Grant Thornton

Fort St. James

2021 – 2026 Tourism Strategy
June 15, 2021

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June 15, 2021

Brooke Eschuk
Economic Development Officer
District of Fort St. James
477 Stuart Drive West
Fort St. James BC V0I 1P0

Via Email: beschuk@fortstjames.ca

Dear Ms. Eschuk:

Re: Fort St. James Tourism Strategy and Implementation Plan (2021 – 2026)

In accordance with the terms of our engagement, we have completed the *Fort St. James Tourism Strategy and Implementation Plan (2021 – 2026)*. We are pleased to provide you with the attached report.

We thank you and the Tourism Committee for your co-operation and assistance throughout the project. We wish you all the best as you move forward to further develop tourism in the Fort St. James area.

Yours sincerely,

Grant Thornton LLP

Shane Troyer

Partner, Advisory Services

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Foreword

This Tourism Strategy is based on factual knowledge gathered from reports and studies as well as input from tourism stakeholders. It is subject to change based on additional participant review and input. The views expressed, and information contained within, do not necessarily represent or reflect those of District of Fort St. James, or any one participant involved in the process.

Acknowledgements

The District of Fort St. James and the project facilitation team wish to thank the participants who contributed throughout the information gathering process by attending the sessions, participating in interviews, and forwarding relevant documents that provided the background for this Tourism Strategy.

In particular, the contribution of the Fort St. James Tourism Committee and their guests was invaluable. These individuals are listed below.

Jennifer Howell, Councillor – Member

Vincent Prince – Member

Valerie Crowley – Member

Jo Ann Alexander – Member

Terry Weibe – Member

Jana Gainor – Member

Riley Willick – Member

Brad McRobert – Member

Bob Grill – Committee Chair

Brooke Eschuk -- District of Fort St. James Economic Development Officer – Committee Clerk

Reg Mueller -- CEO Nak'azdli Whut'en Development Corporation (Guest)

Sharon Bird – Elder (Guest)

Executive Summary

The District of Fort St. James engaged Grant Thornton LLP to facilitate the development of a five-year Tourism Strategy and Implementation Plan. The planning process took place from January to June 2021 and involved extensive input from the Fort St. James Tourism Committee and tourism industry members. This Executive Summary provides highlights from the Tourism Strategy.

Destination overview

Fort St. James is a district municipality located within the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako in Northwestern BC. The area is in the early stages of development as a tourism destination. Its tourism assets reflect:

- A strong nature and adventure theme, complemented by heritage;
- Many supporting recreational clubs; and,
- Anchor assets upon which experiences can be further developed, including:
    - Fort St. James National Historic Site,
    - Cottonwood Park, Marina and Campground, and,
    - Murray Ridge Ski Area.

While there are accommodation properties and restaurants available, there is a need to enhance and increase following types of facilities and businesses over time, to enable the area to further develop and mature as a destination:

- Accommodation - additional types and quality levels;
- Additional shops/retail;
- Outdoor equipment rental; and,
- Guided activities.

The area has potential to further develop spring/summer/fall experiences, in addition to winter experiences focusing on recent upgrades to Murray Ridge Ski Area. Over time, and as the destination matures, Fort St. James will likely offer more market-ready and export-ready businesses and experiences. A key challenge with adding the above types of facilities and services is the need for a strong business case to justify the required investment, in addition to the presence of willing entrepreneurs.

Market overview

The top markets for Fort St. James (pre-COVID) were BC and Europe. Most visitors typically stay in the Fort St. James area for two or fewer nights. The primary trip motivators are the Fort. St. James National Historic Site and nature, adventure and recreation. Most visitation occurs in the summer months.

Key market opportunities include:

- Providing facilities, experiences and services that will encourage visitors to stay longer;
- Marketing to the regional and BC markets, particularly in the 2021 – 2022 period, given COVID-19 travel restrictions; and,
- Further developing and marketing winter experiences, centred around the Murray Ridge Ski Area, focusing on the regional market.

Destination vision

The Fort St. James Tourism Committee crafted the following long-term vision for Fort St. James as a tourism destination.

FORT ST. JAMES DESTINATION VISION

The unceded territory of the Nak'azdli Whut'en is home to Fort St. James, a four-season tourism destination offering wilderness and cultural experiences in a superb setting of lakes, mountains and trails.

We invite you to explore our heritage, wild backcountry and rich and vibrant Indigenous culture. Relax, camp or golf on the shores of Stuart Lake, climb or hike Mt. Pope, ski Murray Ridge, place your bets at the chicken races, meet local artists at our Farmers' Market and take in the welcoming atmosphere of our community. Fort St. James will beckon you to return time and time again –new and unexpected experiences await!

Goals and objectives

The goals and objectives designed to achieve the long-term vision are presented below. Specific projects to achieve the objectives are contained in the Tourism Strategy.

A. MARKETING AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT	
Goal:	Fort St. James enhances its ability to attract target markets and increase length-of-stay and repeat visitation.
Objectives:	1. Increase the number of visitors from the touring market (Hwy 16) (spring/summer/fall).
	2. Increase the length-of-stay and repeat visitation of destination visitors (spring/summer/fall).
	3. Increase visitation from the regional market (year-round) (reciprocal passes).

B. PRODUCT AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT	
Goal:	Fort St. James offers and delivers experiences that appeal to target markets (helping enhance visitor satisfaction, increase visitation, increase length-of-stay and increase repeat visitation).
Objectives:	1. Develop activities/experiences that help increase length-of-stay and repeat visitation of visitors to Fort St. James Historic Site/destination visitors.
	2. Further develop winter tourism experiences that appeal to regional markets.
	3. Further develop nature-based, learning and cultural tourism experiences.

B. PRODUCT AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT	
	4. If of interest to First Nations, and led by First Nations, further develop Indigenous tourism facilities, attractions and cultural experiences.

C. INFRASTRUCTURE AND CIVIC AMENITIES	
Goal:	Fort St. James is a welcoming community with an attractive downtown core that appeals to residents and visitors.
Objectives:	1. Improve the quality and appearance of the downtown core.
	2. Improve the quantity and appearance of signage (coordinate this with signage noted under Experience Development and Marketing).

D. LEADERSHIP, COLLABORTATION AND ORGANIZATION	
Goal:	Leadership, collaboration and organization are provided to support the development and marketing of Fort St. James as a tourism destination within the broader Regional District of Bulkley Nechako.
Objectives:	1. Continue to provide tourism leadership and coordination through the Tourism Committee, focusing on implementation of the Five-year Tourism Strategy.
	2. Collaborate with other communities within the Regional District and Northern BC Tourism Association to develop and market regional tourism experiences. Discuss project ideas and potential funding with the Regional District.
	3. If of interest to First Nations, increase dialogue and collaboration with Indigenous communities regarding tourism development and marketing.

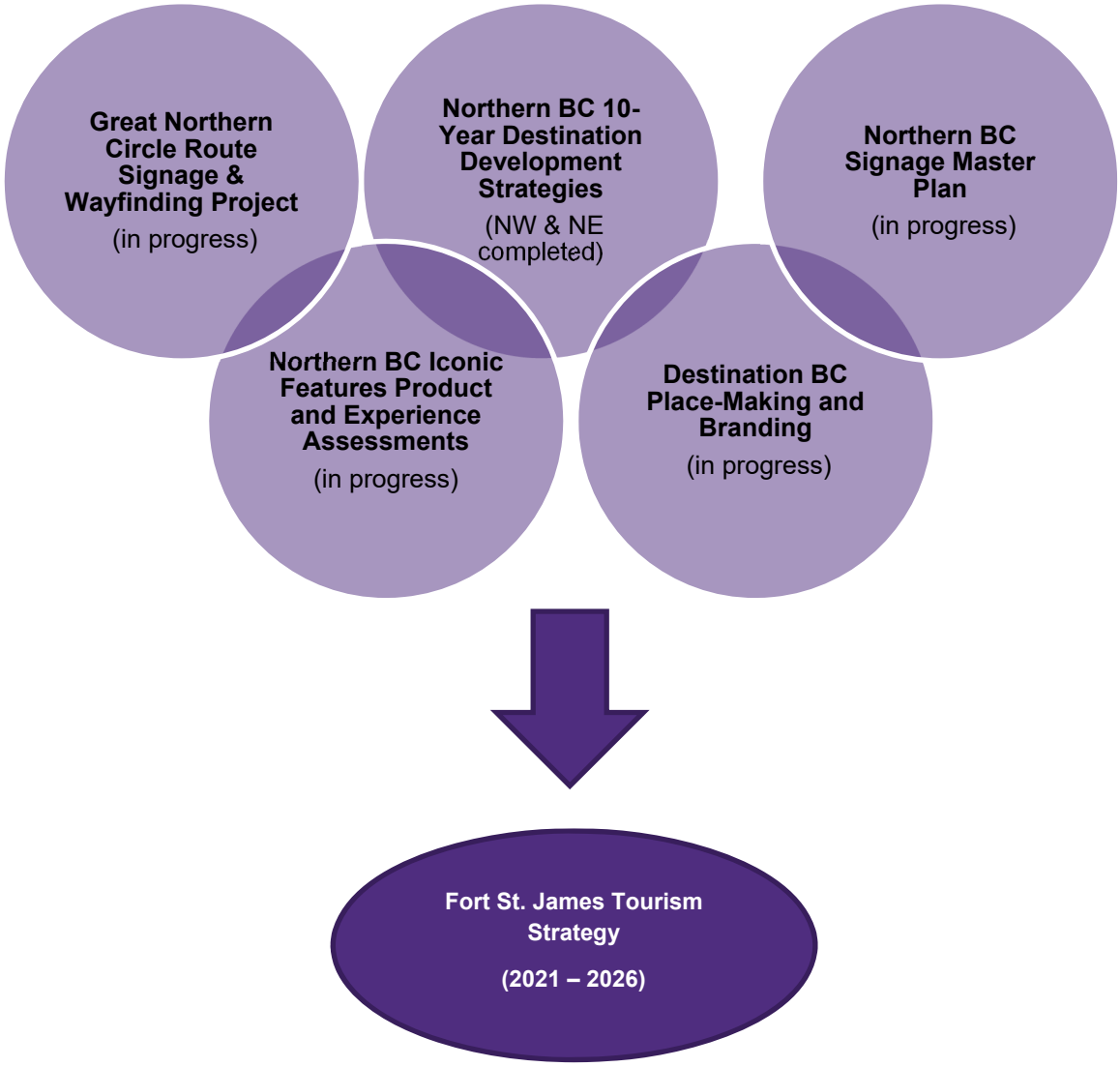
E. HUMAN AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT	
Goal:	Fort St. James has a capable, motivated tourism workforce and entrepreneurial base to support tourism growth.
Objectives:	1. Increase knowledge about workforce and skills training opportunities related to the tourism industry.
	2. Increase knowledge about entrepreneurial development and capacity-building opportunities for existing and aspiring business owners.

1. Introduction

The District of Fort St. James engaged Grant Thornton LLP ("Grant Thornton") to facilitate the development of a five-year Tourism Strategy and Implementation Plan (the "Strategy"). The project was conducted from January to June 2021.

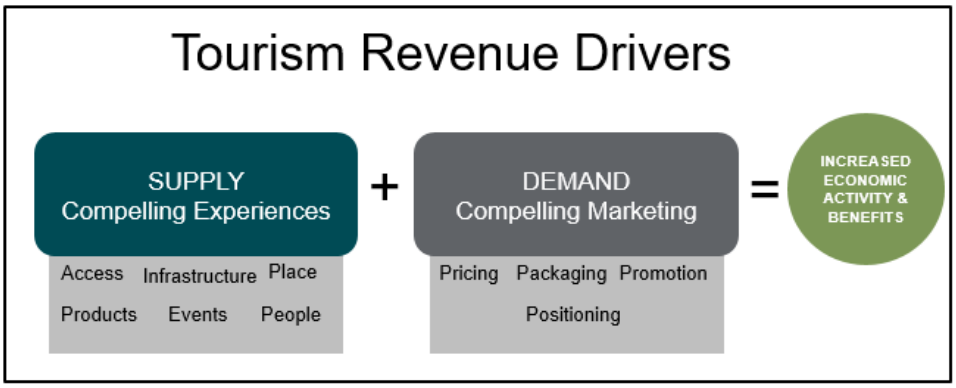
Purpose

Given economic challenges related to downturns in the resource sector, the District of Fort St. James is motivated to diversify its economy, which includes building on its natural assets to further develop and market tourism. Fort St. James developed a community tourism plan several years ago. However, in order to capitalize on new opportunities, and leverage recent and current tourism planning initiatives in BC, Fort St. James will benefit from developing a new tourism strategy. The broader planning context for the Fort St. James Tourism Strategy is illustrated below.



Strategy Development

Tourism has two primary revenue drivers – supply and demand. Compelling marketing efforts strive to create demand for a destination and create interest for people to want to visit. Destination development focuses on the supply side of tourism by providing compelling experiences, quality infrastructure and remarkable service to entice repeat visitation and recommendations. The development of a comprehensive Tourism Strategy focuses on both supply (experience development) and demand (marketing).

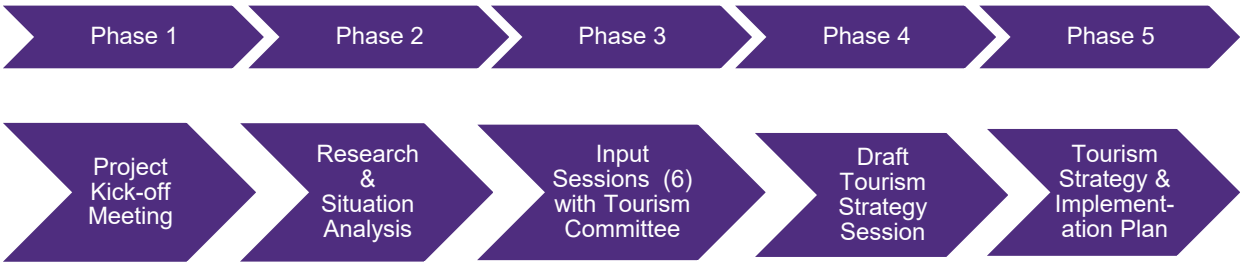


The benefits of a tourism strategy development process include:

- Creation of a clear 'road-map' for the destination;
- Leveraging the strength of the destination;
- Identifying opportunities and challenges;
- Establishing a joint vision that will direct development and marketing activity;
- Establishing priorities to grow the visitor economy; and,
- Establishing the basis for joint action and implementation.

