEASURE	Trip night dispersion outside of summer months/outside more mature destinations	Resident Value Average rating of how much residents value the contribution of travellers to their local community	Recommend BC Travellers likelihood to recommend BC compared to competitor destinations	Tourism Industry Revenue: Annual provincial tourism industry revenue	To come.

3.2 OUR VISION FOR *RAINFOREST TO ROCKIES*

A vision provides a clear, compelling, and bold picture of the preferred future for the destination and takes into consideration how values and visitor experience are connected to the brand positioning.



Rainforest to Rockies, the iconic Canadian journey between the Pacific Ocean and the Canadian Rockies, is a **vector for prosperity, pride of place, and well-being for everyone living along it as host communities are empowered to develop unique, high-quality visitor experiences that make for a globally compelling destination.**

REVELSTOKE
Photo: Dolf Vermeulen

3.3 OUR VALUES

At its core, this strategy is about building good relationships—with the Indigenous Peoples who are the first and ongoing stewards of these places; with tourism businesses and not-for-profit organizations who work tirelessly to provide memorable experiences for visitors, with regional and community destination management partners and partners across all levels of government who have a key role to play in enabling tourism to contribute to the well-being of communities in BC.

In developing this strategy, we are focused on ensuring that it reflects the following values:

- Respectful sharing and celebration of Indigenous cultures, traditions, and languages, which must be Indigenous-led
- The maintenance and restoration of the ecological integrity of natural systems
- The profitability of tourism businesses and the prosperity of the route
- Enriching the experience of visitors who value and respect what the destinations and places along the route offer
- The well-being of communities and the support of residents

It is essential to acknowledge the importance of respecting community aspirations and attitudes of residents toward visitors travelling into host communities, for without local support, destination development efforts can be challenging.

“

I value the contribution visitors make to my local economy.

British Columbia
80.0%



“

Overall, tourism contributes positively to the quality of life in my community.

British Columbia
70.5%



FIGURE 4: A 2024-25 SNAPSHOT OF BC RESIDENTS' PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF BC'S TOURISM INDUSTRY.

Download the full [Resident Perceptions of Tourism Snapshot Series 2024-25](#).

3.4 ICONICS DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK:

AREAS OF FOCUS

To achieve the objectives, the *Rainforest to Rockies* Destination Development Strategy considers the many aspects of the visitor's travel experience, broadly defined as experiences, touchpoints and encounters in the Iconics Destination Development Framework and Action Plan, which was co-developed with by DBC, ITBC, TACS and the RDMOs to guide the implementation of the Invest in Iconics Strategy through destination development. This enables the use of a consistent, coherent, and cohesive approach to destination development for the Iconics by integrating experience development efforts with those already underway at the regional level.

EXPERIENCES

Experiences are all the ways in which visitors can enjoy, explore, engage with, learn about, and develop a deeper appreciation of the area through which they are travelling. The tangible aspects of experiences include products and activities like guided tours, wildlife viewing, fishing, and events, which alone or in combination motivate travel and provide value for visitors. Equally important are the intangible aspects—the thoughts, feelings, and emotions that are awakened as a result of the experience—as well as the lasting impact in terms of the memories, impressions, and even the transformation that can occur.

TOUCHPOINTS

Touchpoints are the places of arrival, welcome, orientation, and decision making experienced by visitors when in the destination. They raise awareness of what a place has to offer while providing reassurance to visitors that they are on the right track and know where to explore next. They can provide a physical manifestation of the brand on the ground, and include the

physical elements of signage, interpretation, and other navigational tools. Touchpoints also include key sites and facilities such as museums, interpretive centres, and Visitor Centres, which provide learning opportunities as well as points of orientation to the story of place and the people who live there.

ENCOUNTERS

Encounters are the ways in which the stories of places are authentically and respectfully shared with visitors, with approval from the story owners. This can happen through the interactions visitors have with local people, the tourism experiences they participate in, or the interpretative materials they encounter. The stories we choose to tell can change the way visitors experience a place and enable them to reach a deeper understanding of the significance of the places they visit.

4. NAVIGATING THE *RAINFOREST TO ROCKIES* JOURNEY

4.1 DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT ROUTE SEGMENTS

We have identified multiple segments of the route based on how a visitor might experience travelling the route. Each segment of the route offers its own distinctive experiences and landscapes, as well as unique development opportunities that contribute to the enhancement of the segment as well as the entirety of the route.

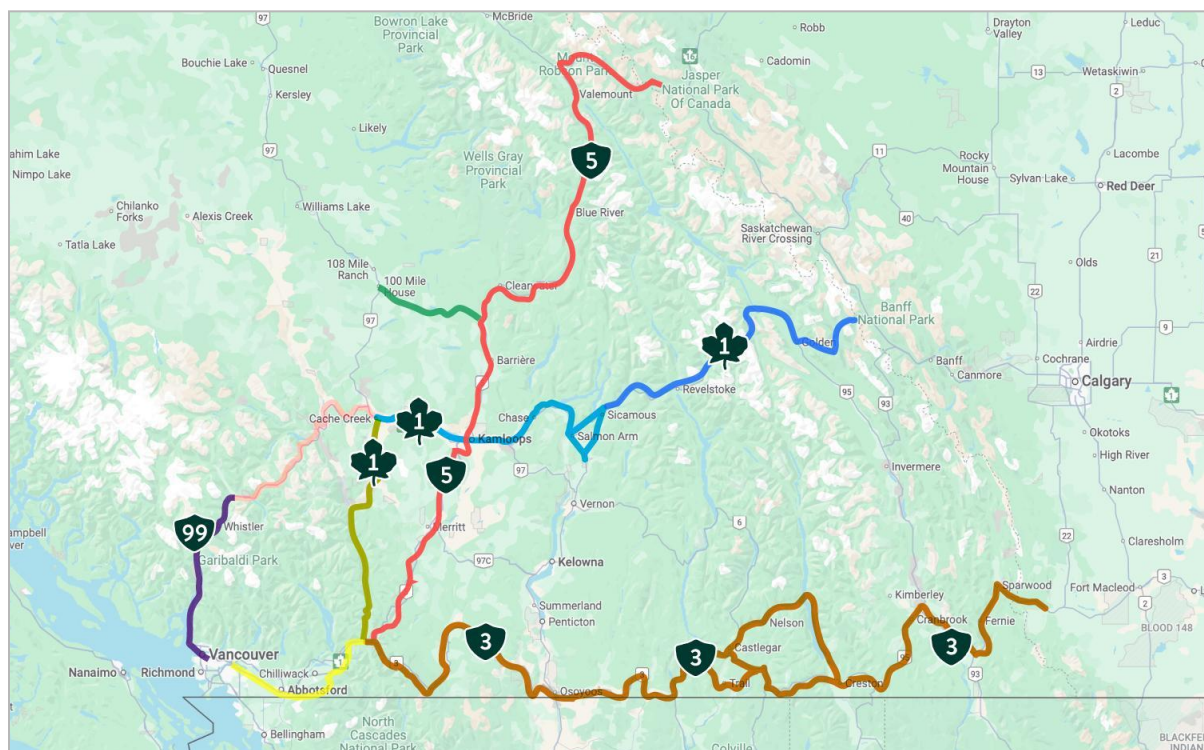


FIGURE 6: THE 8 DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT ROUTE SEGMENTS FOR *RAINFOREST TO ROCKIES*

The visitor journey comprises the following route segments:

Highway 99 (Sea-to-Sky Corridor) from Vancouver's North Shore to

Squamish to Whistler to Pemberton. A ribbon of highway along dramatic coastline, the winding Sea-to-Sky Highway takes in the steep fjords of Howe Sound, runs past sheer rock faces, waterfalls, lakes, alpine forests, glaciers, and the snow-capped Coast Mountains, passing through the largest four-season mountain resort in BC, Whistler, enroute to Pemberton.

Highway 99 - Pemberton to Lillooet to Historic Hat Creek Ranch to (via Highway 97) Cache Creek.

The exhilarating and adventurous mountain road along the shore of Duffy Lake winds through beautiful valleys, offering breathtaking views of deep river canyons and sheer mountain peaks, as well as opportunities to visit small towns and First Nation communities.

