

Visit White Rock

Tourism Implementation Plan
Destination White Rock

*Tourism BC, Community Tourism
Foundations® , and City of White Rock logos
to be added after client approval*

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Community Tourism Foundations®
White Rock Tourism Implementation Plan
DRAFT, FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

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VISIT WHITE ROCK Implementation Plan

White Rock Tourism Environment

Participants in the planning process involved people with many different mandates, reflecting the importance of tourism to initiatives throughout the city. White Rock is a powerful attraction for day trip visitors from the Lower Mainland, many of whom are attracted by the beach and nearby retail and food and beverage opportunities. While they are in White Rock many also attend the museum, the pier, and other historic or heritage assets. Further, White Rock attracts transient travelers, people motivated to attend festivals and events, diners, those considering White Rock as a new residence, and visiting friends and family members.

It should be noted that there is no current research available that defines why visitors choose White Rock. The tourism strategy is based on the experience of the planning session participants. Promoters of White Rock refer to it as romantic and “edgy”, while offering a laid-back, relaxed life style.

Visitors to Greater Vancouver

Tourism Vancouver reports that Greater Vancouver receives a total of 8.7 million overnight visitors who spent a cumulative total of \$4.5 billion in the area in 2006 – an average of \$112 per person per day or \$488 per person during their average 4.4 day trip. Half (50.3%) of those who visited the Greater Vancouver area stayed in hotel accommodation and 38% stayed with friends or relatives.

The \$4.5 Billion spent by these visitors was distributed to accommodation (31.8%), Food and beverage (26.0%), retail (19.0%), private transportation (8.8%), recreation and entertainment (9.2%), and public transportation (5.2%).

These visitors undertook many of the activities that are accessible to them in West Vancouver, including (2004 data):

- ◆ Shopping (69% of visitors)
- ◆ Sightseeing (62%)
- ◆ Visiting friends or relatives (55%)
- ◆ Attending “other” cultural events (41%)
- ◆ Visiting National or Provincial nature parks (36%)
- ◆ Participate in sports, outdoor activities (27%)
- ◆ Visit an historic site (27%)
- ◆ Going to a bar or nightclub (23%)
- ◆ Attending a festival or fair (9%)
- ◆ Golfing (3%)
- ◆ Downhill skiing or snowboarding (3%).

Other trip activities included: Attend sports events (7%), Visiting a theme or amusement park (7%), Go to a casino (5%), and Fishing (3%).

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Visits were distributed seasonally as follows:

- ◆ 1st Quarter: 18.17%
- ◆ 2nd Quarter: 24.6%
- ◆ 3rd Quarter: 35.9%
- ◆ 4th Quarter: 21.3%.

Tourism BC Research

In 2006, Tourism British Columbia conducted several marketing research studies among the residents of BC, Alberta, and Washington State. Further research in which Tourism BC participated addressed residents of other Canadian provinces and the United States. The research projects explored a variety of key marketing characteristics, including awareness and perception, travel behaviour, activities respondents participated in and their motivation to travel, and demographics. The results of these studies are being published in February and March 2007.

Early results indicated the importance of Vancouver, GVRD, and the Fraser Valley as a leading BC destination attracting interest from residents of Washington State, Alberta, and BC. This is not surprising, due to the size, high profile, and extensive marketing of Vancouver in the eyes of the markets included in the research.

Significant proportions of the respondents from these three markets had previously visited the Vancouver/GVRD/Fraser Valley area during the past five years. The primary activities of visitors to BC city destinations for vacations and getaways were found to be shopping, restaurants, sightseeing/attractions, history/heritage/museums, and culture/arts/theatre/galleries. In all three markets, respondents who assessed themselves as “likely to” or “might” travel to BC expected to participate in general sightseeing, relaxing, visiting friends and relatives, shopping, and a variety of outdoor activities. The Washington State respondents among these were most motivated by general sightseeing relaxing, shopping, hiking, and city/town sightseeing.

Impressions about BC volunteered by the respondents in all markets were dominated by scenery and beauty. Alberta respondents particularly noted BC’s ocean/beaches/water/lakes. Washington-resident respondents who had been to BC before noted the friendliness of the people and the fact there is lots to do in BC. Respondents from all of these markets were most highly motivated to visit BC by scenery and nature, followed by outdoor recreation.

Among those respondents familiar with the Vancouver Coast and Mountains region, nearly 80% of those in the Vancouver sample were significantly familiar with White Rock. Lower proportions (in the region of 30%) of those from other parts of BC and Alberta were familiar with White Rock but there was very limited awareness among residents of Washington State (including both East and West Washington).

Other research published recently by Tourism BC (Travel Activities and Motivation Study - US - 2006 “US TAMS”) noted that one third of Washington State resident travelers and 7% of California resident travelers had visited BC.

Although the sample size was small, data for White Rock from that study show:

- Nearly half of the respondents consider the main tourism appeals are the beaches,

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- Nearly one quarter indicated the appeal of “spas, restaurants, hotels, resorts, pubs (as White Rock has only one hotel this is likely a reflection on the restaurants and pubs)
- Nearly 20% indicated shopping.

The research also showed that a higher proportion of Vancouver respondents were “not at all likely” than were “very likely” to consider a vacation or getaway to White Rock. Overall, 20-30% of the respondents familiar with Vancouver Coast and Mountains showed higher propensity to visit White Rock for a vacation or getaway, led by residents of Vancouver, then Alberta, then other BC.

The US TAMS study notes that 76% of US travelers used the internet in trip planning (including travel booking sites, resort sites, and destination promotion sites), followed by past experience, guidance from friends and relatives, and maps. More than 18% of the US respondents said their sources of trip planning included articles in newspapers and magazines compared with 10.9% who used advertisements in newspapers and magazines. It is interesting that the kind of magazines the respondent read is consistent with the kind of attributes available in White Rock: their highest priorities are focused on Home and Garden, Food and Cooking, Health, Fitness, and Well Living, and news magazines.