The Process

Grant Thornton was unable to conduct an on-the-ground destination assessment and in-person workshops due to COVID-19 Pandemic travel restrictions. The key method for obtaining input from stakeholders was through six remote workshop sessions, in addition to interviews. The process used to develop the Strategy included five phases.



The structure of the Strategy is illustrated below.

Destination Overview	• Location and physical attributes • Tourism products, services and faciities • Anchor experiences and products
Market Overview	• Typical visitor markets (pre-Pandemic) • Market origin • Travel patterns
Strengths, Opportunities & Challenges	• Key strengths, challenges and opportuntieis related to tourism development and marketing
Future Direction *The Strategy*	• Destination vision (ideal future state) • Goals to achieve the vision • Objectives and projects to achieve the goals
Implementation Plan	• Suggested steps to guide implementation • Roles and timelines
Appendix *Research and Situation Analysis*	• Supporting research

2. Destination Overview

Fort St. James is district municipality located within the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako ("RDBN") in Northwestern BC. An overview of Northwestern BC is provided below, followed by a description of Fort St. James as a tourism destination.

Location and Access within Northwestern BC

Destination BC recently completed a 10-Year Destination Development Strategy for Northwestern BC (2020), one of 20 strategies completed in BC as part of a comprehensive destination development initiative for the province. The following description of Northwestern BC is based on the Destination Development work completed in 2020.

The main travel corridors in Northwestern BC include:

- The east-west corridor: Highway 16 (or the Yellowhead Highway) which extends from the Alberta border to the Pacific Ocean; and,
- The north-south travel corridor: Highway 37 (or the Stewart-Cassiar Highway) which extends from Kitimat in the south to the Yukon border in the north.

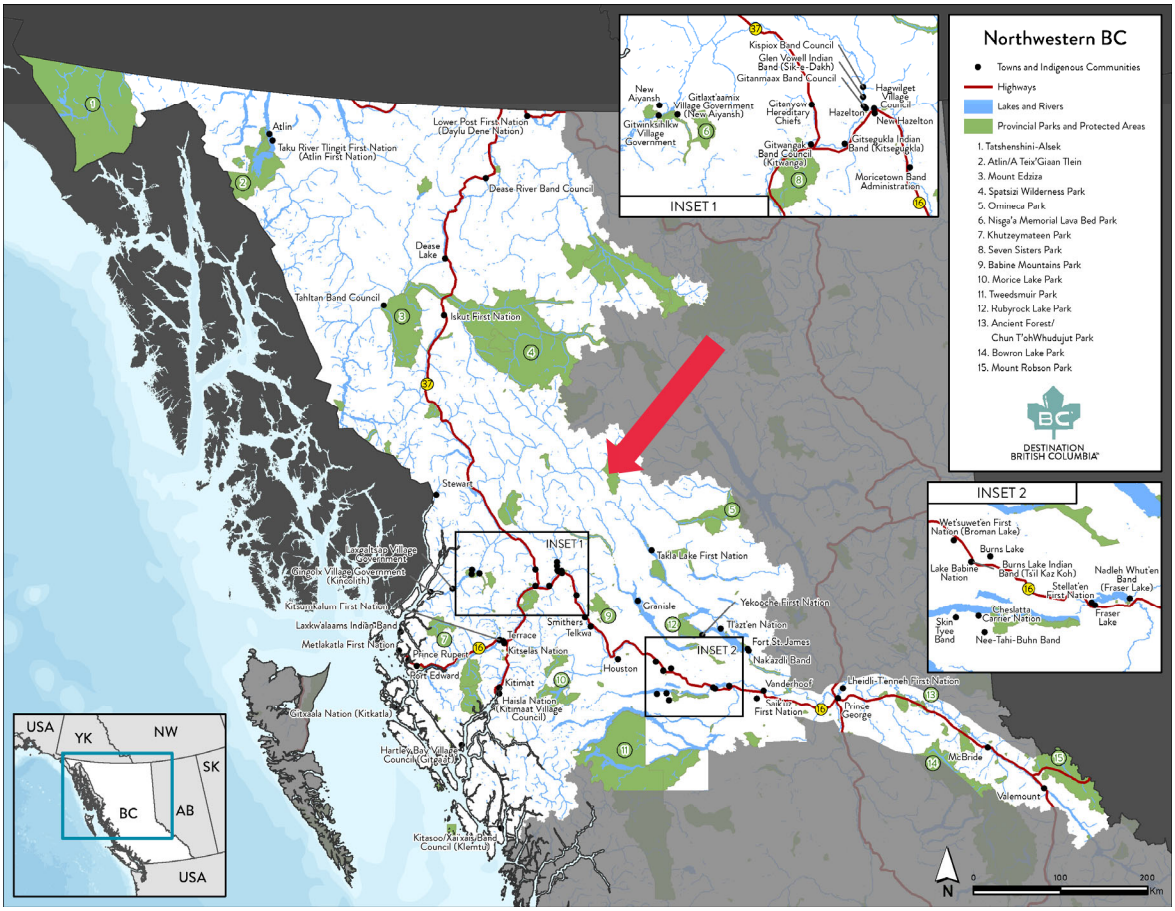
Northwestern BC is vast, spanning from:

- From Mount Robson and Valemount in the east;
- To Prince Rupert and Stewart in the west;
- From southern points:
    - North Tweedsmuir Park, Kitlope Heritage Conservancy,
    - Prince George, McBride and Valemount; and,
- To northern points/borders:
    - Yukon border, Lower Post, Atlin,
    - Tatshenshini-Alsek Provincial Wilderness Park.

Fort St. James is located in the southern portion of Northwestern BC, on the south-eastern shore of Stuart Lake at the northern terminus of Highway 27, which connects to Highway 16 at Vanderhoof to the south (see map on following page). The drive from Highway 16 to Fort St. James takes approximately 45 minutes.

Northwestern BC offers outstanding scenery, spectacular natural and cultural resources and a wide range of recreational opportunities. The area's exceptional and diverse natural attributes (e.g., wildlife, mountain ranges, valleys, rivers and lakes) provide opportunities for a range of outdoor and adventure activities, including fishing, wildlife viewing, hunting, rock climbing, ice climbing, hiking, mountain biking, trail riding, cross-country skiing and downhill skiing and aquatic activities (e.g., kayaking, canoeing, rafting). Most of these experiences are self-guided at this time, as there are only a few formal tourism guiding businesses in the region.

Location of Fort St. James within Northwestern BC



Source: Northwestern BC 10-Year Destination Development Strategy, Destination BC, 2020.

Location of Fort St. James at the Northern Terminus of Highway 27

Source: District of Fort St. James

Iconic Features

During the Northwestern BC Destination Development process, participants identified iconic features around which a strong common identify for Northwestern BC and tourism experiences can be developed. These features are unique to the planning area. Workshop participants identified top iconic features for each of six sub-planning areas in the Northwest, including Sub-planning Area 2 where Fort St. James is located.

The top iconic features for Sub-planning Area 2 are shown below. Of relevance to the Fort St. James area are Stuart Lake and Fort St. James National Historic Site (see #1 and #2 below). Destination BC and the Northern BC Tourism Association, together with regional districts, have commenced further planning related to the top iconic features, which may tie in well with future tourism development in the Fort St. James area.

SUB-PLANNING AREA 2: Prince George to Telkwa	Ranking
Lakes District (Babine, Takla, Fraser, Francois, Stuart, Ootsa)	1
Fort St. James National Historic Site	2
Burns Lake Mountain Bike Park	3
Hiking Trails	4
North Tweedsmuir Park	5
Nation Lakes Canoe Route	6
Telegraph Wilderness Trail	7

Fort St. James Destination Overview

Fort St. James is a small community, with a population of 1,598 (2016 Census). The neighboring First Nation of Nak'azdli Whut'en has 705 people living in the Indigenous community, and an additional 1,978 living elsewhere (2019 data).

As a tourism destination, Fort St. James is characterized by uncrowded nature (lakes, trails, mountains, parks) and associated adventure and recreational activities, in addition to heritage and cultural attractions and events. Examples of prominent tourism features and attractions are as follows.

Fort St. James Tourism Asset Highlights	
Fort St. James National Historic Site of Canada	Restored Hudson's Bay Company outpost on Stuart Lake
Ripples of the Past Guided Tour	Award-winning self-guided walking tour that winds through Fort St. James starting at the historic site to the Russ Baker Memorial
Music on the Mountain Festival	Three-day annual music and arts festival with artists from BC, Canada and around the world
Murray Ridge Ski Area	30 downhill skiing trails and 20 kilometres of cross-country ski trails, open from December through March (note that infrastructure improvements are currently underway)

Fort St. James Tourism Asset Highlights	
Stuart Lake Golf Club	Nine-hole course and club house on the shores of Stuart Lake
World Class Chicken Races	Hosted at the Fort St. James National Historic Site
Stuart Lake	Scenically beautiful lake; provides excellent launching point for the 300-kilometre long chain of lakes connecting Stuart with the Trembleur and Takla Lakes
Nechako White Sturgeon	Stuart Lake is home to one of Canada's most incredible and endangered species of fish, the Nechako White Sturgeon
Cottonwood Park	Flagship park on the lakeshore Home of many of the area's special events, including Canada Day and the Caledonia Classic Dog Sled Race

More detailed information regarding Fort St. James' facilities, services and natural and built attractions are profiled below.

Fixed-Roof Accommodation

The Fort St. James area currently offers several fixed-roof accommodation properties, which are listed below. These include smaller lodges, cabins, a bed and breakfast located in historic buildings at Fort St. James Historic Site, and two larger properties. The larger properties tend to primarily serve work crews and contractors, rather than the leisure market.

ACCOMMODATION	Type	# Units	Markets
Meadowview Lodge	Lodge	2	Long-term
New Caledonia Motel	Motel	25	Contractors; tree planters, some leisure
View Hotel & Bistro	Hotel	40	Contractors; some leisure
Stuart Lodge	Cabins	3	Tourists/leisure
Pikta Bay	RV, Marina and cabins		Tourists/leisure
Historic Park B & B	Historic buildings	2	Tourists/leisure

Specialized Camps

Three specialized camps operate in the area. These are available for a variety of purposes, including rental for events, weddings, conferences and, in the case of the Cinnabar Research Station, educational and research events.

SPECIALIZED CAMPS	
Camp Morice	Many cabins - for kids; may rent for conferences, events and weddings
Echo Lake Bible Camp	Will rent to conference groups or weddings
Cinnabar Research Station	For educational institution groups/professional organization; research focus; can accommodate 120; cabins, boat launch

Food and Beverage

Fort St. James offers several food and beverage options, ranging from fast food, to sit-down dining, to lounge/bar service, to take out. Many of these operations are open year-round, which is positive when considering opportunities for year-round tourism and the need for food and beverage services.

FOOD & BEVERAGE	Type	Season
Little Jimmy Fry's Ice Cream	Fast Food	Spring/Summer/Fall
Hops Cold Beer & Wine Store	Retail - Liquor	Year round
North Arm Pub Ltd	Pub	Year round
BC Liquor Stores	Retail - Liquor	Year round
Mariano's Pizza	Fast Food	Year round
Miguel's Pizza	Fast Food	Year round
Meado's Coffee Cabin	Coffee and Baking	Year round
St. James Restaurant	Chinese &Western	Year round
Subway Cafe	Fast Food	Year round
The View Bistro & Lounge	Restaurant closed at this time	Year round
King's Restaurant	Chinese and Western	Year round
Suspenders	Store, cold beer, food - takeout	Year round
Stuart Lake Golf Club restaurant	Restaurant and bar	Spring/Summer/Fall
Murray Ridge Ski Area	Restaurant and lounge	Ski Season
Petro and Nahounli - Gas Station	Take out	Year round
Sana,aih Market	Take out deli and sit down	Year round
Home Stretch Diner	Restaurant at Historic Site (accepts Chicken Bucks)	May - Labour Day
Meadows Café	Take out (great coffee and baked goods)	Year round
Farmers' Market	Take out (great butter chicken)	Fridays in summer

Recreation

The following clubs and associations speak to the importance of organized sports and outdoor recreation in the Fort St. James area. The existence of organized sports presents opportunities to grow sport tourism and to attract visitors for competitions. The existence of outdoor recreation clubs that support summer and winter recreation presents opportunities for visitors to participate in activities year-round.

CLUBS/ASSOCIATIONS - Organized Sports and Recreation
Fort St. James Ladies Hockey
Apollo Rec Hockey
Old Timers Hockey
Stuart Skating Club
Fort St. James Ball Association
Fort St. James Curling Club
Fort St. James Falcons Speed Skating Club
Fort St. James Stars Minor Hockey Association
Fort St. James Youth Soccer Association

CLUBS/ASSOCIATIONS - Organized Sports and Recreation
Dog Sled Club
Stuart Lake Golf Club
Murray Ridge Nordic Ski Club
Fort St. James Snowmobile Club
Fort St. James Sled Dog Association
Fort St. James 4H Club
Ripin' The North Bike Club
Sailing Club

The recreation facilities shown in the table below provide further support for potential sport tourism and recreational tourism, in addition to arts and cultural events.

RECREATION FACILITIES
Curling Rink
Fort Forum Arena
Murray Ridge Ski Area (December to March)
Stuart Lake Golf Course
Camp Morice
The Lake House (at Historic Park)
Pope Mountain Arts
Fort St. James Community Centre
KDL Bike Park
Kwah Hall
Gymnasium, kitchen, stage
Dinners and take-out food
Take-out food
Seniors Centre
Recreation for seniors
Hot lunches offered on Fridays

Campgrounds and Parks

The area has several parks, as shown below, some of which offer camping.