Highway 1 - Cache Creek to Kamloops to Sicamous. Grasslands and rolling hills dominate the landscape to Kamloops, a vibrant city that offers a unique blend of urban and outdoor living roughly at a mid-way point along the *Rainforest to Rockies* journey between Vancouver and Alberta. With a population of over 100,000 people, Kamloops is the second-largest city in the Interior. Rivers and lakes run along the highway as a continuous water thread to Shuswap Lake which, with its lush green setting and small communities, signals a transition from the drier landscapes of the Kamloops region. As one of the principal features of the region, Shuswap Lake is at the center of a large stream and lake network and the focal point of many tourism activities. The region is hugely varied, comprising remote mountains and wild streams, popular lakes, rich farm lands, and historic towns. It offers a diversity of landscapes and waterscapes associated with Shuswap Lake, Shuswap River, Shuswap Highlands, and a range of smaller lakes. The destination is characterized by small and medium sized communities that give the visitor a range of opportunities to connect with locals, and to experience the wealth of artists, artisans, and musicians that reside/perform in the area.

Highway 1 - Sicamous to Revelstoke to Alberta Border. This segment includes a wide range of biogeoclimatic zones and their associated ecosystems. It is this diversity that contributes to the quality of the journey, offering visitors a chance to experience high, alpine meadows and jagged peaks, glaciers, grasslands, lakes and an inland rainforest. In the spring, summer, and fall, visitors are drawn to the area to experience whitewater rafting, houseboating, fishing, and trail-based activities as well as championship golf courses. The Columbia Wetlands offer unparalleled bird watching opportunities, while parks afford excellent camping, hiking, and

mountain biking. This segment 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.



Highway 1 - Metro Vancouver to Fraser Valley to Hope. The Fraser Valley is all about agriculture, thanks to its abundance of barns, dairies, and fields flanked by steep mountains. Here, you'll find anything farm fresh, along with wineries, microbreweries, golf courses, and sturgeon and salmon fishing.

Highway 3 - Hope to Osoyoos to Castlegar to Cranbrook to Alberta Border. Quirky wineries, historic railway trails, and fertile orchards are all part of the sweeping landscape along Highway 3 east of Hope. Also known as the Crowsnest Highway, this scenic route runs through the Similkameen Valley in the Thompson Okanagan and continues into the Kootenay Rockies.

Highway 5 - Hope to Kamloops to Barriere to Clearwater to Valemount to Mount Robson to Alberta Border. Here rivers flow freely and waterfalls roar with thunderous applause, wildlife roams undisturbed, and every snowfall paints a majestic canvas of beauty. Vibrant communities like Merritt, Sun Peaks, Clearwater, Blue River, and Valemount offer expansive vistas and opportunities for outdoor adventures enroute to Mount Robson, the Canadian Rockies' highest peak.

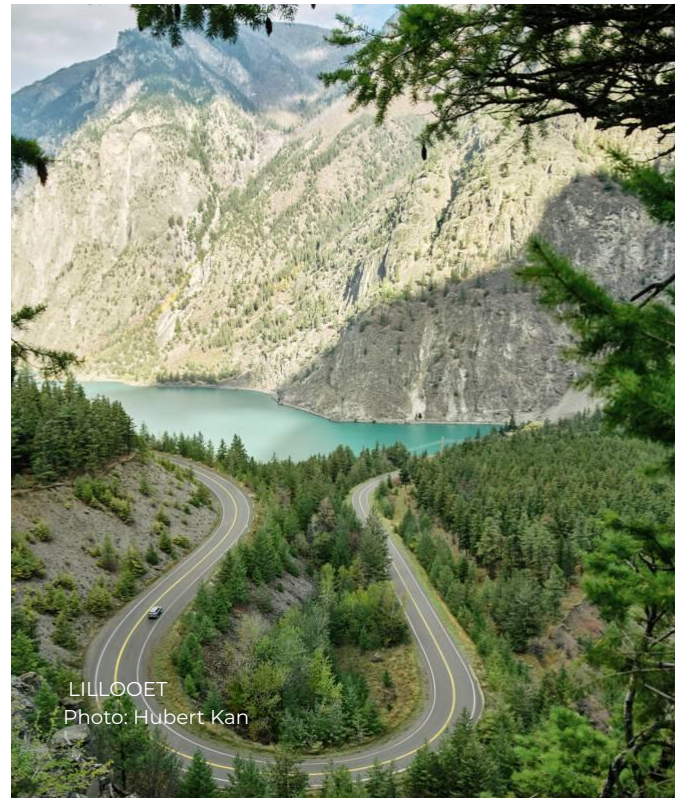
Highway 1 - Hope to Lytton to Cache Creek (Fraser Canyon). Beyond the Fraser River valley to the northeast, the Fraser Canyon's dramatic landscape includes sheer granite walls rising up from the raging Fraser River. Home to the Stó:lō, Xwoxwela:łhp (Yale First Nation), Nlaka'pamux, and St'at'imc Peoples since time before memory, the canyon has been an important pathway for food, transportation, and trade for local First Nations. Experience gold rush history at Yale Historic Site, cross the canyon at Hell's Gate, or sleep under the

stars at Tuckkwiowhum Campground.

 **Highway 24 - 93 Mile to Lone Butte to Interlakes to Little Fort.** Also known as the “Fishing Highway”, some 97 km long, this short yet scenic route offers access to a journey through a region with approximately 100 crystal clear lakes for fishing and water sports, as well as a plethora of places to set up camp. The entire region is renowned for clean air, abundant wildlife, sublime scenery, and laid back locals.

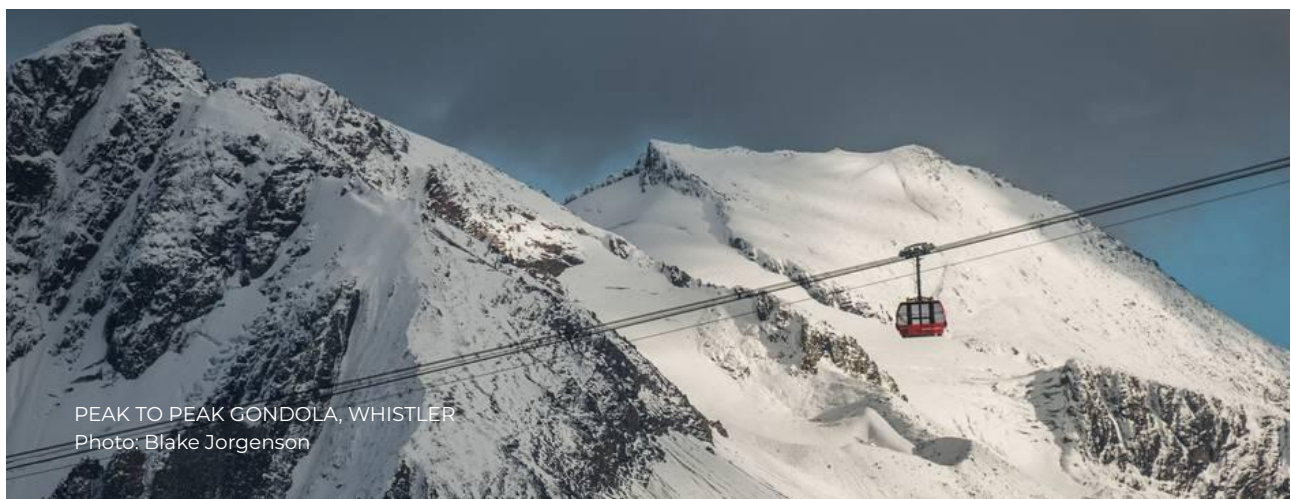
4.2 KEY CHALLENGES

- Driving conditions and road safety, while a consideration for all major highways along the route, are a particular concern along Highway 1 at all times of year. The mountain passes on Highway 3 and Highway 5 (Coquihalla Pass) are especially challenging during winter (October to April). Additionally, for visitors attempting winter travel, there are few scheduled/coordinated options, such as bus services or resort shuttles. Vehicle rental agencies do not always provide snow tires.
- Some sections of the journey lack cell service, which requires travellers to be prepared by downloading offline maps or using printed or paper maps.
- The majority of the route experiences four-season weather and there are variable conditions throughout the year. Weather protected options and seasonal maintenance services will be needed to extend seasons, (e.g., covered wildlife viewing locations, winter trail maintenance, indoor experiential options such as a virtual trip to the alpine flower meadows or fossil fields).
- Capacity constraints and negative resident sentiment exist at times of peak demand.
- Seasonal growth will require experiences and tourism businesses to extend months/days/hours of operation beyond the peak summer months. This will also require travel services and amenities to be open, such as accommodations, restaurants, and retail.
- Communities are at varying degrees of preparedness to accelerate destination development. Communities with few motivating experiences for travellers tend to be small or rural, with local governments having limited funds to promote the destination and attract private sector investment. In addition to this, the private sector is understandably hesitant to invest when the enabling factors to support destination development are not in place locally.