Slightly more than half of the respondents in the US TAMS study started their trip planning with a destination in mind. This suggests the continued importance of expanding the awareness of White Rock as a destination in its targeted US markets. US travelers see good reasons to travel to BC.

Tourism BC plans further research to explore the regional marketplace for White Rock. The results of that research will be reported to White Rock Community Tourism Foundations® participants as they become available.

Positioning White Rock in its Tourism Marketplace

Consistent with the opinions of the participants in the Initial Meeting and subsequent planning sessions, this suggests good potential for growth in the tourism economy from the following strategies:

- Promoting White Rock’s primary attributes as the beach, food and beverage, interesting shopping, and festivals and events.
- Attracting the residents of the Lower Mainland and Western Washington State to visit White Rock for day trips, romantic getaways, small-group meetings, and as accommodation for business trips to the Lower Mainland.
- Raising awareness of White Rock as a destination and motivating decisions to visit White Rock among residents of the higher population areas of BC, Alberta, and western Washington State.
- Attracting leisure travel visitors and convention/business visitors to the Lower Mainland to visit White Rock.

There is a strong relationship between real estate marketing and tourism. While the Fraser Valley Real Estate Board has not recently conducted research that would identify the origin of the purchasers of real estate in White Rock, analysis of purchaser trends for 1994 and 2003 show clearly the decreasing proportion of purchasers from the Fraser Valley and Lower Mainland and the increasing proportion of purchasers from other parts of BC (tripled in

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proportion of all sales, from 3% to 10%) and from outside BC (up more than 250% in proportion, from 7% to 18%). The increasing influence of the “baby boomers” in real estate and travel purchases will be increasingly significant during the forthcoming 10-15 years.

Further, discussions with local realtors indicate that a large proportion of homes are sold to residents of Alberta and other parts of BC. These individuals first learn about the attributes of White Rock as visitors. This suggests a strong opportunity to develop a marketing alliance that benefits both the tourism industry (accommodation, food and beverage, attractions and entertainment, retail, and local transportation) and the realtors.

Existing promotion by private sector accommodators was also reviewed to determine joint marketing focus.

- White Rock’s Ocean Promenade Hotel features its oceanfront location, the beach, shops, boutiques, world class restaurants, spas, and outdoor activities (hiking, biking, golf, horseback riding, kayaking, and windsurfing). White Rock is promoted as a romantic getaway and a Vancouver-area accommodation choice.
- The White Rock Bed and Breakfast Association notes the value of the beach (including a wide selection of attractive images), shopping (including Marine Drive and uptown), food and beverage, activities and events, and the museum as primary reasons to visit White Rock.
- The website www.bedsandbreakfasts.ca, promoting seven White Rock B&B’s, entices visitors to White Rock as an interesting and cultural getaway with the following introduction:

“Browse White Rock’s quaint shops.....try your hand at catching crabs right from the piermarvel at the delightful array of fresh farm produce at a Farmers Marketsavour an oceanside, candlelight dinnerwatch local artists weave their magic on canvas go antiquingspend the whole day on the beachhit the links snuggle into a friendly Bed and Breakfastdo the Sunday Flea Marketwhatever your vacation pleasures the White Rock, Surrey areas of Greater Vancouver will give you something to write home about. Come see for yourself.”

These promotional strategies are consistent with the assets of White Rock and the apparent interest in the marketplace.

Community Input

An Open House on tourism took place in White Rock on September 13 2007 to allow members of the public to provide input on the tourism plan. The Community Tourism Foundations® facilitator presented the tourism plan and discussion ensued on related topics. Although there was low attendance, despite appropriate local promotion, the response was positive towards efforts to take better advantage of the benefits of tourism. A separate report, prepared by the City of White Rock on the Open House, is presented following the summary of survey results.

In concert with the Open House a survey was launched to gather residents’ opinions regarding the tourism economy. The survey was also placed on the City of White Rock website and links were established through other vehicles and mailing lists. The following notes summarize the results of the survey.

The survey instrument can be examined at the City of White Rock.

White Rock and Tourism

About your own visitors:

During the past 12 months, how many groups of visitors did you host in each of the following seasons?	Fall 2006	Winter 2006/7	Spring 2007	Summer 2007		
	26	24	20	32		
In total, how many people were included in all those groups?	136					
What was their average length of stay?	Average 3.5 days					
Where were they from (their normal residence)? Note all that apply. <i>Origins mentioned:</i>	Lower Mainland	Other BC	Alberta	Other Canada	US	Other Country
		7	2	5	6	4
Which of the following did your visitors do during their visit (check all that apply)? <i>Activities mentioned:</i>	Dined at beachfront restaurants, bars, lounges	Dined at uptown restaurants, bars, lounges	Visited the beach/pier area	Shopped at White Rock shops uptown		
	10	5	12	6		
	Shopped at White Rock beachfront area shops	Attended festivals and special events in White Rock	Experienced White Rock arts, culture, heritage, museums	Outdoor recreation or other outdoor activities		
	3	2	2	6		
Did your visitors find enough to do IN WHITE ROCK during their visit to White Rock?	Yes 8		No 3			
What activities did they want to do during their visit that they COULD NOT DO IN WHITE ROCK?	Hiking, tourist activities, eat out and shop, indoor activities, zoo, whale watching, galleries, craft shows, kid friendly things, rent canoes, kayak/bike/boat, dock boat, check out a mall,					
Which of the following types of accommodation were used by your visitors during their visit (Check all that apply)?	Stayed at my house	Local hotel	Local B&B	Local motel		
	8	2	1			
	Hotel /motel elsewhere in Lower Mainland	Camping	Boat	Other		
	3			2		

About managing White Rock's visitor economy

Do you believe it is important to manage the tourism economy in order to optimize the benefits of visitor spending and to minimize negative impacts?

Yes 9 No 0

Do you believe White Rock is managing its tourism economy appropriately?