CAMPGROUNDS & PARKS	Type	Campsites (Y/N)
Cottonwood Park, Marina and Campground	Municipal	Y (open spring - Sep)
Paarens Beach Provincial Park	Provincial	Y (open spring - Sep)
Sowchea Bay Provincial Park	Provincial	Y (open spring - Sep)
Stuart River Campgrounds Ltd./Trailer Park	Private	Trailers year round
Mount Pope Provincial Park	Provincial	N
Stuart River Provincial Park	Provincial	N
Pitka Bay Resort & Marina	Private	Y (motel & camping)
Nak'azdl Lease Lots	Nak'azdli Whut'en	Y
Historic Park	Parks Canada	Y

URBAN PARKS
Spirit Square
Goodwin Park - including tennis courts and playground (ages 2-5)
Sony Hamper Memorial Park - ball parks
Rotary Kiddie Park
Cottonwood Park - has a kids' park
Basketball court (pouring pad this year)
Sand volleyball
Ernie Sam Memorial Arena (outdoor skating rink)
Nak'azdl Skate Park

Recreation Areas/Features

Outdoor adventure and recreation are foundational for tourism in the area. Key lakes, rivers, recreation areas and trails that support outdoor adventure and recreation are listed below.

LAKES AND RIVERS CONDUCIVE TO WATER SPORTS
Stuart Lake
Stuart River
Cripple Lake
Pinchi Lake
Tezzeron Lake
Nations Lakes

RECREATION AREAS AND TRAILS
Mount Pope Rock Climbing Area (on old Mount Pope Trail)
Nations Lakes Canoe Route
Mount Pope Hike
Snowmobile and ATV Trails Map
Mount Pope Mountain Biking Trails
Mcleod Lake Hike and Camping Trip
Nyan'whati "The Way across"

Hidden Gems

The tourism literature for Fort St. James draws attention to the following "hidden gems".

HIDDEN GEMS / INSTAGRAM-WORTHY
Paarens Beach
The Top of Mount Pope
Mount Dickinson Trail
Indigenous Pictograph and Simon Frasers' Signature
Ripples of the Past interactive trail through Fort St. James

Built Attractions and Historic Sites

The area offers several built attractions and historic sites. The Fort St. James National Historic Site was ranked as a top "Iconic Feature" for Northwestern BC during the 10-Year Destination Planning process and is considered one of the area's primary anchor attractions.

BUILT ATTRACTIONS & HISTORIC SITES	Comments
Fort St. James National Historic Site of Canada	Anchor Attraction
Fort St. James Farmers' Market	Open Fridays in summer
Plaque - for Chief Kw'eh (at the Historic Site)	Person of National Historic significance
Our Lady of Good Hope (church)	Oldest Catholic church in BC
Father Morice's Printing Press Shop	Beside church
Russ Baker Memorial	On the scenic drive and Ripples of Past walk

Events

Festivals and events can be important draws for regional visitors, and, in some cases, longer-haul visitors. Annual festivals and events are hosted year-round, as shown in the following table.

EVENT	MONTH
Caledonia Classic Dog Sled Races and Winterfest, Snowmobile Poker Ride, Ladies Curling Bonspiel	January/February
Caledonia Classic Dog Sled Races and Winterfest, Slush Cup and Bathtub Races at Murray Ridge	February/March
Sunday teas, chicken races and demonstrations all summer at the National Historic Site	June/July/August
Salmon cook-off and Caledonia Days at National Historic Site, Aboriginal Day Celebrations – National Historic, ATV Poker Ride	June
Binche Fishing Derby (Stuart Lake), Canada Day Celebration	July
Night Market, Music on the Mountain Music Festival, ATV Poker Ride	August
Terry Fox Run, Historic site open house and BBQ	September
Stuart Lake Hospital Auxiliary Turkey Dart Shoot, Nakazdli Halloween Dance and District Pumpkin Walk, Mt. Pope Annual Adventure Run,	October
Remembrance Day Ceremony, Christmas Craft Fair, Santa Claus Parade/Moonlight Madness downtown shopping event, Festival of Trees	November
Heritage Christmas at Historic Park	December
Chicken Races at Historic Park	May - Labour Day
Ghost Walk at Historic Park	May - Labour Day

Conclusions

When reviewing tourism businesses for the purposes of tourism planning, it is important to distinguish if they are "visitor-ready", "market-ready" and/or "export-ready", as per the definitions below.

Classification	Brief Description
Visitor-ready	Refers to a business which has their licenses, permits and insurance in place to operate legally.
Market-ready	Refers to a business that markets to potential visitors; communicates with potential visitors year-round and is able to accept reservations.
Export-ready	Refers to a business that markets to and through travel trade distribution channels, understands commission or net rate pricing, agrees to trade bookings and a cancellation policy.

Based on the research conducted, Fort St. James has four market-ready businesses and one export-ready business, as shown below.

Market-Ready and Export-ready Businesses and Experiences

Classification	Market Ready Business/Experience
Market-ready	Murray Ridge Ski Area
Market-ready	Rivers Edge B&B
Market-ready	Stuart Lake Golf Club
Market-ready	The View Hotel
Export-ready	Fort St. James National Historic Site

Fort St. James is relatively undeveloped as a tourism destination. Its tourism assets reflect:

- A strong nature and adventure theme, complemented by heritage;
- Many supporting clubs demonstrating strong local interest; and,
- Anchor assets upon which experiences can be further developed, including:
    - Fort St. James National Historic Site,
    - Cottonwood Park, Marina and Campground,
    - Murray Ridge Ski Area.

While there are accommodation properties and restaurants available, there is a need to enhance and increase following types of facilities and businesses over time, to enable the area to further develop and mature as a destination:

- Accommodation - additional types and quality levels;
- Additional shops/retail;
- Outdoor equipment rental; and,
- Guided activities.

The area has potential to further develop spring/summer/fall experiences, in addition to winter experiences focusing on recent upgrades to Murray Ridge Ski Area. Over time, and as the destination matures, Fort St. James will likely offer more market-ready and export-ready businesses and experiences. A key challenge with adding the above types of facilities and services is the need for a strong business case to justify the investments, in addition to the presence of willing entrepreneurs.

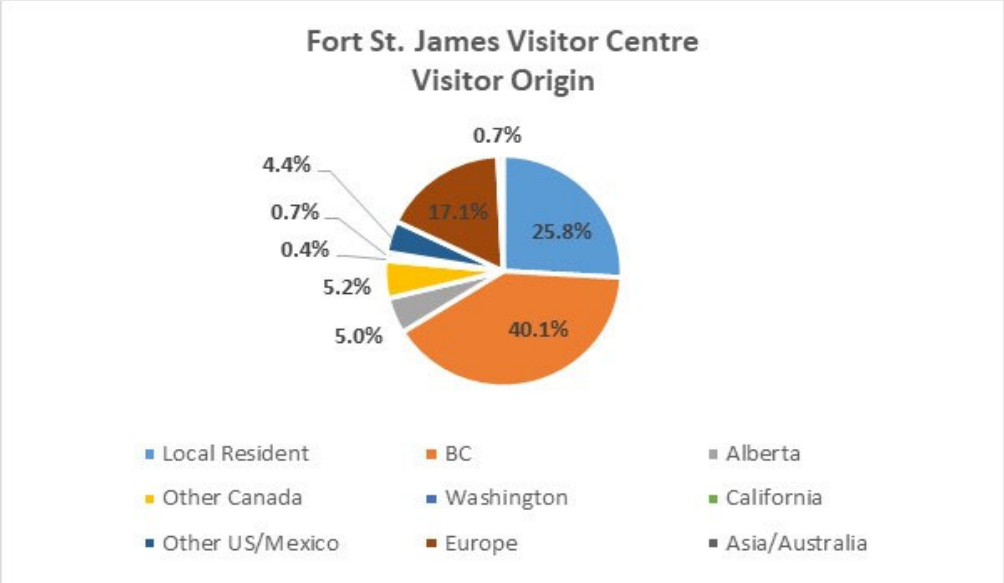
3. Fort St. James Market Overview

Visitation to Fort St. James is driven primarily by the Fort St. James National Historic Site, camping and outdoor recreation. The touring market ("rubber tire" market) is a primary market for Northern BC, including Fort St. James. The main sources of visitor and market trend data are the Visitor Centre and the Fort St. James National Historic Site. The market and visitor trend data presented in this section represents pre-Pandemic trends, which is important to gain an understanding of typical travel patterns.

Visitor Centre Trends

While not all visitors stop at the Visitor Centre, the data does provide an approximate breakdown of visitors to the area. As shown below, the top markets for Fort St. James are BC residents and Europeans. Local residents also use the Visitor Centre but are not considered tourists.

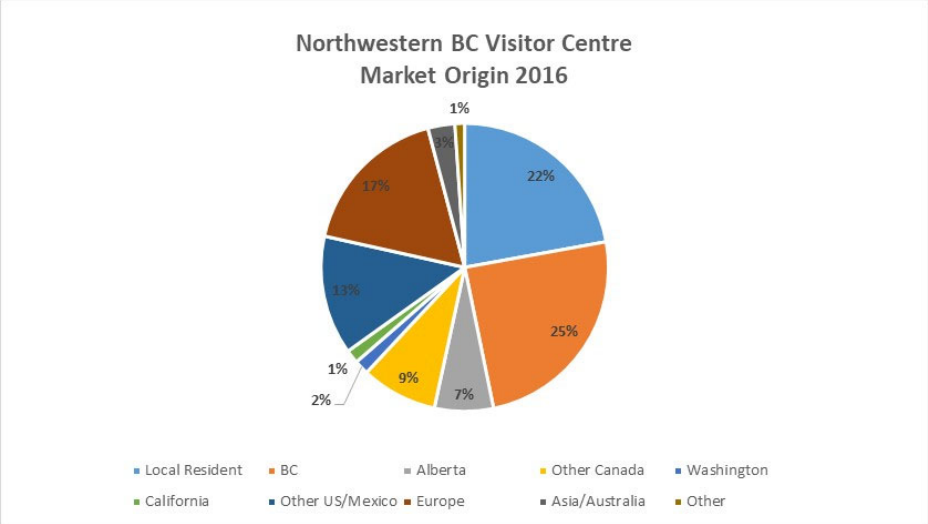
Top Visitor Segments FSJ	
BC	40%
Europe	17%



Source: Destination BC (data from prior to Covid-19)

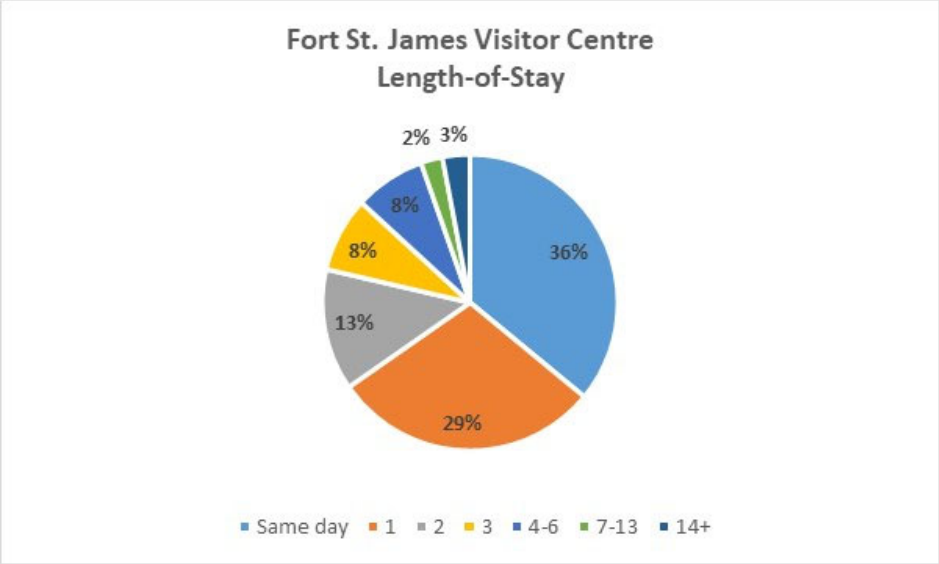
The top visitor markets for the broader region of Northwestern BC are also BC and Europe.

Top Visitor Segments NWBC	
BC	25%
Europe	17%



Source: Destination BC (data from prior to Covid-19)

Most visitors (78%) stay in the Fort St. James area for two or fewer nights, with 29% staying one night and 36% coming and going in the same day. When considering future tourism growth, there is an opportunity to provide additional experiences that will encourage visitors to stay longer in the area.



Length-of-Stay (nights)	
Same day	36%
1	29%
2	13%
3	8%
4-6	8%
7-13	2%
14+	3%
Total	**100%**

Source: Destination BC (data from prior to Covid-19)

Regarding activities visitors are seeking, the following summary of types of information requested by visitors to the visitor centre indicates that there is strong interest in attractions and tours, in addition to adventure and recreation.

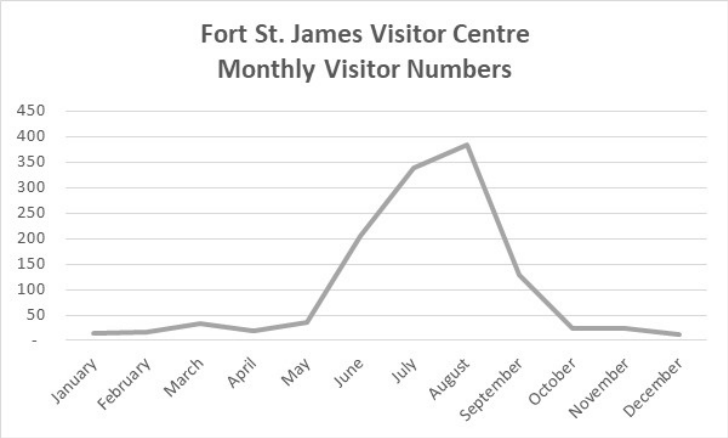
Information Requested	Visitors	%
Maps / Directions	652	30.4%
Attractions / Tours	258	12.0%
Washrooms	226	10.5%
Adventure Recreation	163	7.6%
Accommodation	138	6.4%
Shopping	128	6.0%
Parks	67	3.1%
Food / Beverage	44	2.1%
Events / Conferences	25	1.2%
Community Sservices	15	0.7%
First Nations	7	0.3%
Transportation	4	0.2%
Investment / Moving	3	0.1%
Other	415	19.3%
Total	**2145**	**100%**

Top Requests:

1. Maps & directions
2. Attractions & tours
3. Washrooms
4. Adventure & recreation
5. Accommodation
6. Shopping

Source: Destination BC (data from prior to Covid-19)

The peak tourism season is June to August, with shoulder seasons from April to May and September to October. There is an opportunity to boost winter tourism, focusing on attracting the regional market (e.g., Prince George and other nearby communities) to ski at Murray Ridge and participate in other winter activities.