4.3 OPPORTUNITIES

- Geographic growth of travellers along the route—encourages visitors to explore beyond anchor attractions and travel-motivating destinations to neighbouring communities and side trips off the highway, which leads to more overnight stays in all regions along the route:
 - Vancouver, Coast and Mountains (VCM)
 - Thompson Okanagan (TO)
 - Kootenay Rockies (KR)
 - Cariboo Chilcotin Coast (CCC)
- Current anchors—those places with sufficient and long-established draw to attract and hold visitors—from which to encourage travellers to explore beyond include:
 - Metro Vancouver towards Fraser Valley/Chilliwack/Hope, Fraser Canyon circle tour to Lytton/Lillooet/Cache Creek, Highway 3 eastbound from Hope
 - Sea-to-Sky Corridor – Vancouver’s North Shore to Whistler towards Pemberton, Lillooet, Cache Creek, and Fraser Canyon (possible circle tour)
 - Park locations such as Glacier and Yoho National Parks towards nearby communities of Revelstoke and Golden
 - Wells Gray Provincial Park towards Valemount and the Fishing Highway at Little Fort
 - Mount Robson Park to Clearwater and Wells Gray Provincial Park, for those travelling from Alberta
 - Parks locations such as Wells Gray, Pipi7iyekw/Joffre Lakes, and Golden Ears Provincial Parks towards nearby communities (e.g. Valemount, Pemberton, Lillooet, Mission, Abbotsford, Langley)
- Drawing travellers from select anchors for day trips. Smaller communities may not currently have sufficient depth nor density of experiences, or sufficient accommodation options, to increase local overnight stays but will still benefit from day trip revenues and visitation. For example, Nelson or Rossland can be used as an anchor for day trips to Trail, Fruitvale, and Montrose.





5. THE DEVELOPMENT RESPONSE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Every story shared, every experience offered, and every touchpoint introduced along *Rainforest to Rockies* contributes to both localized expression of place and to the cohesiveness of the larger journey. As such, the ability to meaningfully **share the stories of Rainforest to Rockies** ([Section 5.2](#)) and thereby add to the traveller's overall sense of wonder and connection to the brand, are essential. Such investments bring life to the journey and add meaning to the overall travel experience for the visitor.

When assessing destination development priorities, it is important to consider the anticipated contribution an investment will make to both the local community as well as to the greater whole. A further consideration when prioritizing destination development opportunities is the contribution an investment will make towards achieving a compelling depth and density of experiences for the traveller along the entirety of the route. This leads to ***maintaining travel***

momentum ([Section 5.3](#)) by ensuring there are no significant gaps or breaks in a traveller's sense of awe and wonder as they experience the *Rainforest to Rockies* journey.

Destination development prioritization must also be mindful of the need to ***work within limits*** ([Section 5.4](#)) and capacity of existing experiences to accommodate growth. To conserve the ecological and cultural integrity of the places visited and maintain tourism's social licence, visitor volumes and impacts need to be managed in accordance with community values on what constitutes acceptable change.

Another consideration when assessing destination development priorities is cohesively and enjoyably connecting the touring and road trip experience by providing ***reassurance to travellers*** ([Section 5.5](#)) through investments in touchpoints.

5.2 STORY AS A MECHANISM FOR CONNECTING VISITORS TO PLACE

The brand pillars identified in the [*Rainforest to Rockies Industry Brand Guidelines*](#) manifest on the ground through the experiences that visitors interact once here, which draw their inspiration not only from the essence and multifaceted nature of this place but also from the stories about place and the local destination that local communities want to share with visitors.

The stories of *Rainforest to Rockies* are grounded in the landscapes of the route, the challenges of physical connection across this varied terrain and the human response to these landscapes. To share the wonder of these places and the stories of people, past and present, it is important for visitors to have physical access to the landscapes and to provide places where visitors can get out of a vehicle, slow down, and immerse themselves.

Individual stories and story themes of the route emerged through the engagement sessions when discussing *encounters*. The focus was on “root stories”, defined as those unique, foundational narratives of people and place that are important to communities, distinctive, and add a layer of depth to the experience. These themes were then organized through the lens of the *Rainforest to Rockies* brand pillars to identify those which would best amplify the brand positioning, create a cohesive brand narrative, and appeal to the ideal traveller.

Refer to the framework below for story prompts aligned to the *Rainforest to Rockies* brand.

TABLE 1: RAINFOREST TO ROCKIES THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

RAINFOREST TO ROCKIES		
<i>BRAND POSITIONING STATEMENT: THE ICONIC CANADIAN JOURNEY BETWEEN THE PACIFIC OCEAN AND THE CANADIAN ROCKIES</i>		
BRAND PILLARS		
NATURE EVER-CHANGING	ADVENTURE CONNECTIONS TO CULTURES	CULTURE CHOICE & EASE
DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STORY THEMES		
Journeys and Adventures Across Diverse Landscapes <i>Stories of resilience and adventure that contribute to a cohesive narrative along the route about the landscapes that shaped lifestyles and settlement here..</i> For Example: Stories of wildlife movement across land and rivers Stories of Indigenous trading routes Stories of the challenges overcome by the railroad and of historic and contemporary gold seekers discovering rich deposits Stories of geological evolution, archaeology and climate change and the impact of time and human contact on the landscape and local life Stories that help interpret the landscape	Inspiring Locals, Past & Present <i>Stories that celebrate the diverse culture, history and heritage of the people and places along the route.</i> For Example: Stories of local cultures and cultural expression Stories of local ways of living, both past and present, and of the people and communities who call this place home Stories of local legends and heroes Stories of tourism leaders who are advancing sustainability Stories of how Indigenous ways of being have and are shaped by the land (means of sustenance and spiritual life)	Deep and Enduring Connections to Place <i>Stories that empower visitors to create their own unique experience of the route and make a positive contribution.</i> For Example: Stories of local gems and lesser-known side trips Stories that encourage travellers to slow down and spend more time visiting Stories that encourage travellers to try something new and find a new passion Stories of the transitions from coastal temperate rainforest, to dry interior plateau to alpine meadow, and human adaptation and use Stories of traditional land use, land conservation, and modern stewardship methods, including stories shared by Indigenous Peoples and Knowledge Keepers

5.3 MAINTAINING TRAVEL MOMENTUM: ENHANCING EXPERIENCE DIVERSITY AND DENSITY

To create a cohesive and compelling experience for international travellers across the entirety of the *Rainforest to Rockies* journey, it is important that the momentum of compelling experiences and the sharing of stories be kept at a pace that is neither too intense (so many compelling experiences in one geographic zone that the traveller is satiated and feels no need to continue) nor too monotonous (an overly long span of travel time without a compelling reason to stop and experience something interesting).

To support prioritization of opportunities related to new or enhanced experiences, the following zones have been identified along the route:

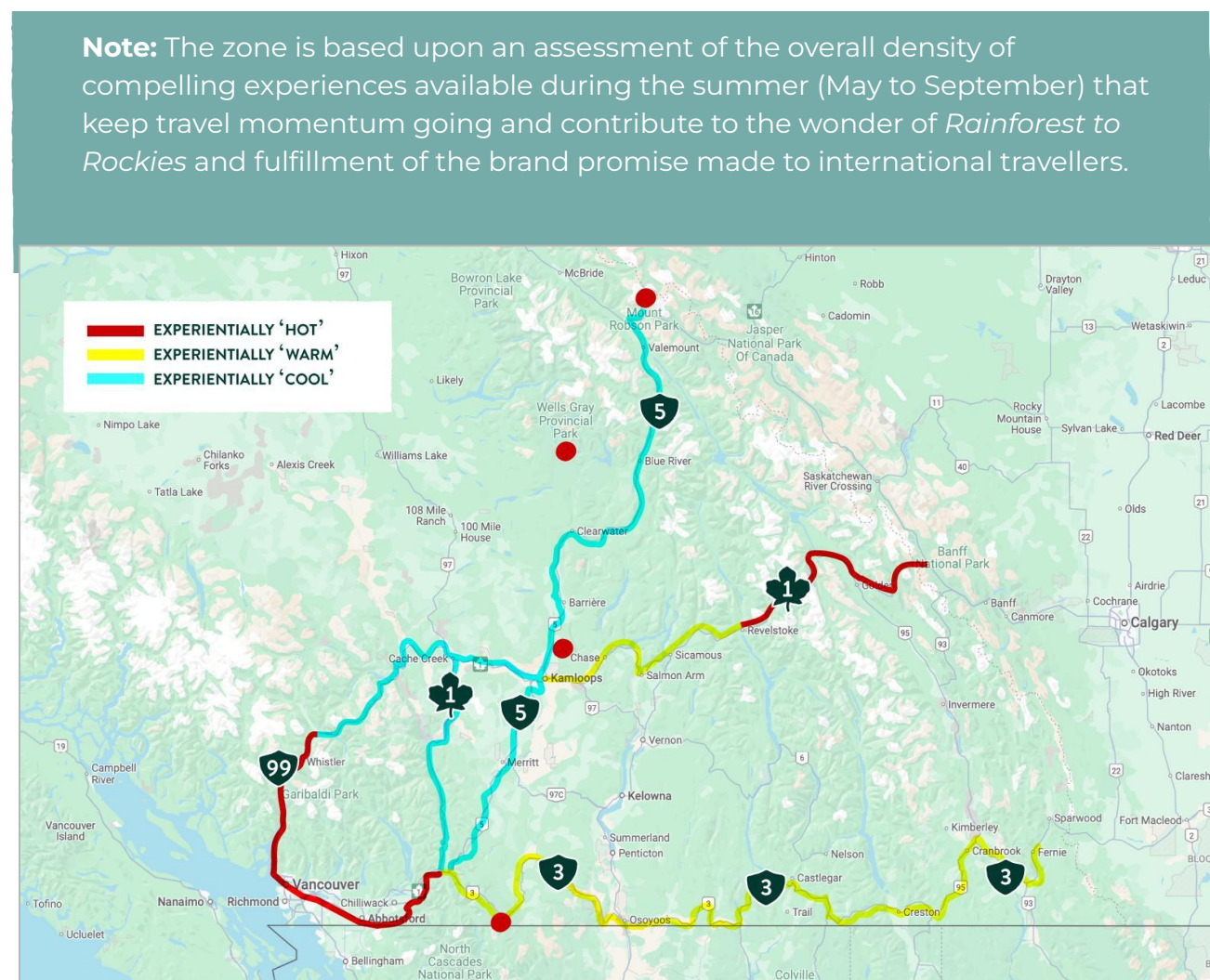


FIGURE 7: EXPERIENTIAL DEPTH ASSESSMENT - HOT/WARM/COLD ZONES ALONG RAINFOREST TO ROCKIES.

Hot zones (red) There is an existing density and diversity of travel experiences such that movement along the route from one experience to the next flows naturally and can be relatively unaided:

- Within Metro Vancouver, Fraser Valley, and the Sea-to-Sky Corridor to Whistler and Pemberton there is both a density of compelling experiences and a natural/intuitive travel route.
 - From Revelstoke to the Alberta border there is a natural route along Highway 1 with clear destinations in the National Park system. Communities like Revelstoke, Golden, and Field offer a strong sense of place and strong diversity and density of experiences suitable for the touring market.
 - Select isolated destinations offer such a compelling experience that the traveller is motivated to move through less experientially-dense areas (warm zones, cool zones) to get there, e.g., EC Manning Provincial Park, Sun Peaks Resort, Wells Gray Provincial Park, Mount Robson Provincial Park.
-

Warm zones (yellow) There is a “string” of enjoyable experiences that contribute to the overall appeal of *Rainforest to Rockies* that are true to place and offer access and insights to local stories and lifestyles that speak to the curious traveller:

- Highway 3 from Hope to the Alberta border offers a series of local communities and experiences with anchors in Osoyoos, Nelson/Castlegar/Rossland (West Kootenay) and Cranbrook/Kimberley/Fernie (East Kootenay). There is a remarkable variety of outdoor experiences on offer along with an interesting mix of arts, culture, heritage, and culinary experiences to sample, with most relatively easy to access from the highway.
 - The network of Rail Trails is an important experiential contributor to these ‘warm’ zones. The Kettle Valley Rail Trail is one of the better-known options to experience and there are other lesser known Rail Trails (also part of the Trans Canada Trail) that are of excellent quality.
 - Kamloops to Revelstoke along the Trans-Canada Highway offers an interesting transition zone from the Columbia mountains to lakes in the Shuswap with opportunities for lake-based experiences, hiking and biking, and an abundance of cultural and heritage stories to be shared.
-

Cool zones (blue) While overall scenery still offers some sense of wonder, from a visitor perspective, there are fewer reasons to slow down and experience these zones today for more than just a meal or to refuel.

- Hope to Cache Creek via the Fraser Canyon
- Merritt to Kamloops along Highway 5
- Pemberton to Lillooet to Kamloops
- Kamloops to Mount Robson Provincial Park, with exceptions for excursions to Sun Peaks Mountain Resort or Wells Gray Provincial Park
- Note: Hope to Merritt along Highway 5 is a significant transportation corridor and unlikely to see major developments as there are few communities along this segment that would benefit from destination development.



5.4 WORKING WITHIN LIMITS: ASSESSING CAPACITY

In addition to considering story themes and the diversity and density of experiences available along the route to ensure there is continuous travel momentum, it is also important to consider current capacity. Working in conjunction with relevant partners, it is important to assess whether there is room to grow or if there is a need to implement visitor management systems to ensure the impacts of visitation on host communities and the natural environment are mitigated and managed sustainably over the long-term.

While social and environmental capacity will always be critical considerations through the entirety of the *Rainforest to Rockies* journey, some zones are already experiencing pressure. Additional development and growth should proceed with caution and with the implementation of capacity monitoring and visitor management systems. Consideration should also be given to seasonal closures so local Indigenous communities can enable access for cultural, spiritual, and community purposes, and in other instances to preserve sensitive habitats and allow for plant and animal species to regenerate and reproduce.

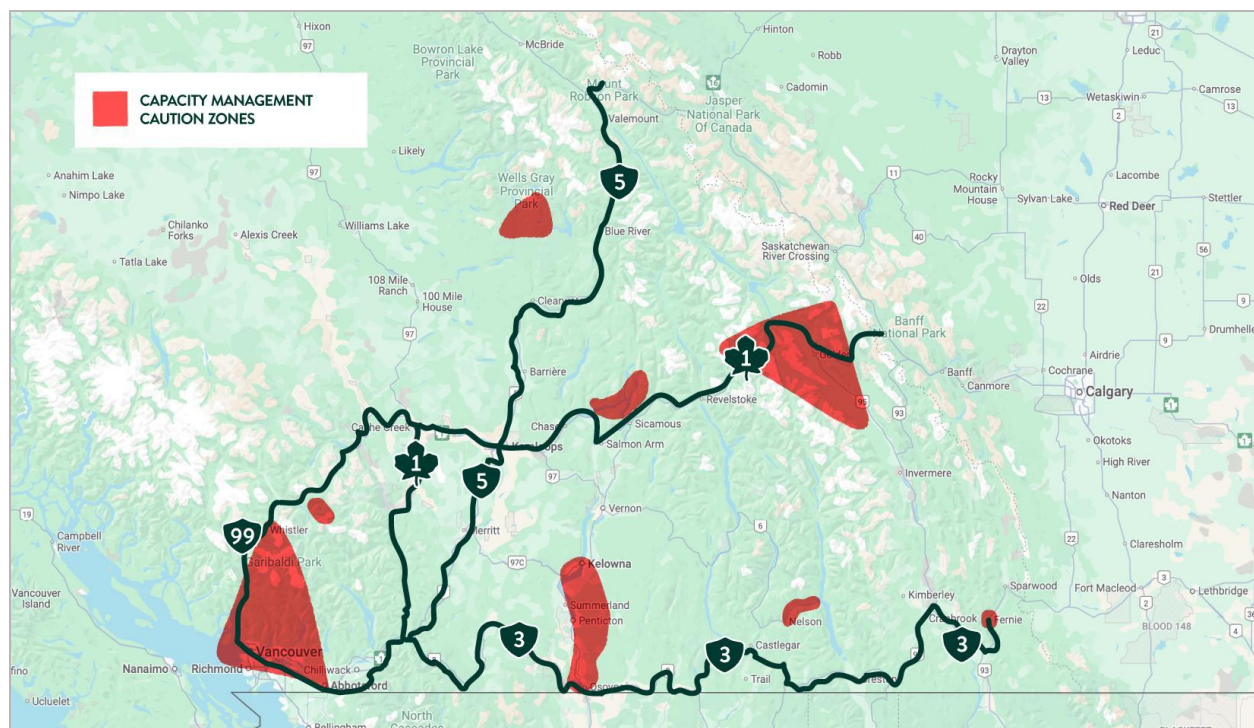


FIGURE 8: CAPACITY MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT: CAUTION ZONES DRAWN FROM DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS CONDUCTED FOR THE *RAINFOREST TO ROCKIES* JOURNEY.

Travel motivating experiences form part of the visitor’s “dream” stage along the path to purchase. Zones with capacity pressures need support as they strive to manage the impacts of their popularity. This is crucial to the long-term success of the *Rainforest to Rockies* journey and to the ability to follow through on the offering presented to travellers in destination marketing.