Yes 1 No 8

Do you believe White Rock is obtaining the best value from its tourism economy?

Yes 1 No 8

What are the most important benefits of Tourism for White Rock?

- Economic benefits (most responses)

What benefits of tourism should be enhanced?

- Awareness
- Things to do
- Parking
- Accommodation
- Economic benefits
- Off season activities and tourism
- Reasonable accommodation
- Opening hours for shops

What negative impacts should be addressed?

- Welcome
 - Arts
 - Engage residents
 - Economic activity
 - Off season
 - Range of things to do
 - Negative press about White Rock council
 - Get people to beach without cars
 - Get rid of electrical wires
-

About White Rock as a tourism destination

How do you rate each of the following attributes of White Rock as a destination to motivate non-residents to spend money here? *Number of mentions*

<i>White Rock Attribute</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Adequate</i>	<i>Not adequate</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Arts, culture, and heritage exhibits	1	3	2	5
Bars and lounges	2	5	2	1
Family restaurants	4	4	2	0
Festivals and events	3	4	1	2
Indoor activities and attractions	0	1	3	4
Local hosting and interpretation	0	3	3	2
Local transportation and access within White Rock	0	5	3	2
Outdoor activities and attractions	1	4	4	1
Overnight accommodation (hotels, motels, B&B's)	1	2	5	2
Parking	2	2	5	1
Retail outlets suitable for tourists	0	4	2	4
Signage and wayfinding	0	3	2	4
Space for meetings	0	3	3	1
Upscale or "character" restaurants	3	3	3	0
Visitor information services	1	6	2	0
White Rock's "welcome" to visitors	1	2	5	0
Wildlife watching (e.g., birds, whales, etc.)	4	5	1	0

What do you suggest should be the highest priorities to enhance White Rock as a tourism destination in order to increase the benefits of visitor spending for local residents and to enhance the local experience of visitors?

- Branding
- Off season
- White Rock image
- Entertainment
- Sell White Rock (marketing)
- Increase "walkability"
- Expand promenade
- More activities
- Festivals
- Arts/Galleries
- Boat rentals
- THINK BIG!
- More to do
- Attractions
- Shuttle to beach
- Safe walking
- Marine Drive
- Highway signage
- Destination retail
- Circus/concert
- Small community feeling
- Keep trees
- More hotels/B&B's
- Skytram to beach
- A guaranteed experience
- Heritage
- "Drive Connection"
- Distinguish White Rock from South Surrey
- Compete as a small community (ride on coat tails of larger marketers)
- Residents and City Hall need to understand how much increased tourism can benefit the city
- Correct image in Lower Mainland from "parking problem" to "great place to visit"
- Signage



- Increase revenue from tourism industry
- Rain festival (January)
- Theming
- Eco tourism
- Access

More detailed information is contained in the survey response forms. However, it is evident from the data summarized here that while the respondents are proud of White Rock, they look to a White Rock to become a stronger destination with appropriate product development, marketing, and coordination in order to achieve the economic benefits of tourism.

City of White Rock Notes from Town Hall Meeting

The Town Hall Meeting, held in White Rock City Hall September 13, 2007, was preceded by a one-hour Open House with informative display panels, was held on September 13 in order to obtain input from the general public on the proposed Tourism Strategic Plan. The consultant presented an overview of the Summary Tourism Plan in order to ensure that all attendees had a clear understanding of the Plan's contents and impact to the City. This presentation was followed by an open discussion and question-and-answer period.

The common points raised are listed below:

- *B&B regulation through licensing*
- *Encourage business opportunities*
- *Market the beach area off-season*
- *Clarify White Rock's boundaries*
- *Directional signage to the beach needs to be more effective*
- *Parking challenges need addressing, i.e. employees, visitors*
- *Coordination with Washington*
- *Establish a clear vision for the waterfront area - certain improvements required (e.g. environmental concerns regarding swimming in ocean)*
- *Transportation and bike lane improvements (alternative to vehicles)*
- *C52 Bus should be free of charge within City proper*
- *Establish wireless access for all to access and enjoy*
- *Next steps - clarity will make things happen.*

Interpretation

The preliminary research noted above suggests significant opportunity to promote White Rock as a destination.

Many of the destination attributes of White Rock are consistent with the travel interest reported within the marketplace. As White Rock contains limited commercial overnight accommodation and few commercial attractions, growth in the tourism economy may be constrained by limitations on the amount of private sector funds available for marketing.

Therefore, the opportunity exists to enhance the image and identity of White Rock as a tourism destination by branding, and to promote increased awareness and motivation for potential visitors. As many overnight visitors to White Rock appear to

be visiting friends and relatives, strategies should be developed to encourage the hosts to promote increased visitation and longer stays, and to encourage their guests to experience more of White Rock.

Marketing strategies should take advantage of the value of the beach/pier, food and beverage, shopping, and festivals and events.

Strategies to attract visitors might include:

- Enhanced websites,
- Strong media relations promotion with lifestyle and travel media,
- Packaging and advertising,
- Alliances with the real estate sector,
- Targeted promotion.

Increasing tourism activity will drive the opportunity for new tourism businesses to be attracted to White Rock. Continued exploration of the components that constitute the experience of a visit to White Rock will reveal new opportunities for tourism attractions.

Tourism Direction

Tourism is already important to White Rock. Spending in White Rock by non-residents (tourists) significantly supports the accommodation, retail, food and beverage, and attractions and entertainment sectors of the local economy. The most evident tourism benefits occur on sunny days and in the peak summer months. However, there is potential for growth outside that time. Increased visitation by non-residents during the winter and shoulder season months would add valuable revenue for White Rock, contributing further strength to the commercial sector. Thus tourism is a driver of economic development.

The growth of the tourism economy requires leadership and a clear focus on optimizing the benefits for the tourism economy and its stakeholders. Consistently applied strategies and ongoing monitoring and evaluation are essential components of success. This is the domain of a lead tourism organization.