Seasonality:

- Peak: Jun - Aug
- Shoulder: Apr - May, Sep - Oct

Source: Destination BC (data from prior to Covid-19)

Fort St. James National Historic Site Data

The National Historic Site conducts periodic visitor surveys, which provide valuable insights related to visitors to the Historic Site and to the Fort St. James area. The most recent survey was conducted in 2016.

As shown below, BC represented the largest market in 2016, with international visitors forming the second largest market.

Origin (n = 779)	% 2010	% 2016
BC	46%	46%
Alberta	13%	9%
Ontario		2%
Other Canada		2%
US	7%	10%
Other Countries	30%	31%

What does this tell us?

- BC is a major, steady market.
- International visitors comprise a large portion of visitors (41% in 2016).
- There was slight growth in international visitors from 2010 – 2016.

Source: Fort St. James Historic Site Visitor Survey, 2016

The following survey results tell us that:

- Half of respondents planned to visit the Historic Site;
- One-third of respondents were not aware of the Historic Site until they saw a highway sign; and,
- Signs and billboards are effective in drawing visitors to the Historic Site and Fort St. James.

Survey respondents…	%
…who learned about FSJ NHS by **road/ highway signs**	33%
…for whom FSJ NHS was **one of several planned stops**	50%
…for whom FSJ NHS was an **unplanned stop**	33%

Source: Fort St. James Historic Site Visitor Survey, 2016

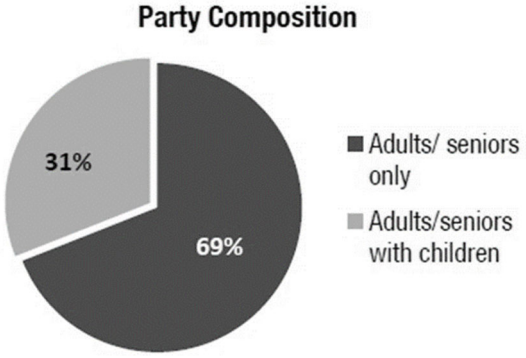
The following survey results tell us that:

- Most respondents were travelling west on Highway 16;
- Almost three-quarters of respondents stayed overnight in the broader region (71%); and,
- Over one-third of respondents stayed overnight in Fort St. James (37%).

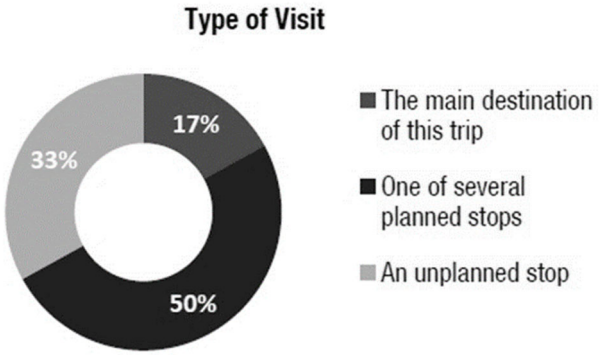
Survey respondents…	%
… who reached FSJ travelling west on Hwy 16*	65%
… who spent previous night in Fort St. James	37%
… who spent previous night in Prince George	34%

Source: Fort St. James Historic Site Visitor Survey, 2016
* Excluding local residents

As shown below, 69% of respondents were adults without children, while 31% were adults with children.



Source: Fort St. James Historic Site Visitor Survey, 2016



Source: Fort St. James Historic Site Visitor Survey, 2016

The following results tell us that signage followed closely by friends and family were the top sources that built awareness about the Historic Site. Travel books/brochures, previous visits, the Visitor Centre and Parks Canada were also key sources for building awareness.

*Information sources that made respondent aware of Fort St. James NHS (n =516)	%
Road / highway signs	34
Friends and family	32
Travel book/ brochure	25
Previous visit / knowledge	21
Tourist information centre	20
Parks Canada ads	11
Parks Canada website	10
Other website	7
Events in my town / region	5
Social media (e.g. Facebook)	3
Other TV broadcasts	1
Parks Canada toll-free number	0
Other	6

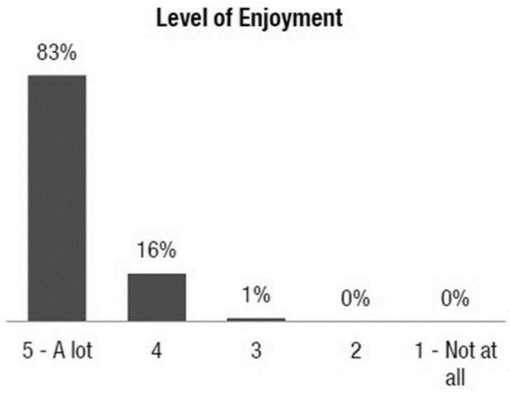
Awareness tools:

- Signage #1
- Friends/family close #2
- Books and brochures #3
- Previous visit #4
- Visitor Centre #5
- Parks Canada ads #6*
- Parks Canada website #7*

* Parks Canada ads and website together = 21%

Source: Fort St. James Historic Site Visitor Survey, 2016

Survey results indicated that the level of enjoyment for visitors to the Historic Site was high, with 99% of respondents providing a rating of 4 – 5 for this survey question.



Source: Fort St. James Historic Site Visitor Survey, 2016

Further survey results regarding visitors' experience are very positive, as shown below.

- 99% of visitors to the Historic Site considered they had learned about the cultural heritage of the site.
- 99% of visitors to the Historic were satisfied.
- 99% of visitors to the Historic Site enjoyed their visit.
- 85% of visitors to the Historic Site consider the place meaningful to them.

The following survey results suggest that people visited other attractions during their trip. This indicates that a regional approach to marketing regional attractions can be beneficial for communities.

"What other parks or cultural attractions have you visited or you plan to visit during this trip?" (n=498)	Visited	Plan to visit	Did not visit	No Response
	%			
Jasper	34	15	32	19
Barkerville	15	12	42	31
Fort Langley National Historic Site	4	3	50	43
Kasan Historic Village	11	6	43	40
Other	16	5	26	53

What does this tell us?

- Visitors enjoy range of regional attractions.
- A regional approach to experience development and marketing can benefit many communities.

Source: Fort St. James Historic Site Visitor Survey, 2016

Conclusions

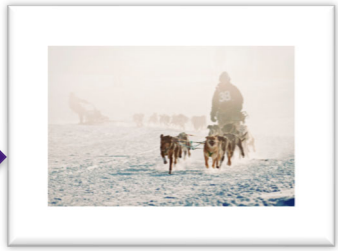
The top markets for Fort St. James (pre-COVID) were BC and Europe. Most visitors typically stayed in the Fort St. James area for two or fewer nights. The primary trip motivators were the Fort. St. James National Historic Site and nature, adventure and recreation. Most visitation occurred in the summer months.

Key market opportunities include:

- Providing experiences and services that will encourage visitors to stay longer;
- Marketing to the regional and BC markets, particularly in the 2021 – 2022 period, given COVID-19 travel restrictions; and,
- Further developing and marketing winter experiences, centred around the Murray Ridge Ski Area, focusing on the regional market.

4. Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities

The Fort St. James Tourism Committee identified strengths, challenges and opportunities related to tourism development and marketing. Highlights are provided below, with additional details documented in Appendix C. These are important to consider when developing goals and objectives for future tourism development.



Key Strengths

- Natural features that support a range of outdoor and adventure experiences
- Natural "gems" – Stuart Lake, Mount Pope, Sowchea Swamp, Murray Ridge
- Unique attractions/ events – Chicken Races, Dog Sled Race/Event
- Presence of a National Historic Site (anchor attraction)
- Marketing opportunities through National Historic Site and Parks Canada
- Strong arts community
- Four-season activities and potential to develop year-round experiences
- Support from the District of Fort St. James and the Tourism Committee
- Support from the Bulkley Nechako Regional District
- Support from Northern BC Tourism

Key Challenges

- Location at the "end of the road" (not on a through route) – note that this may also be a strength, as it means that the area is more remote with more "space" to play
- Low awareness about FSJ market and experiences
- Need for more market-ready and export-ready experiences
- Limited number and variety of shops, cafes and restaurants
- Lack of equipment rentals
- Limited quantity and type of visitor accommodation
- Declining population
- Need for more entrepreneurship/ investment
- Lack of good signage

Key Opportunities

- Leverage anchor attractions (e.g., FSJ Historic Site, Cottonwood Beach)
- Further develop regional market
- Build experiences around the area's wealth of natural assets
- Further develop winter tourism using Murray Ridge as an anchor
- Revitalize the Ripples of the Past Interpretive Trail
- Revitalize Cottonwood Beach and Marina
- Develop organized tours featuring boating, tours of the petroglyphs
- Develop unique experiences around Sowchea Swamp
- Continue to explore opportunity to develop the science and interpretive centre
- Increase the aesthetics and appeal of downtown
- Explore opportunities to develop and offer authentic Indigenous experiences

5. Future Direction

Fort St. James destination vision (2021 – 2026)

A vision is a clear, compelling and bold picture of a preferred future. It describes what success looks like, is set out over a long period of time and is sufficiently challenging to motivate, inspire and influence decision-making. The Fort St. James Tourism Committee crafted the following vision for Fort St. James as a tourism destination.

Credit: David Reneke, http://www.davidreneke.com/buying-and-using-a-telescope/

FORT ST. JAMES DESTINATION VISION

The unceded territory of the Nak'azdli Whut'en is home to Fort St. James, a four-season tourism destination offering wilderness and cultural experiences in a superb setting of lakes, mountains and trails.

We invite you to explore our heritage, wild backcountry and rich and vibrant Indigenous culture. Relax, camp or golf on the shores of Stuart Lake, climb or hike Mt. Pope, ski Murray Ridge, place your bets at the chicken races, meet local artists at our Farmers' Market and take in the welcoming atmosphere of our community. Fort St. James will beckon you to return time and time again –new and unexpected experiences await!

Goals, objectives and projects

The Tourism Committee developed goals to help achieve the vision, together with supporting objectives and projects. The research presented earlier, which is further detailed in the Situation Analysis located in the appendix, helped inform the development of the goals, objectives and projects. The Tourism Committee used the following goal categories.

A. Marketing and Market Development
B. Product and Experience Development
C. Infrastructure and Civic Amenities
D. Leadership, Collaboration and Organization
E. Tourism Workforce and Entrepreneurial Development

A. Marketing and market development

The Market Overview section revealed the following key market characteristics for the area (prior to the Pandemic):

Summary of Market Characteristics (pre-Pandemic)

Top markets:	• BC and Europe
Typical length-of-stay:	• Two or fewer nights
Top attractors/trip motivators:	• Fort St. James National Historic Site • Nature, adventure and recreation
Seasonality:	• Most visitation occurs in summer

The research and analysis conducted (see Market Overview section) points to several opportunities related to market development:

Summary of Market Development Opportunities

Market focus:	• 2021 – 2022: Given uncertainty regarding the re-opening of longer-haul travel due to the Pandemic, focus on the regional (Northern BC) and BC markets initially. • Post-2022: Continue to build the regional and BC markets, but also focus efforts on Alberta, Other Canada, Europe and the US.
Length-of-stay:	• There is an opportunity to increase the typical length-of-stay through experience development, facility development (accommodation) and marketing.
Anchor attractions:	• There is an opportunity to build experiences around anchor attractions and leverage marketing efforts of the Fort St. James National Historic Site and Northern BC Tourism Association. • The Fort St. James National Historic Site is one of nine short-listed Iconic Features in Northern BC that the Northern BC Tourism Association and the RDBN are assessing to support future coordinated experience development, branding and marketing. This presents a key opportunity for Fort St. James.
Winter tourism:	• There is an opportunity to attract regional markets in the winter months by developing and marketing more winter experiences related to Murray Ridge Ski Area and the Dog Sled event.
Regional focus:	• There are opportunities to collaborate with other communities and Indigenous communities in the broader region on specific marketing initiatives (e.g., Scenic Route 16, the Iconic Features initiative, etc.).

The Fort St. James Visitor Centre and Chamber of Commerce are supported by the District of Fort St. James. Key initiatives that are currently in place include:

- Operation of the year-round Visitor Centre;
- Production of the Fort St. James Tourism Brochure;
- Maintenance of the Tourism and Recreation section of the District of Fort St. James website (note that the website, including the Tourism and Recreation section, is being updated); and,
- Application for grants (e.g., through Northern Development Initiatives Trust and other organizations) for various programs, such as signage revitalization.

The Fort St. James National Historic Site conducts research (e.g., periodic visitor surveys) and marketing through Parks Canada. This provides valuable market data in addition to opportunities to conduct marketing initiatives that

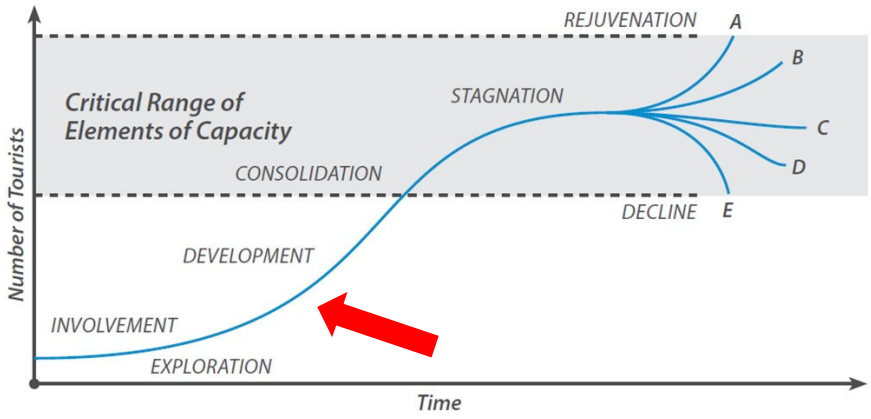
benefit the Historic Site and the Fort St. James area as a whole. The following marketing and market development goal, objectives and projects are based on the research and analysis, and on input from the Tourism Committee.