The caution zones highlighted in red have been broadly identified as having visitor capacity concerns and growth limitations. It is important to note that

these concerns are not necessarily at all times of year or for all businesses operating in the community/destination.

The intention of this consideration is to raise awareness of the potential for harm to the quality of the visitor experience, the host community, and/or the natural environment. This consideration provides space for destination development to prioritize support for investments in capacity enhancements and/or visitor management systems.

The areas of note identified by participants in engagement sessions as having capacity constraints include the following:

- Metro Vancouver and Sea-to-Sky Corridor (Vancouver's North Shore to Squamish and Whistler) – most locations, more times of the year
- Provincial Parks along the route, including:
 - Pipi7iyekw/Joffre Lakes Provincial Park – year-round
 - Golden Ears Provincial Park – select times of year
 - Wells Gray Provincial Park – select waterfall viewing sites, select locations, select times of year
 - Kokanee Creek Provincial Park – select times of year
 - Shuswap Lake Provincial Park – select times of year
- National Parks – Mount Revelstoke, Glacier, Yoho – select locations at select times of year (e.g., Emerald Lake, Takakkaw Falls in summer, Rogers Pass in winter)
- Osoyoos and the South Okanagan – select locations, select times of year
- Fernie – select times of year

5.5 PROVIDING REASSURANCE: ENHANCING TOUCHPOINTS

Rainforest to Rockies is a route-based travel destination, so the overall journey is as critical to its appeal as the individual experiences offered along the way. The number and quality of connections offered to travellers is an important aspect of destination development. These connections along the route can be both physical and non-physical.

Tangible connections to place can be offered through physical touchpoints like signage that provides comfort and assurance that the traveller is in the right place, as well as through a consistent and frequent *Rainforest to*

Rockies brand presence. This brand presence can occur in many forms throughout the corridor such as on signage at Visitor Centres, static signs at interpretive kiosks, as well as on digital applications. Destination BC has also developed an Iconics Signage Opportunity Strategy to provide signage guidelines, specifications, and recommendations to support partners in bringing to life the Iconic brands on the ground through physical signage. It also identifies opportunities to align with signage systems that are already in place as well as possibilities for co-branding with partner organizations.

Provincially, touchpoint locations with most potential impact were identified, based on

- positive impact on seasonal growth
- positive impact on geographic growth
- visitor value
- visual brand presence for the Iconics

They were also differentiated by purpose, as follows:

- Local Storytelling and Interpretation (kiosks, artwork, beacons, digital media, community welcome)
- Navigational Tools and Information (Provincial-level wayfinding, roadside signage, digital wayfinding)

TABLE 2: TOUCHPOINT OPPORTUNITIES FOR *RAINFOREST TO ROCKIES*

Location category	Touchpoint examples	Implementation
Significant Places of Arrival, Transit, and Departure	Regional Border Crossings; Roadside signage; Rest Stops/Points of Interest, Pullouts and Viewpoints; Visitor Centres	Gateway Signage MOTI/TACS to lead on roadside signage (e.g. Circle Routes); consider co-branding at touchpoints in/near entry-points to other Iconics Accessibility improvements to Visitor Centres and extensions of operating hours and/or alternate means to share information Custom Iconics Markers - comprehensive program of branded interpretive signage and digital tools/roadside maps along the route at key places of cultural significance - kiosks, beacons Infrastructure to support responsible behaviour along the route (garbage and recycling disposal and bins, fences, signs, etc.) Visitors Centres on primary R2R route, to include all Iconics that are relevant for trip-planning
Transportation	Car/RV Rental agencies, train stations, Gas stations/ EV charging stations	Partnerships to share trip information, enrich storytelling, support itineraries
Community Arrival	First Nation, community, or multi-community boundary	Community signage at entry points into host communities, co-branding opportunity for all relevant Iconics; promotion of traditional languages and place names of Indigenous Peoples
Tourism Businesses	Tour operators and agents; Accommodators; Attractions,	Collaborate with Sectors (food and bev) and Hotels to promote route and stops along route

	activity providers	Decolonize exhibits in museums, and other cultural venues along the entire route and add more interactive, hands-on programming for visitors.
Parks & Nature	National Parks, Provincial Parks, Indigenous Conservation Areas	Partner with Parks Canada to enhance key rest stops, interpretive centres, and National Historic Sites (decolonize exhibits, add more interactive hands-on programming for visitors) Infrastructure to improve access to nature and appreciation of landscapes and wildlife along the route

More specific opportunities are further detailed, route segment by route segment, in [Section 6, Development Priorities](#).

6. DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

6.1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR *RAINFOREST TO ROCKIES*

At the core of destination development work for *Rainforest to Rockies* is sustainable tourism growth, anchored by the following strategic objectives we want to enable and achieve:

- Provide an opportunity for all communities along the route to choose to participate in and benefit from tourism, based on their capacity and stage of development. [Supporting Experience Development]
- Enable communities to share their unique stories, if they wish to, in ways that will build pride of place and respect as well as a cohesive narrative for the route. [Connecting People to Stories of Place]
- Develop and enhance tourism experiences so that the entire route can provide compelling reasons for travellers to slow down, stop and explore, and spend more time in more places. [Supporting Experience Development]
- Identify strategic locations along the route at which to create new visitor touchpoints or enhance existing ones to give *Rainforest to Rockies* a visual presence on the ground and welcome, reassure, and inform visitors during their journey. [Raising Awareness and Educating Visitors about Lesser-Known Experiences]
- Create a more enabling environment for local communities, businesses, experience providers, and tourism operators, to strengthen and further develop their visitor offerings, fill experience gaps, and expand operations into the shoulder seasons (spring, fall). [Creating an Enabling Environment for Experience Development]

6.2 OPPORTUNITIES ALONG THE ROUTE: SEGMENT BY SEGMENT

Destination development priorities, when they are well considered and strategic, can support both a community's aspirations for its own future as well as provide ways to deliver on the what destination marketing promise made to visitors through destination marketing.

Having identified the route-wide story, experience, and touchpoint opportunities, we will now look in more detail at each of the route segments to report on the emerging priorities that align with the development framework presented in Section 5.

[HIGHWAY 99 - Vancouver's North Shore to Pemberton \(VCM\)](#)

[HIGHWAY 99/97 - Pemberton to Hat Creek Ranch to Cache Creek \(VCM/CCC\)](#)

[HIGHWAY 1 - Cache Creek to Sicamous \(CCC/TO\)](#)

[HIGHWAY 1 - Sicamous to Alberta Border \(TO/KR\)](#)

[HIGHWAY 1 - Fraser Valley to Hope \(VCM\)](#)

HIGHWAY 3 - Hope to Alberta Border (VCM/TO/KR)

HIGHWAY 5 - Hope to Alberta Border (TO/KR)

HIGHWAY 24 - 93 Mile to Little Fort, Hwy 97S to Hat Creek Ranch (CCC)

Note that while these priorities were identified by partners during the engagement process, they do not commit any particular partner to their delivery.

HIGHWAY 99 - Vancouver's North Shore to Pemberton (VCM)

Priorities for experience development and enhancement

- ★ Invest in developing new guided visitor experiences throughout the **Fire & Ice Aspiring GeoRegion project** in the Sea-to-Sky Corridor
- ★ Support further investments to the **Squamish downtown** and waterfront promenade, providing visitor experiences and access to Howe Sound
- ★ Support further investment in developing **Britannia townsites** visitor experiences, interpretation, and restoration activities, including continued support for Britannia Mine Museum and Britannia Mines Concentrator National Historic Site
- ★ Develop new guided tours of **Brackendale Eagle Viewing** preferably with an Indigenous operator
- ★ Develop new guided tours of **Squamish Estuary** with an Indigenous operator
- ★ Support investment in **Squamish Spit kiteboarding** infrastructure and amenities
- ★ Work with BC Parks to **enhance facilities, amenities, and interpretation to improve the visitor experience at popular Parks**, including Alice Lake Provincial Park (Story Trail interpretation), Garibaldi Provincial Park (visitor capacity, infrastructure), Shannon Falls Provincial Park (visitor capacity, infrastructure, washroom facilities), Stawamus Chief Provincial Park (visitor capacity, infrastructure)
- ★ Support investment in increased parking capacity at **Sea-to-Sky Gondola**
- ★ Support investment in **Sea-to-Sky Trail** and complete key sections between Squamish and Whistler, including the 5km section parallel to Cheakamus Canyon
- ★ Develop new **guided beginners rock climbing** experiences and viewing areas