White Rock does not have any agency empowered to exercise this leadership. Consequently there is inconsistent destination marketing and there are limited resources available to add destination development experience. To take the best advantage of the growth potential in its tourism economy, White Rock should establish tourism leadership and take actions focused on that mission.

In practical terms, establishing such an organization and executing a White Rock tourism plan will be achieved through “baby steps” - limited by the availability of financial and human resources and the size and nature of White Rock’s tourism industry.

The tourism plan outlined in this report and the accompanying summary report provides a long term perspective. Priorities will be determined annually and executed within the capacity of the resources that are available.

However, the first step is to provide and fund an organization to take the lead to get the process under way.

White Rock Tourism

The planning group recommended that the White Rock BIA takes the role as the Lead Tourism Organization to coordinate and promote White Rock as a premier tourism destination. In response, it is the intention of the BIA to form a separate tourism division, to be called White Rock Tourism, and engage a Tourism Director to exercise this responsibility. The Tourism Director would become the “champion” of tourism in White Rock and would assume the primary responsibilities of a Lead Tourism Organization.

Further, the BIA proposes to contract with Vancouver Coast and Mountains Tourism Association, the Regional Destination Marketing Organization, to execute much of the marketing activity.

Following are the roles and responsibilities proposed to be assumed by the Tourism Director and by Vancouver Coast and Mountains:

Tourism Director

- Develop and execute a strategic marketing plan including ongoing research, monitoring, and evaluation programming.
- Develop and maintain a marketing contract with Vancouver Coast and Mountains
- Develop and execute shoulder- and winter- season marketing initiatives
- Manage a web page promoting White Rock as a tourism destination
- Motivate White Rock tourism stakeholders to invest in VCM and White Rock marketing initiatives
- Be the “face” and promoter of tourism in White Rock:
 - Facilitate networking opportunities and communication for tourism industry participants
 - Develop and maintain strong alliances with local media and community organizations to present a strong tourism presence
 - Develop initiatives to encourage businesses and residents to participate in attracting visitors and motivating visitor spending
- Motivate tourism industry stakeholders and local partners to participate in tourism marketing initiatives
- Seek additional sustainable funding to support the growth of tourism
- Provide required reporting to stakeholders, the City of White Rock, and appropriate community organizations
- Assist and encourage the development of new tourism product in White Rock
- Manage the budget allocated for tourism
- Participate in sub-regional tourism initiatives.

Vancouver Coast and Mountains

Vancouver Coast and Mountains Tourism Association is the Regional Destination Marketing Organization mandated to promote this region. Readers should review the programming of this organization at www.coastandmountains.bc.ca. Vancouver Coast and

Mountains is funded by Tourism BC and stakeholder co-investment in marketing initiatives.

A strong alliance already exists between White Rock's tourism industry (as an existing stakeholder) and Vancouver Coast and Mountains. Continued enhancement of this relationship should be a priority.

Vancouver Coast and Mountains offers several initiatives that will benefit the growth of White Rock's tourism economy. These will be explored in further detail as detailed marketing planning continues.

Co-investment in Vancouver Coast and Mountains marketing initiatives provides the opportunity for significant leveraging of White Rock's investment as the opportunity exists to take advantage of buying into larger and more powerful ads than can be achieved directly.

Further, Vancouver Coast and Mountains executes a strong media relations program focused on motivating travel and lifestyle writers to develop articles on the destination. Media relations activities conducted by White Rock's tourism promoters would be conducted directly in conjunction with Vancouver Coast and Mountains.

In this new agreement between Tourism White Rock and Vancouver Coast and Mountains, VCM will provide the following guidance, opportunities, and support:

- Assist in ongoing marketing planning, contributing professional guidance and both conventional and innovative approaches
- Develop and execute initiatives that will position White Rock in its targeted markets
- Motivate White Rock tourism stakeholders to invest in VCM and White Rock marketing initiatives.

Roles and Responsibilities

Although Tourism White Rock will take the lead in building a strong tourism economy, the BIA, the Chamber of Commerce, and the City of White Rock are also implicated with the direct tourism industry stakeholders in building a strong tourism economy. The following chart selects key areas of the tourism strategy and illustrates the roles of the Tourism Director, the White Rock BIA, the White Rock, South Surrey Chamber of Commerce, and the City of White Rock.

Community Engagement

Community engagement will be a vital ongoing role for Tourism White Rock. Through community engagement strategies described later in this document, the Tourism Director will pursue enhanced awareness of the importance and benefits of tourism in the business and residential communities, encouraging those constituents to support tourism initiatives.

The Tourism Director will execute a comprehensive program of activities in which the BIA, Chamber of Commerce, and City of White Rock will also participate. The following chart shows examples of the roles and responsibilities of these agencies in key areas of programming and communication. This list is not exclusive. The lead role in each area is to be exercised by the Tourism Director.

- **Engagement of Residents**
 - BIA
 - Presence at all major White Rock events (Spirit of the Sea, Canada Day, Tour de White Rock, block parties, Regatta)
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Chamber events used as a platform to support BIA driven events, website, VC operation year town with presence for locals
 - City of White Rock
 - Using City Page, open houses, town hall meetings, media communications
- **Engagement of the Businesses Community**
 - BIA
 - Understand relationship to tourism economy, making your business tourism friendly, links on website, articles in StreetFront (400 distribution)
 - Chamber
 - SuperHost, welcome initiatives, business education, presentations and discussions at Chamber of Commerce events, articles in Semiahmoo Commerce (newsletter - 800 members)
 - City of White Rock
 - Policy and regulations - sign by law, deregulation, simplifying, "business friendly", revisit parking strategy
- **Engagement of Local Government**
 - BIA
 - Presentations to council on the progress of tourism; work with City of White Rock on regulation issues, appropriate

- participation in relevant City Committees - (e.g., economic development, planning, arts/culture/heritage)
 - Chamber
 - Actively support the BIA's leadership
 - City of White Rock
 - Continue to support the tourism direction and provide administrative facilitation for operational services
 - **Engagement of Local Media - putting a face on tourism**
 - BIA
 - Provides supporting information, story ideas, create events that are tourist friendly and media worthy, provide statistics
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Provides supporting information, story ideas, create events that are tourist friendly and media worthy, provide statistics
 - City of White Rock
 - Provides supporting information, story ideas, create events that are tourist friendly and media worthy, provide statistics
 - Provide support from the City of White Rock Communication Officer
 - **Engagement of Other Community Organizations (Community service clubs, foundations and action groups)**
 - BIA
 - Promotes tourism messages through other participation in those organizations
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Promotes tourism messages through other participation in those organizations
 - City of White Rock
 - Promotes tourism messages through other participation in those organizations.