F. MARKETING AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT	
Goal:	Fort St. James enhances its ability to attract target markets and increase length-of-stay and repeat visitation.
Objectives:	1. Increase the number of visitors from the touring market (Hwy 16) (spring/summer/fall).
	2. Increase the length-of-stay and repeat visitation of destination visitors (spring/summer/fall).
	3. Increase visitation from the regional market (year-round) (reciprocal passes).
Projects	• Enhance the Fort St. James' destination brand and marketing initiatives, focusing on anchor attraction(s) and experience(s) (summer and winter). ▪ Explore the need to refresh the Fort St. James brand – "historic and resourceful" (process is critical – look at Mackenzie's process and result) – tie into place and culture. ▪ Improve signage along Highway 16 and within FSJ. ▪ Tie this into Northern BC Tourism's signage masterplan, if possible. ▪ Tie this into the Indigenous Fund (which supports signage and infrastructure), if of interest to First Nations. ▪ Periodically refresh the District of Fort St. James website, focusing on the Tourism and Recreation section. ▪ Develop a social media program presence, with insights/coaching from Northern BC Tourism, Destination BC and Indigenous Tourism BC. ▪ Determine the value of continuing the production of a hard-copy brochure; if seen as valuable, ensure the brochure content remains current and reflects new experiences as they are developed.
	• Work collaboratively with the Fort St. James Historic Site marketing efforts are aligned and to leverage Parks Canada's investments in marketing.
	• Work with Northern BC Tourism and Destination BC to support marketing efforts that target the touring market (which is a key market for Northern BC as a whole).
	• Prepare and implement regional marketing campaigns focusing on summer experiences (using appropriate and cost-effective marketing tools and platforms).
	• Prepare and implement regional marketing campaigns focusing on winter experiences (using appropriate and cost-effective marketing tools and platforms).
	• See Experience Development projects (which will help achieve marketing objectives)

B. Product and experience development

The following graph illustrates the typical evolution of a tourism area or destination. As the destination develops, and assuming there is effective marketing, an increasing number of tourists will visit the destination. After operating as a mature destination for a period, there is a need to re-invest in the destination or run the risk of stagnation and/or decline.

Currently, Fort St. James is in the "development" phase as a tourism destination. In order to mature, attract more visitors and increase length-of-stay, investment in product, experience and facility development is needed.



Hypothetical Evolution of a Tourist Area
(Adapted from Miller and Gallucci, 2004).

The research presented in the Destination Overview section indicated that Fort St. James' key tourism assets include:

- Strong nature and adventure theme, complemented by heritage;
- Many supporting clubs reflecting strong local interest (heart and soul!); and,
- Anchor assets upon which to build experiences and market to visitors:
    - Fort St. James National Historic Site,
    - Cottonwood Park, Marina and Campground,
    - Other four-season natural attractions, such as Murray Ridge Ski Area.

Accommodation and food services are available, however, there is a need for the following over time:

- Additional accommodation (types and quality levels);
- Additional shops/retail; and,
- Equipment rental.

A key challenge with increasing the supply of these types of facilities and businesses is that there is a need for strong business case prior to making these investments.

The following product and experience development goal, objectives and projects are based on the research and analysis, and on input from the Tourism Committee. The projects are presented as "spring, summer, fall experiences" and "winter experiences".

G. PRODUCT AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT	
Goal:	Fort St. James offers and delivers experiences that appeal to target markets (helping enhance visitor satisfaction, increase visitation, increase length-of-stay and increase repeat visitation).
Objectives:	1. Develop activities/experiences that help increase length-of-stay and repeat visitation of visitors to Fort St. James Historic Site/destination visitors.
	2. Further develop winter tourism experiences that appeal to regional markets.
	3. Further develop nature-based, learning and cultural tourism experiences.
	4. If of interest to First Nations, and led by First Nations, further develop Indigenous tourism facilities, attractions and cultural experiences.
Projects	**Spring, Summer Fall Experiences**

	• Enhance overall touring and exploring experience in and around Fort St. James
	  ○ Support/further develop the map and banner initiative proposed by Bob Grill, Fort St. James Historic Site.
	  ○ Rejuvenate the Ripples of the Past tour.
	  ○ Identify opportunities to enhance/expand the Farmers' Market.

	• Improve amenities, facilities and services at Cottonwood Park.
	• Explore private sector opportunities to develop organized activities such as: boat tours, kayaking, sky diving, parasailing, paragliding (Mount Pope) and zipline.

	• Explore the opportunity for the private sector to revive the boat tour/sightseeing business that was offered from 2000 – 2007.
	  ○ This business featured tours to the pictographs (including lunch), special events, rentals/fishing and camps/ large tents and cook tents, entertainment (hoop dancers/teachings).
	  ○ The business attracted visitors from the US, Canada and international markets, some booking a year in advance.
	  ○ This business stopped due to cost of liability insurance.

	• Identify and develop learning/experiential and cultural tourism, possibly centered around the proposed Chuntoh Education Society Interpretive Centre and key natural attractions.
	• Monitor progress regarding the Nak'azdli Whut'en's concept for developing a Nak'azdli Whut'en cultural village.
	• If of interest by First Nations, and led by First Nations, apply for a First People's Cultural Council grant to revitalize Chief Kw'eh's gravesite.
	• Improve trails and associated signage and maps over time to support the development of mountain biking and hiking trails.
Projects	**Winter Experiences**
	• Enhance and/or develop additional experiences that capitalize on the infrastructure improvements planned for Murray Ridge Ski Area.
	• Build additional experiences related to the success of the Annual Caledonia Classic dog sled event, which could be an iconic event.
	• Identify and plan for additional winter experiences that would appeal to target (regional) markets (snow mobiling, cross-country skiing, outdoor skating, etc.).
	• Further develop winter sport tourism (hockey tournaments, snow mobile races, etc.).

C. Infrastructure and civic amenities

The provision of quality, attractive civic amenities and signage is important to the overall tourism experience. Input provided through the Tourism Committee and interviews indicated that there are opportunities to improve the quality and appearance of the downtown core, in addition to more functional and attractive signage. The following goal, objectives and projects to improve infrastructure and civic amenities are based on the research and analysis, and input from the Tourism Committee.

H. INFRASTRUCTURE AND CIVIC AMENITIES	
Goal:	Fort St. James is a welcoming community with an attractive downtown core that appeals to residents and visitors.
Objectives:	1. Improve the quality and appearance of the downtown core.
	2. Improve the quantity and appearance of signage (coordinate this with signage noted under Experience Development and Marketing).

Projects	• Identify relevant programs and funding sources that support the improvement of community/northern community civic services, facilities and facades and apply for relevant funding.
	  ○ Examples of practical improvements that would not be costly include bike racks and places to tie up dogs.
	  ○ There are opportunities to leverage existing initiatives, such as the Seniors' Accessibility Action Plan.

	• Improve signage within the community and on the highway. This can be coordinated with the signage project noted under Experience Development and Marketing Projects, in addition to broader thematic corridor and signage projects that the Northern BC Tourism Association is leading.

D. Leadership, collaboration and organization

A strong, vibrant tourism industry depends on solid leadership and collaboration from government, organizations, businesses and destination management and marketing organizations ("DMOs"). The following diagram shows the types of entities involved in "setting the stage", "supplying the experience" and "selling the experience. It is important for these various entities to work collaboratively to support the growth of tourism.

The tourism industry in Fort St. James is supported by the District of Fort St. James, the Chamber of Commerce, the RDBN, the Northern BC Tourism Association, Community Futures and Northern Development Initiatives Trust. Other government ministries, such as the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, BC Parks and Parks Canada, also provide critical support to the tourism industry. Destination BC and Indigenous Tourism BC provide provincial-level support for tourism development and marketing. Appendices D – G provide information pertaining to relevant government and tourism organizations.

The following goal, objectives and projects related to leadership, collaboration and organization are based on the research and analysis, and on input from the Tourism Committee.

I. LEADERSHIP, COLLABORTATION AND ORGANIZATION	
Goal:	Leadership, collaboration and organization are provided to support the development and marketing of Fort St. James as a tourism destination within the broader RDBN.
Objectives:	1. Continue to provide tourism leadership and coordination through the Tourism Committee, focusing on implementation of the Five-year Tourism Strategy.
	2. Collaborate with other communities within RDBN and Northern BC Tourism Association to develop and market regional tourism experiences. Discuss project ideas and potential funding with RDBN.
	3. If of interest to First Nations, increase dialogue and collaboration with Indigenous communities regarding tourism development and marketing.
Projects	• Identify existing, planned or potential opportunities to work on regional tourism development and marketing initiatives with communities in the RDBN and with the Northern BC Tourism Association.
	• Continue to work as a Tourism Committee to oversee the implementation of the Five-Year Tourism Strategy and to provide leadership related to tourism development and marketing in the Fort St. James area.
	• Further explore opportunities to collaborate and communicate with First Nations regarding tourism development and marketing. Possible actions include the following: o Focus on similar aspirations and plans for economic development and tourism development and marketing. o Explore the development of a joint business plan for a First Nation cultural park (cultural centre, gift shop, etc.), which would require sanction from the Nak'azdli Whut'en community. o Stay apprised of relevant priorities emerging from the Nak'azdli Whut'en Economic Development Strategy, for example the longer-term vision to possibly develop a destination resort.

E. Human and entrepreneurial development

A thriving tourism industry is dependent on an appropriately-skilled labour force, in addition to individuals and companies that are interested in investing in tourism businesses. The research and consultation to support this project indicated that labour supply and skills need to be bolstered to support tourism growth. In addition, the research indicated that the area needs investment in certain types of businesses to help the tourism industry evolve and mature. This is a common occurrence in communities in Northern BC, given the need to transition for economies based primarily on resource development to a more diversified economy that includes tourism.

The following goal, objectives and projects are based on the research and analysis, and on input from the Tourism Committee.

J. HUMAN AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT	
Goal:	Fort St. James has a capable, motivated tourism workforce and entrepreneurial base to support tourism growth.
Objectives:	1. Increase knowledge about workforce and skills training opportunities related to the tourism industry.
	2. Increase knowledge about entrepreneurial development and capacity-building opportunities for existing and aspiring business owners.

Projects	• Create a section on the District of Fort St. James website, under "Tourism and Recreation" that provides current information related to:
	  ○ Tourism workforce and skills training opportunities, including links to relevant institutions and programs and a link to go2HR's and Destination BC's websites;
	  ○ Entrepreneurial development and capacity-building programs and services, including links to relevant institutions and programs;
	• Review provincial budgets annually to identify new funding and program opportunities that focus on job creation and training for tourism and hospitality;
	• Coordinate with the Nak'azdli Whut'en regarding entrepreneurial training the First Nation is providing, where seats may be available for participants outside the First Nation.
	• Conduct a survey to gauge interest in tourism business development, possibly in partnership with Community Futures.

6. Implementation Plan

Implementation plan

The following Implementation Plan is intended to guide project implementation over the next five years. Due to time and funding constraints, further refinement of the Implementation Plan may be required. The Tourism Committee should review the Implementation Plan regularly to monitor progress and to adjust it as needed to reflect changing priorities, funding opportunities and/or shifts in market demand. "Year 1" is the current year (2021).

Marketing and Market Development Implementation Plan

Projects	Implementation Direction	Year				
		1	2	3	4	5

Explore the need to refresh the Fort St. James brand	• Tourism Committee to discuss this
	  ○ Contact the District of Mackenzie regarding their recent re-branding process
	  ○ If the decision is to refresh brand, identify the budget and plan to complete in Year 2					

Improve signage along Highway 16 and within FSJ	• District Economic Development Officer ("EDO") to contact Northern BC Tourism to discuss opportunities related to:
	  ○ Northern BC Tourism's signage masterplan
	  ○ The Indigenous Fund (which supports signage and infrastructure), if of interest to First Nations					

Periodically refresh website	• The District is doing this now					
Develop social media program and presence	• Tourism Committee to discuss how to increase and maintain social media presence • EDO to request guidance from Northern BC Tourism, Destination BC and Indigenous Tourism BC					
Determine value of hard copy brochure and, if used, ensure content is current	• Tourism Committee to discuss this annually, starting in 2022 ○ If the decision is to continue producing the brochure, ensure that that refreshed content reflects any changes in branding, the target markets and their interests, and key experiences that are being promoted					

Product and Experience Development Implementation Plan – Spring/Summer/Fall

Projects	Implementation Direction	Year				
		1	2	3	4	5
Enhance overall touring and exploring experience	• Tourism Committee to support/further develop the map and banner initiative proposed by Site Manager, Fort St. James Historic Site					
	• Tourism Committee to discuss how to rejuvenate the Ripples of the Past tour (Yr. 2) • Implement in Yr. 3, if funding is available					

Projects	Implementation Direction	Year				
		1	2	3	4	5
	• Tourism Committee to identify opportunities to enhance/expand the Farmers' Market, by attracting new vendors and possibly attracting entertainment/ musicians (ongoing Yrs. 2 – 5)					
Improve amenities, facilities and services at Cottonwood Park	• District is considering options to upgrade Cottonwood Park					
Explore private sector opportunities to develop organized activities	• EDO to develop content for the District website and any District investment and resident attraction literature regarding the Tourism Strategy and opportunities for entrepreneurs to develop organized activities such as: o Boat tours, kayaking, sky diving, parasailing, paragliding (Mount Pope) and zipline • Ensure the Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures and other relevant organizations are aware of the District's interest in having entrepreneurs develop organized/guided activities for visitors					

Explore opportunities to revive the boat tour/sightseeing business	• In conjunction with the above project, Tourism Committee to explore opportunities for the private sector to revive the boat tour/sightseeing business that was offered from 2000 – 2007.
	  o This business featured tours to the pictographs (including lunch), special events, rentals/fishing and camps/ large tents and cook tents, entertainment (hoop dancers/teachings).
	  o The business attracted visitors from the US, Canada and international markets, some booking a year in advance.
	• As this business stopped in part due to cost of liability insurance, look at options for operators to obtain more cost-effective insurance through industry associations or other organizations.					