Touchpoint investment priorities

- ★ Support investment in interpretive signage and visitor amenity improvements at key story locations/Stops of Interest within the **Fire & Ice Aspiring GeoRegion** and highlight the ongoing work on the Átl'ka7tsem / Howe Sound UNESCO Biosphere Region
- ★ Refresh/refurbish **Sea-to-Sky Cultural Journey Kiosks** and incorporate additional information (maps, digital apps) about lesser-known experiences that have capacity for visitation
- ★ Work with local communities to explore the opportunity to invest in **co-branded community gateway signage**

HIGHWAY 99/97 - Pemberton to Hat Creek Ranch to Cache Creek (VCM/CCC)

Priorities for experience development and enhancement

- ★ Support ongoing **efforts led by Lílwat Nation** to host an annual St'at'imc PowWow in Pemberton and invest in projects such as a new marketplace with artisans workshops, coffee shops, retail spaces, and additional public washrooms
- ★ Continue to explore and implement **co-management and visitor use management models between BC Parks and local First Nations** at popular Parks, e.g., Pipí7iyekw/Joffre Lakes Provincial Park
- ★ Support Upper St'at'imc Nation efforts to construct an **Upper St'at'imc Cultural Centre** in Lillooet, working in collaboration with the District of Lillooet
- ★ Support investment in additional camping capacity and/or offer interpretation at select Parks, including **Marble Canyon – Story Trail** interpreting unique freshwater stromatolites
- ★ Support decolonization efforts of **Historic Hat Creek Ranch Provincial Heritage Site** interpretation, programming and experiences, and expand visitor experiences and interpretation on site with Bonaparte First Nation
- ★ Support continued **preservation and maintenance investments by BC Heritage Branch** in provincial heritage sites, e.g., Historic Hat Creek Provincial Site

Touchpoint investment priorities

- ★ Support **community-led sharing of traditional languages, traditional place names, and interpretive stories** at locations of cultural significance along the route, e.g., expansion of Sea-to-Sky Cultural Journey Interpretive Kiosks north of Whistler to Pemberton and Historic Hat Creek Provincial Site, telling stories of Indigenous Peoples and stories of landscape transitions (temperate rainforest to dry plateau)
- ★ Support investment in **interpretive signage and visitor amenity improvements at key story locations and rest stops**, e.g., Old Bridge (Lillooet), Seton Lake/dam history (Lillooet), Fountain Flats/Fraser River viewing locations, bighorn sheep wildlife viewing areas, sturgeon of the Fraser River, Cayoosh Creek Campground river access and boat launch
- ★ Support continued investments in **infrastructure to support responsible travel**, e.g., parking, washroom facilities at popular trailheads (Mosquito Lake, Tenquille Lake, Blowdown Creek)
- ★ Continue to maintain and expand the **Pemberton Farm Tour**

HIGHWAY 1 - Cache Creek to Sicamous (CCC/TO)

Priorities for experience development and enhancement

- ★ Support the **recovery of businesses** and experiences affected by wildfires of summer 2023 **and ongoing climate resilience** planning efforts
- ★ Support completion of **Shuswap North Okanagan Rail Trail** from Sicamous to Armstrong
- ★ Work with BC Parks to increase **capacity at popular Parks**, e.g., add camping capacity at **Shuswap Lake Park** and continue to invest in **Shuswap Trails** to create a more cohesive network of interconnected greenways and blueways experiences for the Shuswap
- ★ Work with **BC Parks and communities to add overnight accommodation** options (existing B&Bs; new backcountry huts)
- ★ Support operators in exploring and implementing shorter duration **houseboat experiences** that would appeal to touring travellers
- ★ Support the development of the **Shuswap Farmgate Tour**, an agriculture, culinary, history, artists, artisans, gallery tour
- ★ Support investments in accessible trails along the **Eagle River** (Shuswap Lake)
- ★ Work with BC Parks and partners to offer **angling experiences for novices** at select locations, e.g., Roche Lake Park, Tunkwa Park, Juniper Beach Park, Riverside Park Kamloops
- ★ Work with BC Parks to enhance interpretation and programming available in select Parks **following the Story Trail model** found in Tsútswecw Park, e.g., **Juniper Beach Park Story Trail**
- ★ Support **Tkemplúps te Secwépemc Tourism Strategic Plan** and its implementation, establishing **Tkemplúps te Secwépemc** as a host community, including enhancements in programming for visitors to Kamloopa Powwow, re-opening of the museum, RV park development, and other initiatives led by the First Nation
- ★ Support development of visitor experience led by the Bonaparte First Nation at the **McAbee Fossil Beds Heritage Site**, including tours and the building of an interpretive centre
- ★ Reinforce the position of **Kamloops as a key anchor** and service hub along the journey by investing in an iconic tourism attraction in alignment with the *Rainforest to Rockies* brand

Touchpoint investment priorities

- ★ Support investment in the promotion of **traditional languages of Indigenous Peoples, traditional place names, and interpretive stories** at locations of cultural significance to First Nations communities along the route, where desired by those communities e.g., **Secwépemc Landmarks project**
- ★ Work together with local communities to explore the opportunity to invest in **co-branded community gateway signage**
- ★ Consider co-branded *Rainforest to Rockies* **arrival signage at Kamloops Airport (YKA)**
- ★ Support investment in **interpretive signage and visitor amenity improvements** at key story locations, Stops of Interest and rest stops, e.g., Lake of the Shuswap Scenic Viewpoint, Shuswap Lake Rest Area, Kamloops Lake Rest Area

HIGHWAY 1 - Sicamous to Alberta Border (TO/KR)

- ★ Work with Parks Canada to add capacity to, and disperse visitors away from key sites with capacity issues, in **Yoho National Park**, e.g., create an accessible, interpretive experience for Burgess Shale at Yoho National Park Visitor Centre
- ★ Support investments in visitor access to the **Columbia Wetlands** from Golden through dedicated guided experiences
- ★ Support efforts to share stories of the **Edelweiss Swiss Village** in Golden and create new visitor experiences
- ★ Work with Parks Canada to add programming, tours, visitor services, and amenities at **Rogers Pass Historic Site** and explore a *Super, Natural British Columbia/Rainforest to Rockies* brand presence within Rogers Pass Interpretive Centre
- ★ Support ongoing work by Parks Canada to manage visitation at summit of **Rogers Pass** and offer safe and accessible experiences where capacity exists
- ★ Work with Parks Canada to support new guided experiences, weather-protected experiences, and citizen-science programming throughout **Glacier and Mount Revelstoke National Parks**. Support experience development at lower elevations to extend the operating season in Mount Revelstoke National Park
- ★ Support enhanced collaboration by **Parks Canada and Revelstoke Railway Museum** to create a strong, accessible railway heritage experience between key historic sites (Spiral Tunnels, Rogers Pass, Craigellachie Last Spike locations)
- ★ Support investments in infrastructure to add capacity for camping and lake access with associated amenities (parking, boat launch, washrooms) on **Lake Revelstoke**

Touchpoint investment priorities

★	Refresh provincial gateway signs at the BC/Alberta border with provincial destination brand (<i>Super, Natural British Columbia</i> and/or <i>Rainforest to Rockies</i> brand)
★	Support investments in visitor education about the Columbia Wetlands through touchpoints in Golden and surrounding areas
★	Support investment in interpretive signage at key locations. Stops of Interest and natural stops along the journey (and ensure appropriate notice of upcoming Stops of Interest), e.g., Columbia Wetlands, Kicking Horse Rest Area, Columbia River Treaty Heritage Project, Rogers Pass, Spiral Tunnels, Three Valley Gap, Craigellachie Last Spike
★	Work with Parks Canada field unit on co-branded interpretative signage, visitor facilities at enhanced western gateway to Mountain Parks, and on use of capacity management systems (Glacier and Mount Revelstoke National Parks)
★	Work with Parks Canada on co-branded interpretative signage at entrance to Yoho National Park Day Use Area
★	Work with Parks Canada on co-branded interpretative signage at entrance to Yoho National Park Day Use Area
★	Invest in visitor amenities (parking, washrooms) at key stops e.g., Burges James Gadsden Park, Kicking Horse Rest Area, Illecillewaet Brake Check

HIGHWAY 1 - Fraser Valley to Hope (VCM)

Priorities for experience development and enhancement

★	Support continued investments in the Experience the Fraser (ETF) network of blueways and greenways connecting Hope to the Salish Sea
★	Support investments related to the pedestrian walkway/rail trestle (lower level of Bill Hartley Bridge near Hope and the Chawathil First Nation)
★	Support continued enhancements to launch points for visitors to learn about the Fraser River, e.g., Fraser River Discovery Centre, Steveston (Richmond), Hope
★	Support continued development of authentic Indigenous cultural experiences e.g., Salishan Place by the River, Totest Aleng: Indigenous Learning House located in Surrey
★	Support efforts to repair, maintain, and connect the Rail Trails network , e.g., repair Othello Tunnels in Hope
★	Support Cheam First Nation in developing new experiences at Bridal Falls Golf Course , e.g., Indigenous cultural ecotourism initiatives
★	Work with BC Parks to continue to enhance visitor experiences, add camping/RV capacity, and add interpretive programming within Parks including high-visitation

Parks, e.g., **Golden Ears Provincial Park**. (Manning Park Resort Sky View RV Campground is a good example of this)

- ★ Support the development of the new **Canadians of South Asian Heritages B.C. Museum** as an anchor attraction, which is currently in the engagement process. The museum would be an anchor attraction in the chosen community. Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley communities and groups have shown interest in having the museum located within these planning areas.