Destination Development

The primary role of White Rock Tourism with respect to destination development is to facilitate the continuing evolution of the destination in a manner that is consistent with the expectations of visitors. White Rock Tourism cannot make investments in, or actively drive, destination projects, but can encourage appropriate organizations to do so and contribute tourism expertise to their planning. Primary activities are:

- **Create a tourism-friendly community environment, including:**
 - City of White Rock to take the lead, integrating the knowledge and experience of the BIA, Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations as appropriate. Key areas of influence are:
 - Aesthetics/design/visuals
 - Access, land planning, local transportation, signage, and parking (cars and tour buses)
 - Facilitation new or expanded attractions and tourism friendly environment, theming
 - Redefine concept of parks
 - Branding for the community as a destination

NB: This is a long term goal that requires prioritization and its own implementation plan.



- **Create resident-friendly activities for off season**
 - BIA to take the lead
 - Continue to expand retail mix
 - Create special events among retailers and restaurateurs focused on residents
 - Make every day a White Rock event day.
- **Festivals and events**
 - Tourism Director:
 - Motivates other people and organizations to stage new events focused on attracting non-residents
 - BIA
 - Identify ways to create festival and event linkages that benefit the growth of the business economy
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - Identify ways to create festival and event linkages that benefit the growth of the business economy
 - City of White Rock
 - Simplify and communicate process associated with festival and event approvals and execution.
- **Business attraction**
 - BIA to take the lead
 - BIA
 - Focus on attracting indoor activities and activities for families and
 - City of White Rock
 - Economic Development Office to actively promote tourism business attraction.
- **Integration with other plans**
 - City of White Rock to facilitate the inclusion of the tourism mandate in appropriate planning processes.
- **Amtrak stop in White Rock**
 - City of White Rock to continue to pursue this high-value initiative, which would create significant benefits for the White Rock tourism economy.
- **Support existing sectors of the tourism industry.** Local sectors and initiatives include
 - Arts, Culture and Heritage
 - Outdoor recreation activities
 - Eco-tourism
 - Wildlife watching
 - Retailers
 - Restaurant
 - New White Rock Community Centre.

Tourism Director to facilitate tourism initiatives and deliver tourism messages

- City of White Rock

- BIA
- Chamber
- Other community organizations (White Rock Museum and Archives Society, White Rock and Community Arts Council, White Rock Arts Society, School District 36, Leisure Services, Communities In Bloom, Parks, etc.).

Visitor servicing

Responsibility for visitor servicing would continue to be maintained by the White Rock, South Surrey Chamber of Commerce. Primary responsibilities with respect to visitor servicing are:

- Operate the visitor centres
 - Explore the opportunity to operate the beach area visitor centre on a year round basis with expanded facilities
- Provide fulfillment in response to visitor information requests
- Participate actively in “Welcome to White Rock” initiatives
- Encourage visitors to spend money in White Rock, focusing first on the primary areas of the tourism economy:
 - Accommodation
 - Food and beverage
 - Entertainment, attractions, activities, and events
 - Retail
 - Local transportation.

Destination Marketing

Destination Marketing activities are also described elsewhere in this document. The following summary identifies the primary areas of responsibility, all of which are led by the Tourism Director.

This area of responsibility would be pursued directly by the Tourism Director in consultation with White Rock and regional tourism stakeholders and Vancouver Coast and Mountains. However, it will be essential for the Tourism Director to maintain strong communication with the identified community organizations and the City of White Rock to maintain strong coordination and teamwork.

Destination Marketing

- Execute a media relations, in conjunction with Vancouver Coast and Mountains, to optimize opportunities with travel, activities, and lifestyle writers
- Develop and execute advertising initiatives to promote the White Rock (using the new White Rock place branding) and to enhance awareness of the destination in this highly competitive marketplace
- Develop and execute cooperative marketing initiatives (advertising, consumer show attendance) to include tourism operators
- Develop publications to reflect the White Rock place branding and White Rock’s tourism attributes, providing opportunities for “buy in” by local tourism operators
- Develop both traditional and non-traditional partnerships and alliances appropriate to building a strong tourism economy



- Promote packaging and promotions initiatives to motivate visitors to choose White Rock
- Establish a research, monitoring and evaluation program to optimize marketing investments
- Execute marketing initiatives to attract local residents to understand and experience the tourism attributes of their own community
 - Execute an annual “Tourism in your own Town” event.

The Tourism Budget

Limited funds are available to execute the tourism plan for White Rock. The funds available will permit only minor marketing initiatives

The proposed budget for the first three years is as follows:

Source of Funds	Year 1 \$	Year 2 \$	Year 3 \$
City of White Rock - Parking Funds	15,000	15,000	15,000
White Rock BIA - Existing promotion budget	15,000	15,000	15,000
White Rock, South Surrey Chamber of Commerce (from existing tourism fund)	15,000	15,000	15,000
Other community sources (to be identified)	20,000	20,000	20,000
Tourism BC Community Tourism Foundations® Implementation Fund	20,000	20,000	10,000
Total direct resources	85,000	85,000	75,000
Use of funds			
Tourism Director and related costs (800 hours)	25,000	25,000	25,000
Marketing contract with Vancouver Coast and Mountains	5,000	5,000	5,000
Advertising and promotional activities	55,000	55,000	45,000
Total funds invested	85,000	85,000	75,000

To the maximum extent possible, these funds will be leveraged further through investment in conjunction with Vancouver Coast and Mountains initiatives.