Identify and develop learning/experiential and cultural tourism	• The District and the Tourism Committee to:
	  o Stay apprised of the Chuntoh Education Society Interpretive Centre plans and support these plans, if appropriate
	  o Talk to the University of Northern BC (Prince George) (UNBC) regarding the development of potential niche learning tours that feature natural and cultural attractions (note that UNBC does offer these types of tours in Northern BC)					

Explore opportunities related to Indigenous culture/experiences	• Tourism Committee to continue to discuss and collaborate with the Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation regarding tourism-related initiatives the First Nation is considering, such as:
	  o The Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation's cultural village concept
	  o Revitalization Chief Kw'eh's gravesite (possibly through the First People's Cultural Council grant)					

Enhance mountain biking and hiking trails	• The District to explore funding opportunities to support trail development, including: o Tails and associated signage and maps over time to support the development of mountain biking and hiking • Explore funding possibilities in Yr. 2; Implement in Yrs. 3 - 5					

Product and Experience Development Implementation Plan – Winter

Projects	Implementation Direction	Year				
		1	2	3	4	5
Enhance/develop experiences based on improvements to Murray Ridge Ski Area	• District and the Tourism Committee to support the development of winter experiences based on the improvements to the Murray Ridge Ski Area • Coordinate this with the Ski Area manager and local volunteers • Explore opportunities to obtain grant funding to support this initiative					
Build additional experiences related to the Caledonia Classic event	• Tourism Committee to discuss with the Caledonia Classic dog sled event organizers opportunities to add new, complementary experiences to this annual event to capitalize on its iconic appeal • Tourism Committee to ensure this is linked to future branding and marketing initiatives					
Develop additional winter activities over time	• Tourism Committee to identify and plan for additional winter experiences that would appeal to target (regional) markets (snow mobiling, cross-country skiing, outdoor skating, etc.)					
Further develop sport tourism over time	• Tourism Committee to work with local clubs and associations regarding opportunities to host additional hockey tournaments, snow mobile races and other sport tourism activities					

Infrastructure and Civic Amenities Implementation Plan

Projects	Implementation Direction	Year				
		1	2	3	4	5

Identify relevant programs and funding sources	• EDO to identify relevant programs and funding sources that support the improvement of community civic services, facilities and facades and apply for relevant funding.
	  ○ Examples of practical improvements that would not be costly include bike racks and places to tie up dogs
	  ○ There are opportunities to leverage existing initiatives, such as the Seniors' Accessibility Action Plan					

Improve signage	• EDO to coordinate this with the signage project noted under Experience Development and Marketing Projects, in addition to broader thematic corridor and signage projects that the Northern BC Tourism Association is leading					

Leadership, Collaboration and Organization Implementation Plan

Projects	Implementation Direction	Year				
		1	2	3	4	5
Coordinate with other organizations and governments	• EDO to establish regular dialogue with other organizations and government s to identify existing, planned or potential opportunities to work on regional tourism development and marketing initiatives • This includes dialogue with communities in the RDBN and with the Northern BC Tourism Association					

Projects	Implementation Direction	Year				
		1	2	3	4	5
Oversee implementation of the Tourism Strategy	• Continue to work as a Tourism Committee to oversee the implementation of the Five-Year Tourism Strategy and to provide leadership related to tourism development and marketing in the Fort St. James area					

Collaborate with the Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation	• Tourism Committee to further explore opportunities to collaborate and communicate with the Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation regarding tourism development and marketing
	• Possible actions include the following:
	  ○ Focus on similar aspirations and plans for economic development and tourism development and marketing
	  ○ Explore the development of a joint business plan for a First Nation cultural park (cultural centre, gift shop, etc.), which would require sanction from the Nak'azdli Whut'en community
	• Stay apprised of relevant priorities emerging from the Nak'azdli Whut'en Economic Development Strategy, for example the longer-term vision to develop a destination resort					

Human and Entrepreneurial Development Implementation Plan

Projects	Implementation Direction	Year				
		1	2	3	4	5
Conduct a survey to gauge interest in employment in the tourism sector	• Chamber of Commerce to conduct a survey to gauge interest in tourism business development, possibly in partnership with Community Futures					

Create awareness about opportunities for workforce, skills and entrepreneurial training	• District to create a section on the District of Fort St. James website, under "Tourism and Recreation" that provides current information related to:
	  ○ Tourism workforce and skills training opportunities, including links to relevant institutions and programs and a link to go2HR's and Destination BC's websites
	  ○ Entrepreneurial development and capacity-building programs and services, including links to relevant institutions and programs
	• EDO to seek advice from go2HR regarding this initiative, as there may be opportunities to learn from what other communities have done to address this issue					

Stay up-to-date on job creation and training programs	• EDO to review provincial budgets annually to identify new funding and program opportunities that focus on job creation and training for tourism and hospitality					
Coordinate training with the Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation	• Tourism Committee to coordinate with the Nak'azdli Whut'en regarding entrepreneurial training the First Nation is providing, where seats may be available for participants outside the First Nation					

APPENDICES – Situation Analysis Research Summary

Appendix A – Consumer Trends

Trends are patterns of activity – social, economic, environmental, political and/or technological – that will affect the future over the next 20 years. Within the last decade, there have been significant shifts in consumer preferences that have affected travel choices. A summary of the most relevant shifts is outlined below.

Overall, the impact of the various economic, demographic and attitudinal trends is that the tourism market will become more segmented, and product demand will become more diverse.

Consumer Trends	Description	Implication
Shifting Demographics/ Millennials	By 2030, the world's population is expected to increase 20% from today's 6.9 billion to 8.3 billion. Many developed countries now have progressively aging populations. Rural-to-urban migration continues to be a significant pattern within many countries. Millennials, also known as Generation Y, are the demographic cohort born between the early 1980s and the early 2000s. Millennials are one of the largest generations in history and are emerging as important to the tourism industry due to their sheer size and contribution to international visits.	Tourism needs to account for the preferences and needs of older travellers who may have a 'younger' outlook but may need nearby medical care. Also, seasonal travel patterns may shift as older travellers have the freedom to travel outside of traditional peak periods. Increases in multi-generational families and solo travellers will require more flexible options for transportation, accommodation, and services. Destinations need to plan for millennials unique travel preferences, including their preference for: ○ Experiences that align with social equality, personal growth, authenticity, innovation and environmental consciousness, and ○ Automatic and essential use of technology.
Shifting Values and Attitudes	Health, environmental sustainability, and ethical values are more prevalent and are creating higher demand for certain products.	BC is well endowed with natural beauty and pristine wilderness, which is a draw for international and domestic travellers. Finding a balance between encouraging visitation to BC's natural assets and preserving them will be critical.
Mobile Technology	The use of mobile and other technology has exploded, with most travellers now having near constant access to web enabled devices. Consumers increasingly place a huge value on being connected and use technology for sharing ideas, getting news, researching, communicating with friends and industry.	For destinations, this means an opportunity to reach travellers both before and during their trip and draw them off the traditional tourist path. Businesses and destinations need to adapt to the continued innovation and increase in the use of mobile devices by ensuring connectivity and online information sources.
Transportation Innovation and Technology[1]	New transportation technologies are emerging, including connected and autonomous vehicles, alternative fuels, keyless fleet management and traffic analytics. Connected technology focuses on	Transportation concepts, policies and legislation is rapidly evolving. New technology for on-road communications will dramatically change how vehicles operate, provide information and

[1] http://www.govtech.com/transportation/How-Transportation-Technologies-Will-Change-Everything-.html

Consumer Trends	Description	Implication
	wireless communication: vehicle-to-vehicle, vehicle-to-pedestrian and vehicle-to-infrastructure.	capabilities for better, real-time traffic management and provide enhanced traveller information.
Advocacy/ Social Media	Recommendations and stories from other travellers are the most influential source of information for travel destinations, with positive word of mouth driving travellers to act. Advocates are believed to represent up to 25% of the consumer base with the potential to influence the remaining 75%.	Traveller advocacy begins with an experience. Focusing on developing positive and remarkable visitor experiences, products and services will have a greater impact than marketing tactics alone. Local destinations, tourism businesses and communities all gain from leveraging traveller advocacy.
Travel Information Sources	Different consumers are at different stages of travel decision making and require different information. Awareness and inspiration occur mostly through traditional media and word of mouth; online sources and traveller review sites. Social networks are an occasional planning tool for most and are growing in importance.	Visitor services must extend beyond brick-and-mortar locations to take advantage of the ability to connect with visitors via new digital information and servicing opportunities. Societal trends and specifics around individual trips are always changing so the landscape of trip planning and visitor services will continue to evolve.
Sharing Economy	Travel disrupters such as sharing economy organizations like Airbnb and Uber are changing the travel landscape. Travel disrupters have led to more traveller choice for accommodation and transportation trip components.	As travellers experience destinations from a local's perspective, more residents are able to get involved with, and benefit from, tourism. These alternatives present an opportunity for destinations that lack traditional infrastructure like large hotels and transportation systems.
Customer Service/ Personalization	Technology has shifted power from institutions to the individual consumer and at the same time, consumers are more cost-conscious. Businesses have a new focus on providing personalized customer service at a lower cost, e.g., online self-service, online chat and facilitation of service from online communities. Increasingly, customers are shopping across multiple locations – in-store/person and devices – desktops, smartphones and tablets.	Customers increasingly expect continuity and best-practice service between customer service channels. This expectation has been extended to the tourism industry. Consumers will expect this capability throughout their travel experience, from the smallest to largest businesses and destinations.
High Quality, Authentic Experiences	The last decade has witnessed growing demand for vacations that offer authentic opportunities to experience the culture, natural attributes and unique activities of the local destination as well as enrich the traveller's life. There has been a growth in the awareness and availability of Indigenous tourism experiences throughout BC, with efforts led by the Indigenous Tourism Association British Columbia (ITBC).	Destinations should understand and track components of remarkable experiences in BC: unless the tourism product meets the needs and expectations of visitors, the destination cannot realize its full potential. One way to do so is to measure Net Promoter Score. Two critical drivers for NPS include the natural environment and the supporting tourism infrastructure. Ensuring attributes of the natural environment are maintained and protected will support continued interest in BC as a travel destination.
Value, Staycations and Time Poverty	Travellers continue to place greater emphasis on achieving greater value for money when decision making and purchasing. The fall of the Canadian dollar has led to many Canadians avoiding travel	Despite increases in wealth, people do not necessarily feel wealthier and continue to seek budget travel options. BC is not perceived as an inexpensive, or 'value' destination which drives the

Consumer Trends	Description	Implication
	to the U.S. but stay at home or within Canada. In some markets and some demographic segments, it appears that populations are feeling greater pressures on leisure time, leading to more frequent shorter trips.	importance of top-quality experiences facilitated by outstanding visitor services. The “time poor” consumer generally wants to maximize their ‘value for time’ with quick purchases, fast check-ins, easy transportation logistics, and option activities during trips.

Appendix B – Destination Management/Marketing Organization Trends

Several of these trends in destination management and marketing respond to the shifts in consumer behaviour noted earlier.

Management Trends	Description	Implication
Shifts in Role of DMO	DMOs continue to evolve their role in response to changing consumer behavior and competitive pressures.	Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) documented three main groups of action by DMOs in response to evolving trends. They include: • Dealing with the New Marketplace: Shifting from broadcast communication to engagement with travellers. • Building and Protecting the Destination Brand: More emphasis on the quality experiences and destination advocacy, management and development. • Evolving the DMO Business Model: Working together with public and private sector partners to build a new business model for DMO's.
Tourism Marketing Trends	DMO's have evolved their marketing strategies and initiatives to meet shifting consumer preferences. There is a new focus on digital, mobile, social advocacy, personalization, outstanding customer service, authentic experiences, partnerships and alignment with other agencies.	Destinations should ensure development activities align with regional, provincial and national branding and marketing initiatives. Also, destination development activities should focus on remarkable, authentic experiences that surpass visitor expectations that will encourage repeat visitors and positive word-of-mouth.
Visitor Services Trends	An increasing number of travellers plan their trips and get visitor information online. Smartphones have accelerated this trend, with instant information available, thus causing rapid drops in the number of visitors at physical visitor centres.	Destinations need to consider a multi-channel approach to providing visitor services. The traditional brick-and-mortar approach of welcoming visitors at visitor centres no longer has the broad economic impact that it once did.
Competition	Global competition is fierce. Mature destinations are embracing the value of tourism while emerging destinations increase their competitiveness and target new markets. Also, locally, there is growth in the number of BC destinations looking to tourism to increase their local economy.	To maintain and grow market share, BC tourism businesses will need to be accessible and accommodating to these markets, and our messaging must be relevant to this audience.

Management Trends	Description	Implication
Climate Change and Tourism	Global warming impacts on the tourism industry include: • Retreating glaciers, milder winters and reduced snowfall. • Rising sea levels on coastal areas. • More frequent/intense forest fires. • Changes in the natural landscapes, parks and protected areas. • Impacts on wine producing regions, marine environments and fisheries, and species migration, decline extirpation.	The industry has a responsibility to reduce its own climate change footprint by undertaking various infrastructure retrofit, management, operational and programming changes to reduce energy and water use and overall greenhouse gas emissions. Destinations should consider climate change while planning tourism infrastructure and products.
HR/Labour	The market for tourism employment, both globally and in Canada, is expected to face considerable workforce shortages in the future. BC's tourism industry is expected to have 101,430 job openings by 2020, affecting the food and beverage services, recreation and entertainment industry sector.[2] Changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW) program have restricted the capacity and ability, in some cases, to make use of the program within the tourism industry.	Local tourism businesses and destinations will continue to evolve to attract a sufficient labour force, including: • Raising wages to attract more employees. • Highlight opportunities for advancement to prospective employees; workers aged 15 to 24 years were twice as likely to remain with their employer when given opportunities for advancement. • Individual businesses can increase annual vacation days from two weeks. • Identifying underused labour pools including mature workers, persons with disabilities and new immigrants.
Land Use	Increasing competition among resource industries, competition within land-based tourism sectors and increasing visitor volume could lead to pressure on land-based tourism policies and businesses.	Elements of BC's natural environment are important reasons to recommend BC as a destination and ultimately travel again. Ensuring these attributes are properly maintained and protected will support continued interest in BC as a travel destination.
Sharing Economy Emerges	Travel disrupters such as sharing economy organizations like Airbnb and Uber are changing the travel landscape and providing more value and choice to consumers.	Travel disrupters have led to increased competition with existing, traditional travel businesses (e.g. taxis, hotels), which, along with concerns for traveller safety and fair commerce, has led to review of existing regulation and policies.