Touchpoint investment priorities

- ★ Support **community-led sharing of traditional languages, traditional place names, and interpretive stories** along Highway 1 by working with Indigenous communities
- ★ Work with local communities to explore opportunities to Invest in **co-branded community gateway signage**
- ★ Invest in **interpretive signage and visitor amenity improvements** at key locations, Stops of Interest and rest stops

HIGHWAY 1 - Hope to Cache Creek (Fraser Canyon) (VCM)

Priorities for experience development and enhancement

- ★ Assist in the outworking of the **Fraser Canyon** Tourism Master Plan to revitalize and re-energize excitement about the Fraser Canyon Route
- ★ Support tourism-related recovery/redevelopment efforts of the **Town of Lytton**
- ★ Encourage continued **relationship building and experience development with Indigenous communities** (Spuzzum First Nation, Lytton First Nation guided tours into Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux Heritage Park, Ashcroft Indian Band, Tuckkwiowhum Heritage Park)
- ★ Support efforts to complete and maintain **Hudson Bay Company Heritage Brigade Trail** connecting Hope to Tulameen
- ★ Invest in infrastructure to support introductory **angling experiences** along the Thompson River (Spences Bridge, Ashcroft locations)

Touchpoint investment priorities

- ★ Invest in **interpretive signage and visitor amenity improvements** at key story locations, Stops of Interest and rest stops, e.g., Alexandra Bridge, Boston Bar, Stein Valley Nlaka'pamux Heritage Park access points, Cariboo Wagon Road points of interest
- ★ Support decolonization efforts and development of additional interactive visitor programming at **Yale Historic Site** (Provincial Heritage Site)

HIGHWAY 3 - Hope to Alberta Border (VCM/TO/KR)

Priorities for experience development and enhancement

- ★ Invest in **wildlife viewing infrastructure**, trails and interpretive signage in key locations, such as Creston Valley, Elizabeth Lake (Cranbrook), Swan Lake Wildlife Refuge (Princeton)
- ★ Complete and maintain segments of the **Trans Canada Trail** network that offer the most potential for motivating visitation and support development and enhancement of related experiences and services
- ★ Continue to expand **multi-community trail networks**, e.g., between Rossland, Warfield, Trail, Montrose and Fruitvale, Columbia River trails from Castlegar to Trail for multi-season use; support development and enhancement of related access to other experiences and services
- ★ Continue to invest in access, visitor management, and infrastructure to facilitate put in, take out access where necessary on all **high-use riverways** such as Elk River, St Mary's River, and Kootenay River
- ★ Create a **Gateway Park to the City of Cranbrook** with connectivity to the heritage downtown in collaboration with the Ktunaxa Nation
- ★ Support continued effort to decolonize exhibits and programs at heritage sites and enhance the visitor experience at **Fort Steele Heritage Town** (National Heritage Site)
- ★ Invest in **access improvements to the Columbia River** between Castlegar and Trail for angling and boating activities
- ★ Support continued experience development, interpretive programming, and infrastructure at **Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre**
- ★ Support continued **Sunshine Valley Tashme Museum** experience development, and infrastructure near Hope

Touchpoint investment priorities

- ★ Continue to expand **EV charging station network** along the length of Highway 3
- ★ Support **community-led sharing of traditional languages, traditional place names and interpretive stories at places of cultural significance** in collaboration with ITBC and First Nations (the Ktunaxa Nation, the Sinixt, the Syilx (Okanagan Nation), Osoyoos Indian Band, Upper and Lower Similkameen Nation), e.g., Spotted Lake outside of Osoyoos, Ktunaxa story of the creation of Mt. Baker from viewing location in downtown Cranbrook, Sinixt story of camas harvesting at Millennium Ponds in Castlegar

- ★ Support continued **interpretive programming related to stories (encounters) in Sunshine Valley**, e.g. history of Tashme Japanese internment and the internment camp, rail history (1916 Hope CNR station relocated here)
- ★ Invest in rest stop improvements at **Summits and Passes along Highway 3**, adding interpretive signage, enhanced amenities (washrooms, picnic tables, viewing areas). Priorities include Nicolum Rest Area, Bridal Lake Rest Area at Kootenay Pass, and Crowsnest Rest Area
- ★ Invest in branded **provincial gateway signage**, starting with gateway signs at the BC/Alberta border on Highway 1, Highway 3, and Highway 93/95
- ★ Invest in co-branded welcome **signage at regional airports**, including West Kootenay Regional Airport, Canadian Rockies International Airport, Trail Regional Airport
- ★ Work with communities to explore opportunities to Invest in **multi-community signage initiatives**, e.g., Creston Valley-Kootenay Lake wayfinding/signage project, Balfour Terminal interpretive kiosk

HIGHWAY 5 - Hope to Alberta Border (TO/KR)

Priorities for experience development and enhancement

- ★ Support Indigenous communities wishing to explore opportunities for cultural sharing and development of authentic **Indigenous cultural experiences** (Simpco First Nation is actively engaged with Blue River, Little Shuswap Lake Band have presence in Sun Peaks Centre, Upper Nicola Band at Hwy 5 Junction to Merritt Gateway 286 presence/interpretation)
- ★ Within the context of the **Lac Du Bois Grasslands** Protected Area Management Plan, work with BC Parks to consider opportunities for ecotourism and commercial recreation
- ★ Work with BC Parks to invest in accessible visitor infrastructure within **Wells Gray Provincial Park** to encourage visitors to explore the park beyond waterfalls; add viewing platforms; accessible trails, guided hikes, interpretive programming, guided canoe/kayak tours
- ★ Work with BC Parks to expand the operating season and to invest in new and enhanced experiences at **Mount Robson Provincial Park** including guided tours, accessible trails, food and beverage options
- ★ Support continued investments in new experiences in **Blue River**, including expanding the trail network and other nature-based experiences
- ★ Support investment in enhanced trails, additional trails, and more parking capacity in the **Valemount** area

Touchpoint investment priorities

- ★ Support investment in **interpretive signage and visitor amenity improvements** at key story locations/Stops of Interest and rest areas along Highway 5 and Highway 16

- ★ Work with BC Parks to deliver more expansive storytelling and interpretation at **Mount Robson Provincial Park** (headwaters of the Fraser River)

HIGHWAY 24 - 93 Mile to Little Fort, Hwy 97S to Hat Creek Ranch (CCC)

Priorities for experience development and enhancement

- ★ Support Indigenous communities wishing to explore opportunities for cultural sharing and providing **authentic Indigenous cultural experiences** (Secwépemc – Canim Lake).
- ★ Invest in development of **accessible trails and enhanced lake access**, e.g., Bridge Lake Ice Caves Trail
- ★ Develop new **guided tours and equipment rental** opportunities for visitors (boats, kayaks, canoes, angling gear) in Green Lake Park, Bridge Lake Park, and Emar Lakes Park. Include consideration of a circular canoe route with short portages

Touchpoint investment priorities

- ★ Invest in **interpretive signage and visitor amenity improvements** at key story locations/Stops of Interest and rest stops, along Highway 24 (#24 Rest Area, MacDonald Rest Area) and Highway 97 (Big Bar Rest Area, Loch Lomond Rest Area)
- ★ Support investments in Indigenous interpretation along Highway 24 to **co-promote new Northern Secwépemc Cultural Centre** at 108 Mile



FERNIE
Photo: Kari Medig

7. GEARING UP FOR DELIVERY

7.1 INTRODUCTION

A key challenge for the *Rainforest to Rockies* Destination Development Strategy is finding the right mechanisms for supporting its delivery and implementation. Because this strategy aims to identify opportunities of high impact to the visitor experience that are readily actionable by tourism-specific champions, it is intended to be mid-to-long-term in nature, spanning five to ten years. We also recognize that the order and shape of the destination priorities contained herein can shift with changing circumstances and, importantly, with funding opportunities available to partners locally, regionally, and provincially, who are keen to support and enable their delivery.