A primary responsibility for the Tourism Director will be to achieve two specific goals with respect to the White Rock Tourism budget:

1. Increase the amount of money invested in marketing White Rock
2. Obtain sustainable funding for White Rock Tourism.

Accountability is an essential component of successful community tourism development and will be achieved through an appropriate research, monitoring, and evaluation program.

Marketing Activities

Marketing activities in the early years will be limited due to the amount of funds available. As credibility increased through the reporting processes and sustainable funding for tourism evolves, it is anticipated that the budget will increase and further market penetration can be achieved. It is important to acknowledge that destination marketing is highly competitive and nearby competing communities invest heavily in destination marketing to achieve the growth in their own tourism economy.

In the first two to three years, selective investments will be made targeted towards the highest yield markets:

- Local residents
 - Includes a specific focus on attracting visiting friends and relatives
- Lower Mainland residents
- Lower Mainland visitors
- Transient travellers
- Visitors exploring White Rock as an option for a vacation or retirement location.

Likely only the following program can be executed in the short term:

- Target Markets:
 - Local
 - Visiting Friends and Relatives
 - Lower Mainland populations
 - Visitors to the Lower Mainland
- Initiatives will include:
 - Visitors guides
 - Local media relations
 - Broader media relations
 - Web based initiatives
 - Vancouver Coast and Mountains initiatives
 - Local and Lower Mainland advertising
- Focus of promotions will be:
 - Awareness of White Rock as a destination and motivation to experience White Rock
 - Activities, attractions, and entertainment making White Rock a destination
 - Special promotions focused on food and beverage, shopping
 - Getaways
 - Activity motivated trips and packages.

In the longer term, initiatives focused on the following reasons to travel will be developed focused on the selected targeted markets. A broader view of the opportunities is shown below:

Media Relations

- Separate action plans;
 - Local media
 - Direct local engagement with stories, articles, etc.
 - Broader travel, activities, and lifestyle media

- Pursued in a formal media strategy with Vancouver Coast and Mountains

Broad Based Initiatives

- White Rock Visitors Guide (focused on the Peninsula)
- Visit White Rock Visitors Guide (25,000 distribution)

Festivals and Events

- VCM Media Relations and website;
- Consumer e-News
 - No cost for entry,
- Banner ads;
- Advertorial;
- Tourism BC "What's New"

Activity Oriented Tourism Promotions

Promotions in regional media and locally

- Bird Watching
- Shopping
- Dining
- Ocean-based activities
 - Crabbing
 - Kayaking
 - Skim Boarding
 - Sailing
 - Wind surfing
 - Kite boarding
- Promenade
 - Pier
 - People watching
 - Jogging
 - Sunsets
- Beach
 - Waling
 - Kiting
 - Sunbathing
 - Swimming
 - Beachcombing
- Culture
 - First Nation mask carving
 - Art events
 - Galleries
 - Museum.

Special Promotions

- "Get to Know White Rock"
 - Get local residents to invite people through and ambassador program
- "Girl's Night Out"



- Women's magazines;
 - New Crave,
 - Women's Groups direct,
 - Vancouver outdoor show,
 - Taboo - The Vancouver Sex Show
- "White Rock is a Feeling"
 - Special events (including media coverage)
 - Lifestyle publications
 - Newspapers
- "Step back in Time"
 - Magazines
 - Lifestyle publications
 - Newspapers
- "Life's a Beach"
- Escape to White Rock
 - Vancouver Magazine;
 - Escapes and Getaways Section in Province/Sun (VCM),
 - Some VCM publications;
 - Cascadia Weekly LifeStyle US targeted
 - Sunset Magazine (US targeted)

Place Branding and Marketing

The planning analysis included a review of awareness, image and identity, and motivation to travel to White Rock. The City of White Rock is directly pursuing place branding.

Participants in the planning meeting addressed these issues also. The following notes summarize the results of their analysis. This summary is grouped according to the questions addressed by the participants in the planning meeting. These comments provided by the planning group participants lead to opportunities for destination development and provide some textural input for branding White Rock as a tourism destination.

- **What are the five most compelling reasons for leisure travelers to visit White Rock in a competitive tourism environment?**
 1. Beach, bay area activities (weather dependent)
 2. Restaurants, food and beverage
 3. Ambiance/lifestyle
 4. Festivals and events
 5. Shopping
 6. Visiting friends and relatives

- **What are the five most compelling reasons leisure travelers would choose NOT to visit White Rock in a competitive tourism environment?**
 1. Inclement weather (tourism operators note that their business is significantly weather dependent, likely because decisions to visit White Rock for day trips can be made in the primary market (Lower Mainland) based on the weather on the day.
 2. Parking
 3. Limited accommodation
 4. Lack of activities
 5. Perception that there is nothing to do outside the “beach” season
 6. Lack of retail variety
 7. Lack of awareness
 8. Not invited by fiends and relatives

- **What relevant values of White Rock residents influence tourism?**
 1. Sense of community/closeness in the community
 2. Proximity to scenery and pristine environment (trails, outdoor activities, scenery)
 3. Small town values: sense of community, safety and security
 4. Inclusive; unity, friendly
 5. Non-corporate
 6. Sensitivity to environmental protection
 7. Prestige to be a WR resident
 8. Celebrating the nostalgia of past visits



- **What is the image that White Rock projects as a tourism destination to those who visit now?**
 1. Seaside town
 2. Instant escape
 3. Beautiful, clean, quiet, peaceful, quaint, safe, charming, ambiance
 4. Culinary focus (culinary destination???)
 5. Artsy and urbane
 6. Boring (closes at night and in the winter)
 7. Spring Break destination
 8. White Rock