[2] Source: Destination BC

Appendix C – Opportunities and Issues/Constraints

Opportunities

The Fort St. James Tourism Committee identified the following opportunities for tourism development and marketing. These are not listed in order of priority.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES	

Leverage Anchor Attractions	• For example, further develop experiences and marketing related to:
	  ○ Fort St. James Historic Site
	  ○ Cottonwood Beach

Further develop regional market	• Develop packages that will appeal to the regional market, leveraging assets such as:
	  ○ Mount Pope
	  ○ Fort St. James National Historic Site
	  ○ Golf Course
	  ○ Cottonwood Beach (need power to service these markets)

Market natural assets	• Key themes/assets:
	  ○ "Unlimited Access to Wilderness"
	  ○ Second largest lake in BC
	  ○ Rock climbing

Further develop the Alberta market	• The East Kootenays saw an increase in Alberta visitors in 2020, due to the fact that Canadians were not as free to travel outside Canada • There is an opportunity to attract RV and camping visitors from Alberta
Increase the profile of Murray Ridge as an anchor asset	• Further develop Murray Ridge for both winter and summer tourism destination
Increase the appeal of Farmers' Market	• Attract more vendors to the Farmers' Market to make it more of a draw for visitors

Increase the appeal of downtown	• Provide incentives for more boutique businesses, shops and cafes to open downtown
	  ○ Note that opening new businesses requires a sound business case, which includes demand from both residents and visitors
	  ○ The economics must "make sense"
	• Note that initiatives related to downtown revitalization have been completed

Revive events/ attractions and introduce new events	• Examine the possibility of reviving the following, which used to be big draws:
	  ○ The Night Market
	  ○ Music in the Mountain
	• Examine other events that could be hosted in the park

Revitalize Cottonwood Beach and Marina	• Suggestions include:
	  ○ Encourage the opening of a café
	  ○ Provide paddle board rentals
	  ○ Establish a flea market, where booths can be rented

KEY OPPORTUNITIES	
Boat Rentals and Petroglyph Tours	• This could be a draw for visitors • However, obtaining liability insurance is a challenge
Enhance Marketing through Social Media	• There is an opportunity (and a need) to bolster marketing through social media strategies/content creation and management • However, the demographic of many of the volunteers in the not-for-profit sector is older and not proficient with using social media
Develop Unique Experiences In/Around the Sowchea Swamp	• Summer activities could include canoeing and wildlife viewing • Winter activities currently include cross-country skiing and sledding, and could include ice skating if a rink were developed
Increase the Profile of Hiking and Snowshoeing Activates/Areas	• Prince George has an online schedule for these activities in the Prince George area • Fort St. James can also do this
Science/ Interpretive Centre	Chuntoh Education Society (CES) developed an advocacy plan for the development of an Interpretive Centre (November 2020). The intention is to collaboratively develop a feasibility study from March 2021 to March 2022, which would support decision-making regarding the proposed development. The purpose of the advocacy plan is stated below. *The purpose of this plan is to initiate a multi-stakeholder Feasibility Committee to investigate the establishment of a natural interpretive centre in Fort St. James, BC. This interpretive centre would highlight local ecosystems and economies through the bridging and complementary aspects of Indigenous Ecological Knowledge (IEK) and western natural resource management practices (NRM).*[3] The plan requests participation by the following entities on an Interpretive Centre Feasibility Study Committee: • District of Fort St. James • Nak'azdli Whut'en • Tl'azt'en Nation • Binche Keyoh • Regional District Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) • Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (MFLNRORD) Several ideas related to the proposed development that have been expressed to date include: • Historical exhibits highlighting local ecosystems and economies • Interactive educational exhibits • Remote camera feeds from local nests, dens, wildlife trails, etc. • Indigenous ethnobotany trails and guided tours • Retail space for local Elders and Artists • Boat tours to Nak'al Bun pictographs • Migratory Bird Banding Station • Kokanee hatchery • Coffee and snack bar • Meeting space overlooking the lake • Outdoor space for event bookings

[3] Chuntoh Education Society Interpretive Centre Advocacy Plan, Nov. 2020, p. 3.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES
• Visitor Centre space • Drum making and art classes • Featured local foods

Issues and constraints

The Fort St. James Tourism Committee identified the following issues and constraints related to tourism development and marketing. These are not listed in order of priority.

KEY ISSUES/CONTRAINTS TO ADDRESS	
Low Awareness about FSJ and tourism assets	• There is low awareness about Fort St. James and its tourism assets amongst many/most markets
Demographic and Economic "Shrinkage"	• The Fort St. James population has declined over the years • The Fort St. James economy and associated businesses have declined
Shops and Cafes	• Related to the above issue, there are limited shops and cafes • Investment in these businesses requires a demonstrated need and business case, in addition to a growing, rather than shrinking, local population
Access and Transportation	• Fort St. James is located at the "end of the highway" ○ There is a need to develop strategies to encourage visitors to travel to the area • There is a lack of shuttle buses and taxis
Signage	• Signage needs to be increased and improved
Truth in Marketing and Advertising	• There is a need to we "live up to the promise" regarding what we are marketing

Equipment Rentals	• There is a need for rentals:
	  ○ Bikes
	  ○ Electric bikes
	  ○ Paddle boards
	  ○ Kayaks and canoes
	  ○ Other recreational equipment

Accommodation	• There needs to be a greater selection of accommodation
Public Washrooms	• The only public washrooms are in the Public Library and in Spirit Square
Entrepreneurial Culture/Experience	• There is a need for business coaching/courses to support people who are interested in developing a business, but lack the experience to develop a business plan and operate a business

Appendix D – Regional Government and Organizations

Regional Government

Regional Government	
Organization	**Relevant Initiatives**

Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako	• Head office is in Burns Lake.
	• The Regional District focuses on tourism within its broader economic development program. It has prepared:
	  ○ The RDBN Value of Tourism Report (July 2017)
	  ○ Regional and Community Tourism Profiles
	• The following excerpt from their website provides an overview of tourism in the Regional District.[4]
	The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) covers 76,000 sq.km of pristine wilderness in the centre of the province of British Columbia. Nestled between Prince George and Prince Rupert, the region is a 10 to 12-hour drive from the lower mainland. The region has economic potential for tourism providers.
	The transportation route running east to west through the region is Highway 16. Individual Visitor Information Centres within the Region record up to 13,000 visitors stopping at their location per year. This figure does not include the numerous visitors who do not stop at information centres. The peak tourist season occurs from April to October. Visitors travelling to the area often continue to Prince Rupert or to Yukon or Alaska.
	In effort to support the tourism industry, communities within the RDBN have included tourism initiatives as part of their economic development strategies. Communities within the region are working together to attract visitors to the area. www.visitbulkleynechako.ca.
	The RDBN's Tourism Plan in 2009 cites the Free Independent Traveler primarily arriving by recreational vehicle or car as the major tourism market for the region. These travelers are looking for soft outdoor recreational opportunities, expanding the opportunities for tourism providers who target this market.
	- *In recent years the region has seen an expansion of the adventure tourism industry. Many feel the adventure tourism industry is in its infancy in the region.*

[4] http://opportunities.rdbn.bc.ca/tourism. (accessed on August 21, 2018)

Regional Government	
Organization	**Relevant Initiatives**
	New Mountain Bike facilities are attracting national and international riders to "stay and play" in the region. This young demographic is also likely to white-water kayak, mountain or ice-climb, or heli-ski in the region.

Regional Organizations

Regional Organizations	
Organization	**Relevant Initiatives**
Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT)[5]	• NDIT has leveraged over $1.3 billion in incremental funding through a $185 million endowment established in 2004/2005 by the Government of BC to help identify and pursue new opportunities for stimulating economic growth and job creation of central and northern BC. • NDIT has approved funding of $150 million for over 2,200 economic infrastructure and economic development readiness projects in Central and Northern BC since 2005. NDIT offers 11 different grant funding options based on the type of initiative being undertaken. Funding can range from as little as $8,000 up to $250,000.
Community Futures	• Business advice and coaching. • Small business loans up to $150,000. • Deliver's the Province's 48 week-long Self Employment Program that helps participants develop and launch their own businesses. • Community Futures in NWBC: - Stuart Nechako - Fraser Fort George - 16/37 - Pacific Northwest - Nadina
Tribal Resources Investment Corporation (TRICORP)	• Provides a wide range of financial services to First Nations entrepreneurs in Northwestern British Columbia. • Nesika Management Ltd., a Tricorp subsidary, is a management and Consulting business which works closely with TRICORP to provide financial and business management services to the firm's clientele, as well as public and private individuals and organizations.
Futurepreneur Canada – Thrive North	• National, non-profit organization that provides financing, mentoring and support tools to aspiring business owners aged 18-39. • Offers mentoring program that matches young entrepreneurs with a business expert from a network of more than 2,800 volunteer mentors.
Northern BC Tourism	• Northern BC Tourism is a Regional Destination Marketing and Management Organization working to promote the region through development, media relations and marketing activities. Northern BC Tourism is a partner in the development of the Northwestern BC Destination Development Strategy.

[5] Source: http://www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca/

Regional Organizations	
Organization	**Relevant Initiatives**
Northern Health **First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)**	• Northern Health administers the FOODSAFE training program that instructs on safe food handling practices, and the Food Security Program. • Northern Health provides health services to residents of Northern BC, serving about 300,000 people. Services include, acute care, mental health and addictions, public health and home and community care. • The FNHA is responsible for transforming the health and well-being of BC's First Nations including northwestern BC and is responsible for the planning, management, service delivery and funding of health programs in partnership with Indigenous communities.
University of Northern BC – Prince George	• The University of Northern BC offers several programs that relate to the tourism industry: - Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Management (MSc) - Eco-Tourism Management (BA) - Bachelor of Commerce (offering a range of specializations, such as Financial Management, Human Resource Management, Marketing, etc.) • Continuing Studies Courses, such as: Environmental Management, Habitat Management, Jet Boat Safety, Human Resource Management, etc.
College of New Caledonia – Various Locations	• The College of New Caledonia offers the following programs/courses that relate to the tourism industry: o Professional Cook o Business Management o Accounting and Financial Diploma o Human Resources Management o Tourism and Hotel Management • NWBC Branch colleges are in: Fort St. James, Vanderhoof and Burns Lake, Fraser Lake, and Houston

Appendix E – Relevant Provincial Ministries

Relevant Provincial Government Ministries

Provincial Ministries/Agencies	
Organization	**Relevant Initiatives**
Destination B.C. (DBC)	• Marketing BC domestically, nationally and internationally as a tourist destination via consumer advertising and campaigns, travel trade, media relations, content generation and social media efforts • Cooperative marketing programs working with regional tourism marketing and sector marketing organizations • Market research and analysis • Destination Development Strategy (destination development), Remarkable Experiences (product development) • Visitor Services Network, travel trade relations, media relations

Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (TAC)	• Areas of responsibility: Arts, Culture, Sport, Multiculturalism and Tourism
	• Oversight of Provincial Destination Marketing Organization, Destination British Columbia (DBC). DBC leads tourism marketing and development efforts.
	• Support for Indigenous Tourism Association BC, providing development and marketing support for Indigenous tourism.
	• Oversight of Crown Corporations: Destination BC, BC Pavilion Corp (in charge of Vancouver Convention Centre) and Creative BC (which manages film producer tax credits and support programs)
	• Key tourism initiatives:
	  • MRDT program, co-managed with the Ministry of Finance and Destination BC – up to 3% tax on sale of short-term accommodation to provide funding for local tourism marketing, programs and projects
	  • Tourism Events Program, co-managed with Destination BC – an application-based program to support world-class events that can enhance the volume of visitors to British Columbia and increase global recognition for the province
	  • Resort Municipality Initiative – funding provided to eligible resort-based communities
	  • Wildfire response work with DBC and Regional DMOs to mitigate the impacts of 2017 season and plan for future emergency seasons. Economic Recovery Working Group to assess impacts and determine government response.
	  • Tourism Policies – works across government to identify and mitigate policy barriers across government
	  • Creative Sector – provides expertise and business support to strengthen BC's motion picture, interactive digital, music and publishing sectors
	  • BC Arts Council – supports the development of artists and events.
	  • Support for First People's Culture Council, which works to preserve Indigenous culture and language.
	  • Sports – supports development of athletes, and events to showcase athletic achievement

Provincial Ministries/Agencies	
Organization	**Relevant Initiatives**
	• Multiculturalism – supports measures to increase inclusiveness, including special events
Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR)	• Co-develops agreements that support First Nation self-governing and broader economic development • First People's Cultural Council ▪ First Nation Leadership Gathering – in 2016, the First Nations gathered, indicated their interest to participate in the Destination Development Strategy process
Ministry of Agriculture (AGRI)	• Agricultural Area Plans, including support for farmers and farm organizations, improving access to and use of capital, improving productivity of farmland, consumer education and outreach, improving marketing and protecting the environment • Regulation of tourism use of agricultural lands/facilities • Buy Local program • Creating new markets for BC wine, craft beer and spirits • Strengthening certification and quality assurance programs
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH)	• Municipal Infrastructure capital programs • Regional Growth Strategies – plans for community sustainability • Climate Action Charter • Community Recreation Program • Community Gaming Grants: support for a wide range of developments and events
Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV)	• Stewardship, operation and capital investments in BC Parks • Working to enhance visitor services in parks • Processes applications and activities for filming and other commercial activities • Monitoring impacts to wildlife from human use of parks and trails
Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (TRAN)	• Responsible for transportation network and major infrastructure projects • Designs, constructs and maintains highway system (with contractors) • Manages roadside signage • Developing cycling network and route signs • Community works – tourism infrastructure now eligible • British Columbia Air Access Program (BCAAP): provides capital funding to assist B.C. airports with improvements to their infrastructure • Oversight of BC Ferries
Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Rural Development (FLNR), including Rec Sites and Trails (RST) and Heritage	• Areas of Responsibility: Crown Land Policies, Heritage and Archaeology, Recreation Sites and Trails BC, Adventure Tourism Policy, Mountain Resorts, BC Wildfire Services • FrontCounter BC– single window service for clients of provincial natural resource ministries and agencies • BC Rural Dividend Fund – to assist rural communities, First Nations and organizations diversify their economies and build and retain their workforce • Recreation Sites and Trails Initiatives: Authorizing Mountain Biking on Crown Land, Trails Strategy for British Columbia • Heritage Branch: • Stewardship of cultural heritage resources on crown land.