Key themes relating to delivery were identified in the Iconics Destination

Development Framework and remain relevant for the implementation of the *Rainforest to Rockies* Destination Development Strategy. These include the importance of adopting an integrated approach, building on the partnerships already established and creating new alliances, and finding ways to secure the investment that will be needed to support and advance the vision, objectives, and experience development priorities.

7.2 INTEGRATION

The Invest in Iconics Strategy marks a key shift towards a new approach to marketing BC. This reimagined approach emphasizes a dual focus which integrates branding and destination development and endeavours to harmonize marketing efforts with the creation of immersive, memorable experiences for visitors.

There are four levels of integration to consider when advancing destination development priorities for the Iconics:

1 Integration between branding and experience development with the focus of integration being “story.”

Integration will be achieved through a more focused storytelling approach, shining a light on what makes the places and communities along *Rainforest to Rockies* distinctive and special, and, through experience development, globally compelling destinations to visit.

2 Integration between the regional and planning area destination development strategies being taken forward and the opportunities presented by *Rainforest to Rockies* to elevate experience development opportunities.

In terms of destination development planning, elevating experience development opportunities presented by *Rainforest to Rockies* will continue to support and, where necessary, accelerate those experience development and enhancement activities already being taken forward by partners through their destination development strategies, enabling communities along the route to reap the benefits of aligning with *Rainforest to Rockies*.

3 Integration of Invest in Iconics Strategy priorities by Destination BC at program level.

As the provincial lead behind the Invest in Iconics Strategy, **Destination BC (DBC)** has already begun aligning its existing programs and resources to advance the long-term vision and potential of the Invest in Iconics Strategy across all areas of the organization for the benefit of industry and the province as a whole.

A number of programs were piloted in 2023 to support the enhancement of the visitor experience. For example, a small grants program was initiated to support the Visitor Services Network in enhancing the visitor experience at Visitor Centres and in their communities, focusing on experiences, encounters, and touchpoints. Another initiative was an Iconics-focused "Spark" business incubator program, piloted in partnership with Tourism Innovation Lab, with the aim of finding, advancing, and supporting tourism ideas that will result in new experiences, motivating international travellers to spend more time along the route and engage more meaningfully with the places they visit.

Other programs that offer opportunities for further integration, alignment, and support for the Iconics include the Co-op Marketing Partnerships Program and future experience development programs. There have also been signage recommendations identified in the Iconics Signage Opportunity Strategy, which is looking to bring the family of brands to life in destination through the proposition of a refreshed and cohesive branded roadside signage system.

4 Integration across and between the core partners in supporting the implementation of *Rainforest to Rockies* within their respective mandates:

- The **Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport (TACS)** is focused on creating healthy, inclusive, and resilient communities in BC through tourism-related programs, policies, and investments that support the sustainable growth of the tourism sector. To support the creation of Iconic, inspirational routes and places that will strengthen travel appeal in all regions of BC, TACS is committed to raising awareness of the needs of the visitor economy across government, as well as working to ensure policy enables destination development throughout BC. TACS will mobilize support for provincial destination development priorities that emerge through the Iconics Destination Development Strategies through cross-government engagement and collaboration.
- **Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC)** prioritizes First Nations' decision-making and Indigenous inclusion within the Invest in Iconics Strategy. Firstly, this ensures that there is no prejudice against First Nations' interests, safeguarding Title and Rights, and respecting self-government agreements. The team is dedicated to providing support through community engagement with Indigenous groups and organizations. Additionally, this focuses on creating human and economic capacity. The Indigenous Tourism Training Initiative, comprising three programs, offers training and educational opportunities for ITBC stakeholders. ITBC also extends further assistance through the Capacity Building and Resiliency Program, including mentorship and funding opportunities.
- **Regional Destination Management Organizations (RDMOs)** work to develop, support, and sustain the tourism sector across their respective regional planning areas. The RDMOs will continue to champion the strategy and work collaboratively with ITBC, Destination BC, and a range of regional and local partners to carefully and respectfully steward the development of tourism in ways that will realize benefits for communities along *Rainforest to Rockies*.

7.3 PARTNERSHIP

Working collaboratively and in partnership to deliver on the ambition for tourism for *Rainforest to Rockies* is essential. Building on longstanding and more recent relationships established during the strategy preparation phase, it is critical to our success, as we head into the delivery and implementation phase, to continue to think “beyond local,” nurture new relationships, involve the right partners with the needed expertise or authority at the right time, and continue to be flexible.

Key partnerships will include:

- Working closer with **Parks Canada and the Ministry of Environment and Parks (ENV)** to progress experience development priorities, visitor management initiatives, signage, and other touchpoint enhancements.
- Working with the **Ministry of Transportation and Transit (TT) and the Ministry of Infrastructure (INF)** to progress the Iconics Signage Opportunity Strategy that is looking to advance opportunities to bring the Iconic brands to life in destination through the proposition of a refreshed and cohesive branded roadside signage system, as well as enhancements at key rest stops.
- Working with the **Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation (JEDI) Regional Economic Operations branch** to champion innovation, and support economic development and tourism investment attraction within the context of *Rainforest to Rockies*.
- Leveraging Destination BC’s partnership with the **British Columbia Economic Development Association (BCEDA)** to reach and engage more of the economic development community and increase awareness of experience development investment opportunities.
- Leveraging Destination BC’s partnership with the **Local Government Leadership Academy (LGLA)** to continue raising awareness about the value of tourism and the opportunities for local governments to participate in tourism and align their investments with the larger provincial efforts.

It is envisaged that each core partner will be responsible for strengthening certain partnerships at the right level at the right time. For example, the RDMOs partnering at a district level with BC Parks, MOTI, JEDI, and local governments to progress locally significant aspects of the experience development and touchpoint enhancement priorities identified in this strategy.

- **Local tourism partners** such as CDMOs, local governments, tourism businesses, business associations, Visitor Centres (VCs) and not-for-profit groups, have a critical role to play in the success of the tourism economy provincially. Partners located along the route can use this strategy to inform their own planning and create alignment with the broader vision. They can also use this strategy to elevate and gather support for those local projects positioned as key priorities in the provincial context, in addition to providing benefits locally and supporting local aspirations.

The RDMOs and ITBC are key points of contact for local tourism partners and can provide guidance on how to align with strategic priorities for the Iconics, support in connecting with other potential project partners, access information on best practices or case studies in BC and globally, help develop project plans and identify funding opportunities, in addition to delivering a wide array of programs and resources that local tourism organizations and businesses can access.



7.4 INVESTMENT

Destination Canada's Tourism Corridor Strategy Program aims to accelerate the intentional development of tourism corridors or clusters of tourism assets across Canada. [*Sustainable Journeys from Prairies to Pacific Corridor*](#) along Highway 3 (from Hope to Lethbridge) is one of the first three corridors supported through this program. This program will leverage existing destination development

strategies in BC and Alberta and will focus on attracting investment to enable these strategies to come to fruition. As inter-provincial collaboration is a key consideration, this will enable synergies and a scale of intervention to be achieved that the individual provinces cannot advance on their own.

The Destination Development program in BC has seen a lot of success supporting new public

investments, however there is a tremendous opportunity in BC to uncover the potential of tourism as a priority sector for attracting private investment. Through partnerships, Destination BC will seek to find ways to support communities (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) along the route to

increase their awareness about tourism investment readiness factors, understand the steps needed to increase the attractiveness of communities to tourism investors and promote tourism investment opportunities to regional, provincial, national, and international investors.

8. APPENDICES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

- DBC: Destination BC
- ITBC: Indigenous Tourism BC
- RDMO: Regional Destination Management Organization
- CDMO: City Destination Management Organization
- CASL: Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation
- FOIPPA: Freedom of Information Policy (government)
- IPACs: Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas
- SUP: Stand Up Paddle Board
- NWR: Nechako Watershed Roundtable
- BCEDA: British Columbia Economic Development Association
- VC: Visitor Centres

Regional Tourism Association Acronyms

- VCM: Vancouver, Coast & Mountains
- 4TVI: Tourism Vancouver Island
- TOTA/TO: Thompson Okanagan
- KR/KRT: Kootenay Rockies Tourism
- CCC/CCCTA: Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism
- NBC /NBCTA: Northern British Columbia Tourism

Government of BC Ministry Acronyms

- TACS: Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture & Sport
- TT: Ministry of Transportation and Transit
- MIRR: Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
- ENV: Ministry of the Environment
- JEDI: Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation
- LGLA: Local Government Leadership Academy



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