- **How do those who do not know White Rock well view this destination?**
 1. Retirement community
 2. Location is “Lower Mainland”; LM residents know it’s near the US border
 3. Weather
 4. Seaside location
 5. Elitist
 6. Expensive to visit, live
 7. Parking challenges
 8. Geographic confusion (DK, remote, awkward, etc.) - perhaps due to Peninsula location

- **What do people not know about WR that they should know?**
 - ❖ **Passionate**
 - Sunsets
 - Vibrant arts, culture community
 - “perfect place to vacation and live”
 - Welcoming, friendly and inclusive
 - Great climate
 - White Rock is celebrating its history

 - ❖ **Product-related, logistical**
 - Culinary destination
 - Bird watching
 - Launch pad for outdoor recreation and tourism (kayaking, hiking, swimming, walking)
 - Sailing destination
 - Totem plaza
 - Promenade
 - Close to other LM and PNW communities
 - Lifestyle, heritage, nostalgia
 - Accessible

- **How would you be proud to describe White Rock as a tourism destination in its competitive marketplace?**
 1. California of Canada
 2. Scenic
 3. Feeling of White Rock
 4. Unique in the Lower Mainland
 5. Seaside, ocean community



6. Culinary experiences
7. Vibrant, historic community (historic identity of the seaside)
8. Small town values, big city benefits
9. Proximity to LM and US attractions and communities
10. Recreation Mecca
11. Clean, no bugs, good drinking water
12. Multicultural, inclusive
13. Sense of familiarity / belonging
14. Romantic destination/getaway
15. Walking destination (modules, beach front, trails)

Measures of Success

The participants in the planning process determined that measures of success with respect to a stronger tourism economy would be:

- Community attitudes
 - A common vision for the growth of White Rock's tourism economy
 - An increasing sense of community pride
 - "Converts" to support tourism
 - Breaking down "nimby"-ism
 - An open and active community
- White Rock lifestyle
 - Enhanced lifestyles
 - Economic growth
 - A busy community
- A stronger tourism economy
 - Increased visitor-days outside the summer season
 - Full hotels, B&B's, and restaurants
 - Advanced bookings for tours
 - Greater critical mass in the tourism economy
 - The addition of new, high quality tourism product
 - Increased reporting of White Rock by "unpaid" media (travel writers)
- Greater accountability
 - Tourism statistics reported (trends analysis, # of tourism businesses, employment)
 - Semi-Formal reporting of operator-level performance by restaurateurs, retailers, B&B's and hotel
 - Quantified measures of the return on marketing investments
- General business benefits in White Rock
 - Retail spending is increased, leading to a profitable business environment.
 - Increased retail longevity and minimal empty retail space as attrition reduces due to the increasingly successful business environment
 - There is a steady influx of new businesses
 - A stronger White Rock economy resulting from a successful business environment
- Events and activities
 - Increased attendance of non-residents at events
 - New volunteers attracted due to renewed enthusiasm
- A growing population



- People are attracted to White Rock as visitors, then choose to live here
- Continually increasing proportions of real estate sales to in-migrants
- A happy, healthy community.

These characteristics should be tracked in White Rock on an ongoing basis as measures of success.

Goals and Objectives

The following pages expand on the execution of the goals and objectives identified through the planning process. Detailed implementation priorities are identified for each component of the tourism direction. Each goal starts on a new page.

Goal 1: Make tourism White Rock's industry.

Strategy:

Execute a strategic tourism marketing plan to optimize economic growth and community benefits from tourism.

Objectives:

1. Increase visitor spending in White Rock
2. Optimize appropriate alliances for the promotion of tourism
3. Establish a media relations program among travel writers and other selected journalists in the marketplace and create a media kit

Deliverables:

- 1 Increase visitor spending in White Rock
 - ◆ Develop and execute a strategic marketing plan to attract non-resident spending
 - i) Bring focus through research-based marketing direction
 - ii) Focus on optimizing a return on the marketing investment
 - iii) Target selected markets and experiences
 - (1) Geographic markets include residents in and visitors to the Lower Mainland; Alberta and the US Pacific Northwest residents; visitors to South Surrey
 - (2) Activity-motivated travel includes beach, food and beverage, retail, outdoor activities (e.g., kayaking, bird-watching, and walking), arts and culture, history and heritage, festivals and events, and meetings and conventions
 - (3) Targets include overnight leisure travellers, small corporate meetings, conference delegates in the Lower Mainland, and day trippers
 - (a) Emphasize "getaway" packages
 - (b) Trip durations include day trips, outings, overnight stays
 - ◆ Motivate non-residents to spend money in White Rock businesses
 - i) Optimize influential visitor servicing opportunities
 - ii) Create fluidity of the experience for visitors
 - ◆ Track and report on the performance of the marketing plan
- 2 Optimize appropriate alliances for the promotion of tourism
 - ◆ Motivate a White Rock marketing team to invest in joint marketing initiatives focused on increasing revenue in the front line tourism businesses (accommodation, food and beverage, retail, attractions, entertainment, and the arts, and local transportation)
 - i) Ensure marketing initiatives are driven by sustainable funding
 - ii) Partners should include public and private sector sources
 - (1) Private sector businesses invest for their own return
 - (2) Public sector partners invest to attract economic growth, economic benefits, and other community benefits
 - ◆ Develop targeted marketing initiatives in conjunction with Vancouver Coast and Mountains and other partners