Provincial Ministries/Agencies	
Organization	**Relevant Initiatives**
	• Stewardship of Historic Places operated as tourist attractions. • Provincial Historic Places Recognition Program. • Forest Stewardship Plans, with public consultation and considerations for recreation and other uses • Cumulative Effects Framework – assessing and managing the effect of all natural resource activities on values that are important to the people of British Columbia • Manages archaeological (ancient human, e.g. pre-contact Indigenous) resources
Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology (JTT)	• Indigenous Business & Investment Council to help Indigenous participation in the economy. • Economic Development tools and resources. • Small Business BC. • Small Business Support - resources to assist small business ventures, including Mobile Business Licenses that enable businesses to operate across participating jurisdictions and BizPaL that provides easy access to permit and licensing information. • BC Stats for statistical and economic research and analysis. • Technology, Innovation & Research - investments in innovation to fuel economic growth and diversification.

Appendix F – Relevant Provincial Organizations

Relevant Provincial Organizations and Associations

Provincial Organizations and Associations	
Organization/Association	**Relevant Initiatives**
Indigenous Tourism Association of BC (ITBC)	• Initiatives: training and business development, marketing and promotion, Indigenous travel services (travel agency), regional strategies, "Authentic Indigenous" cultural authenticity program • Focus on improving level of service quality of Indigenous tourism products • Training programs: 12 workshops – training and capacity building program to develop tourism businesses, improve market readiness and assists with job/careers • Actively promoting stakeholders through marketing efforts such as social media, blogs, sharing culture/stories
go2HR	• Supporting the tourism industry in attracting, training and retaining a reliable and skilled workforce. • SuperHost Training Services - delivers customer service workshops, e-Learning and customized courses for the tourism and hospitality industries. (go2Hr became the program owner effective 2017.) • HR counsel to the Destination Development Planning processes.
Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC)	• Umbrella or over-arching group advocating on behalf of tourism industry • Advocacy, lobbying and creating awareness about provincial tourism issues (e.g. air access, cross-border travel, land use issues, transportation networks, service infrastructure, etc.)
Accessibility BC *(Accessibility 2024 Initiative)*	• The BC Government introduced a 10-year action plan to make BC more accessible for people with disabilities, which accounts for 15% of the population. • BC also strives to be an inclusive travel destination to people of all abilities as Vancouver was named the “most accessible city in the world” • Part of the Consumer Experience building block, the initiative plans complete the following: - Profile the existing and emerging accessible tourism opportunities on key travel sites such as HelloBC. - Undertake key accessibility park projects including the Liard River and upgrade rest stop accessibility. • Travellers with disabilities can also find information on accessible transportation and travel in BC at www.accesstotravel.gc.ca •
Heritage BC	• Not-for-profit, charitable organization supporting heritage conservation across British Columbia through education, training and skills development, and capacity building. • Manages the Heritage Legacy Fund, and administers grants for heritage conservation.

Provincial Organizations and Associations	
Organization/Association	**Relevant Initiatives**
	• Manages the Provincial Historic Places Recognition Program in cooperation with Heritage Branch.
Quad Riders Association of BC (ATVBC)	• Strive to improve the perceptions of quading/off-road sport through advocating safe and environmentally responsible riding while working with all to the greater benefit of the sport. • Membership based organization. • Promote ATV events taking place around the province. • Communication regarding ATV legislation, trails, trail reports, etc.
BC Campground and Lodging Association	• Provides consumer marketing and promotion support to its members. • Cooperates with other industry associations to address regulatory concerns.
BC Commercial Snowmobile Operators Association	• A member directed association comprised of representatives from around 12 privately owned Snowmobile Tour/Rental operations located throughout BC. • Offers access to Snowmobile Tour operators, Guides and Rentals, daily and multi-day tours and available from Nov- May. Some members offer ATV Tours and rentals through the non-snow months. •
BC Fishing Resorts and Outfitters Association	• Represents the fresh water tourist fishing industry and work with public and private sector to protect those areas currently in use and to preserve the wilderness experience in BC. • Fishing Enhancement Fund - to promote and fund projects that enhance freshwater fishing opportunities and education in communities throughout BC. • Working to inventory the fishing experiences available in BC. •
BC Guide Outfitters Association	• Provides consumer support to connect hunting clients with guides and companies offering hunting experiences. • Provides an assistant guide certification program. • Represents the guide outfitting industry. •
BC Hotel Association	• Advocates on behalf of hotels/motels on issues pertaining to hospitality regulations and policy. • Promotes and supports the national star rating program for accommodation properties. •
BC Innkeepers B&B Guild	• Provides education, marketing and representation for members in the sector. • Oversees the quality assurance inspection program. •
BC Mountain Biking Association	• Consumer marketing support for mountain biking destinations and companies. • Industry development resources.
BC River Outfitters Association	• Provides information about certified river rafting trip outfitters and how to locate them. • Represents river outfitter interests with government and other agencies, promotes a high standard of safety and operations and strives to improve operations for all throughout BC. •
BC Rodeo Association	• Primary governing body of rodeo in BC. • Communication of rodeo events and standings in BC. •

Provincial Organizations and Associations	
Organization/Association	**Relevant Initiatives**
BC Rural Network (BCRN)	• BCRN is a coalition of organizations, communities and individuals who share a commitment to building the capacity of BC to develop responses to rural and remote community issues. •
BC Snowmobile Federation	• Support environmental stewardship. • Communication regarding snowmobile closures within caribou areas. • Promotes snowmobiling safety through training courses.
BC Wildlife Federation	• Committed to protecting and enhancing the environment • Delivers an online hunter education program •
Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC (FFSBC)	• Research, conservation and education programs to improve angler access. Fish stocking program including Learn to Fish and Rod Load programs. • Angler licenses. The Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation receives 100% of the surcharge revenue collected from angling license sales to provide grants for fish conservation projects. • Partner of Fishing BC cooperative marketing programs.
Nordic BC	• Focused on resources for athlete and coach development for nordic skiing and promotes competitions and events around the province. •
Outdoor Recreation Council	• Works on behalf of about 40 provincial member groups, representing more than 100,000 individuals, as well as the public, to protect the outdoor way of life in BC. • Represents the interests of the full range of public outdoor recreation users of BC's lands and waters. • Vision is for British Columbia to be the world leader in the conservation and enjoyment of outdoor places. Our vision is for all British Columbians to have access to diverse and abundant opportunities to enjoy outdoor recreation experiences • Coordinates BC Rivers Day. • Publishes BC's Most Endangered Rivers list. • In partnership with the Horse Council of BC delivers 'Share the Trails' workshops. •
Wilderness Tourism Association	• Works to influence policy related to land tenure and security, land and resource use, marine use and fisheries. Not overly active in the Interlakes region. •
WildSafeBC	• WildSafeBC is a program designed, owned and delivered by the BC Conservation Foundation designed to reduce human-wildlife conflict through education, innovation and cooperation. •
Backcountry Horseman's Association of BC (BCHBC)	• This is a province wide society of over 900 members and 23 regional chapters. • The BCHBC is an organization that provides equestrians who are interested in trail riding and the back country, with a social and safe learning atmosphere where people of all ages and experience can enjoy trail riding and the wilderness experience. Through collaboration with individuals, government, business and other recreational users of public lands, we strive to preserve and enhance the use of public lands for all equestrians. • The organization's purpose is: o To work together with recreational groups, government agencies and the public to promote awareness and understanding for a cooperative wilderness experience. o To build new trails, trailheads and other facilities for horsemen. o To maintain and preserve existing equine trails - wilderness and urban.

Provincial Organizations and Associations	
Organization/Association	**Relevant Initiatives**
	○ To promote educational programs in safety, courtesy and environmental awareness. ○ To preserve access for Canadians to use horses and mules (equines) on public lands. • The BCHBC has three chapters in NWBC: Prince George-Omenica, Robson Valley and Skeena Stikine (Terrace).

Appendix G – Relevant Federal Ministries and Organizations

Relevant Federal Ministries and Organizations

Federal Ministries and Organizations	
Organization	**Relevant Initiatives**
Government of Canada More than 15 Government of Canada departments and agencies work together to support Canada's tourism industry.	• Promotional investment in the US Market. • Improving border access to Canada. Improving VISA services, e.g., reinstating VISA with Mexico. • Improving National Parks. • Financial support to tourism businesses, communities in partnership with other levels of government and with Indigenous communities. • Investing in tourism and cultural infrastructure, e.g., the Building Canada Plan and Canada's Economic Action Plan both invest in infrastructure that benefits tourism, such as convention centres, exhibition halls, arts centres, and sports, recreational, cultural and heritage assets • Supporting the development of Indigenous cultural tourism experiences, near national parks. • Support tools for cultural and heritage tourism.
Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada	• Focuses on creating partnerships between associations, organizations, government departments and industry leaders from across Canada to support the growth of Indigenous tourism in Canada and address the demand for development and marketing of authentic Indigenous experiences. • Often partners with Destination Canada.
Destination Canada is a federal Crown Corporation that is Canada's national tourism marketing organization. Annual budget $90 million	• Manages the Canada Brand. • Strategic marketing in 11 international markets: Australia, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, the UK and the US. • Market research and analysis. • EQ Program management. • Promotes product and industry development.
Parks Canada	• Protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage. Initiatives: Infrastructure Investment, Indigenous Affairs, Environmental Stewardship. • Major partnership with Destination Canada for 2017.
Canadian Heritage	• The Department of Canadian Heritage and its portfolio organizations play a vital role in the cultural, civic and economic life of Canadians. • Key programs include the Aboriginal People's Program and the Canada History Fund.

Federal Ministries and Organizations	
Organization	**Relevant Initiatives**
	• Marking the 150th year of Canadian confederation in 2017, Canadian Heritage had a budget of $360 million (between June 2015 and December 2018) to support key initiatives across Canada, which was known as the “Canada 150 Initiative”.

Appendix H – Northern BC Regional Profile

At the provincial level, Destination BC produces regional profiles for each of the tourism regions in the province. Key findings from the Northern British Columbia profile are highlighted below[6]: Note that these findings relate to pre-COVID-19.

- The Northern BC Tourism Region received 936,000 overnight person-visits in 2014, which generated $413 million in direct spending.
- BC visitors generated 65% of overnight visitation and 47% of overnight visitor spending.
- Same-day travelers accounted for 64% of visitor volume and 29% of visitor expenditures (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

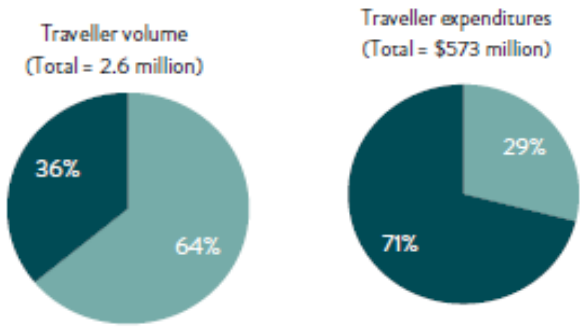
	Total		
	Overnight visitors (000s)	Spending ($000s)	Nights (000s)
*All travellers in Northern BC	936	$412,398	4,105
BC residents	604	$192,491	2,310
Other Canadian residents	141	$72,932	704
US residents**	149	$114,955	704
Other international residents**	72	$32,020	387

Source: Northern British Columbia Regional Profile, May 2017, Destination BC

**Travellers main purpose of the trip to Northern BC is classified as either Leisure (38%), Visiting Friends and Relatives (32%), Business (13%), and Other (16%).*

*** Due to small unweighted sample size, please use extreme caution when interpreting.*

Same day vs Overnight Visitor Volume and Expenditures



[6] Source: Northern British Columbia Regional Profile, May 2017, Destination BC. More details can be found at: http://www.destinationbc.ca/getattachment/Research/Research-by-Region/

Source: Northern British Columbia Regional Profile, May 2017, Destination BC

Northern BC Market Origin

Top five markets of origin (2014)		Share in Northern BC	
		Visitation	Spending
1	British Columbia	65%	47%
2	Alberta	12%	9%
3	Alaska	2%	1%
4	Washington	2%	2%
5	Nebraska	2%	4%

Source: Northern British Columbia Regional Profile, May 2017, Destination BC

- Over 40% of all traveller nights in the Northern British Columbia tourism region were spent in the residences of friends and family for all markets, except US residents.
- US residents spent more of their nights at camping or RV park facilities than travelers from other markets of origin.
- Overnight travellers who spent one or more nights in the Northern BC region took part in a number of outdoor activities during their trip, including visiting national or provincial parks, hiking/backpacking, camping, and wildlife viewing.
- Most people travelled to Northern BC during the peak summer months.

The following table shows the most popular activities for overnight visitors to Northern BC, by market. The most popular activities are outdoor oriented, followed by visiting museums, art galleries and historic sites.

	BC Residents	Other Canadians	US Residents**	Other International**
1	Camping	Hiking/Backpacking	National/Provincial or Nature Park	National/Provincial or Nature Park
2	Boating	Camping	Wildlife Viewing or Bird Watching	Wildlife Viewing or Bird Watching
3	Beach	National/Provincial or Nature Park	Historic Site	Hiking/Backpacking
4	Fishing	Wildlife Viewing or Bird Watching	Hiking/Backpacking	Historic Site
5	Hiking/Backpacking	Beach	Museum or Art Gallery	Museum or Art Gallery

**Activities listed could have taken place anywhere on the trip, not just in Northern British Columbia.*
*** Due to small unweighted sample size, please use caution when interpreting these data.*

Source: Northern British Columbia Regional Profile, May 2017, Destination BC.

	BC Residents	Other Canadians	US Residents*	Other International*
January - March	20%	24%	2%	4%
April - June	20%	21%	48%	26%
July - September	36%	47%	43%	66%
October - December	24%	8%	8%	3%

** Due to small unweighted sample size, please use caution when interpreting these data.*
Source: Northern British Columbia Regional Profile, May 2017, Destination BC.

As shown below, the top five markets by visitor volume for Northern BC are: BC, Alberta, Alaska, Germany and California.

			TOP FIVE MARKETS					
			VCM	VI	TOTA	KR	NBC	CCC
BY VISITOR VOLUME	Domestic	Alberta (2)	3	3	2	1	2	2
			7%	6%	19%	52%	12%	6%
		BC (1)	1	1	1	2	1	1
			39%	63%	62%	24%	65%	76%
		Ontario	4	5	5	4		
			5%	2%	1%	2%		
		Saskatchewan				5		
						2%		
	United States	Alaska (3)					3	5
							2%	2%
		California	5	4				
			4%	3%				
		Washington (5)	2	2	3	3	5	3
			11%	6%	3%	3%	1%	3%
	Overseas	Germany (4)					4	4
							2%	2%
		UK			4			
					2%			

Source: Destination BC, 2015.