- 3 Establish a media relations program to engage, inform, and motivate travel writers and other selected journalists in the marketplace. The media relations program should be documented and should focus on the following key strategies:
 - ◆ Targeting and attracting the attention of selected media writers and producers in conjunction with Vancouver Coast and Mountains and Tourism BC; qualify media as appropriate
 - ◆ Create a media kit, to provide writers with the following key information:
 - i) Background information about White Rock (location, population, economy, facts and figures, etc.)
 - ii) Tourism information about White Rock, including:
 - (1) “Official” and “Unofficial” reasons to visit White Rock - media writers like to find unique and “insider” or “secret” stories
 - (2) Things to do and things to see - seasonal differences - what’s unique?
 - (3) What to do when it is raining - what’s unique?
 - (4) Museum, arts, cultural offerings - what’s unique?
 - (5) Food and beverage opportunities - what’s unique?
 - (6) Retail opportunities - what’s unique?
 - (7) Outdoor recreation
 - (8) Regional connections.
 - iii) Include a list of key contacts.
 - ◆ Stimulate well-researched stories about White Rock and about the components/tourism assets of White Rock as a destination
 - i) Both “story starters” and developed stories should be prepared. Both will be used. Ideas for stories will be found in various locations, including the White Rock Archives, responses by visitors to White Rock websites, among community residents and businesspeople.
 - ii) Include contacts for further details.
 - ◆ Establish a hosting program and facilitator to ensure visits by media writers and producers are first class experiences and that the media person has access to everything they want. Some writers want to be left alone and others prefer to be guided or hosted - but they all need to have a local contact to facilitate their experience and research.
 - ◆ Establish an image bank, perhaps online, to provide high quality images for reproduction.

Goal 2: Make a White Rock invitation compelling. Make “Welcome to White Rock” a way of life.

This goal is about the engagement of the community. It is focused on motivating the 18,500 residents and the business community to promote White Rock.

Strategy:

Engage the residential and business community through direct communication, media, and community alliances focused on building awareness of tourism benefits and opportunities. Motivate the community to invite visitors and to stimulate their White Rock tourism experience.

Beneficiaries will be tourism industry participants, the business community, and the population in general. Messages must describe these benefits in a way that will promote action.

Objectives:

1. Engage the business and residential communities to raise awareness of the benefits of tourism.
2. Integrate local media outlets into communication strategies focused on raising awareness of tourism
3. Motivate the business and residential community to promote White Rock
4. Build inclusive alliances with key community partners.

Deliverables for each Objective:

1. Engage the business and residential communities to raise their awareness of the benefits of tourism.
 - Define the benefits of tourism for the residential and business communities
 - Define methods to **communicate the value of tourism**; Establish a benchmark and measures to evaluate local perceptions
 - Use parking meter, museum, and Visitor Centre statistics
 - Initiate a survey among the restaurants and other tourism operators to gather relevant data.
 - Conduct research among the population to explore awareness and attitudes regarding the value of tourism (not a high priority as many messages are known)
 - Induce every resident and business person to understand the benefits of tourism
 - Establish a “benefits catalogue” to guide increasing awareness, including appropriate messaging
 - Create messages and a Public Relations strategy to promote the value and benefits of tourism in White Rock
 - Integrate messages that address tax sensitivity
 - Encourage retailers and restaurateurs to understand the benefits of a strong tourism economy for them.



- Motivate locals to “shop local” to reinforce their awareness of things to do and encourage local business people to make this a beneficial and motivating experience for their customers
 - Actively encourage local residents to attract “snowbirds” and initiate home exchange programs.
2. Integrate local media outlets into communication strategies focused on raising awareness of tourism
- Develop a local media relations strategy for tourism
 - Execute innovative initiatives to involve local media outlets to communicate and promote community pride in, and awareness of, tourism
 - Create a digital media plan.
3. Motivate the business and residential community to promote White Rock
- Establish a “White Rock Pride” ambassador program to encourage every resident and business person to promote White Rock at every opportunity (potential is 18,500 promoters!)
 - Establish recognition programs to enhance community engagement
 - Engage the Chamber of Commerce and Business Improvement Association in this initiative
 - Develop action plans to stimulate White Rock residents to invite their friends and relatives to visit White Rock and to motivate residents to encourage their guests to take advantage of White Rock’s tourism assets (accommodation, food and beverage, retail, heritage/arts/culture/festivals, and local transportation)
 - Motivate and support residents and business people to take positive action to attract meetings, conventions, banquets, and similar events to White Rock
 - Integrate tourism-related initiatives in existing and new community events (trade shows, festivals, etc.) to raise awareness of tourism.
4. Build inclusive alliances with key community partners and community organizations:
- To enhance communicating the benefits of tourism among their audiences
 - To encourage them to take part in identifying and stimulating new opportunities for tourism development.
 - Alliance partners include the City of White Rock, First Nations, BIA, Chamber of Commerce, business community, service clubs, lobby groups, and non-traditional partners such as the Real Estate and Financial industries.
 - Encourage Vancouver Coast and Mountains to participate in communicating tourism messages to these organizations -
 - ◆ Build on the message “here are the VCM statistics. Let’s find some ways increase White Rock’s market share”
 - Build tourism awareness initiatives into existing events in the community that are focused on community residents (e.g., local trade shows, entertainment events, etc.).

Goal 3: Facilitate the continuing evolution of White Rock as well rounded tourism destination offering environmental, arts and culture, history and heritage, culinary, retail, festival, and scenic/activity-driven experiences.

Strategy:

Execute a tourism destination plan that has been developed by tourism industry, other business, community organization, and government leaders.

Objectives:

1. Create White Rock as a mosaic of tourism-friendly venues and activities
2. Empower an organization or mandate to direct and facilitate the execution of the plan
3. Motivate the tourism leaders, First Nations, government, and other community leaders to implement the tourism plan
4. Through a monitoring and evaluation process, track and report on progress towards the vision for tourism.

Deliverables:

1. Create White Rock as a year-round mosaic of tourism-friendly venues and activities
 - Develop a precinct plan addressing the waterfront and other areas
 - Four precincts have been identified
 - Facilitate the evolution of the precinct or neighborhood plan into architecture, business order, and sub-local vision for the mini destination
 - Create a “Seaside Centre” building and space as a focus for small events
 - Perhaps on/near the pier?
 - Public policy direction, financial resources, and time must be committed to pursue this objective
 - Bring a growth focus to each aspect of White Rock’s tourism inventory and the related infrastructure
 - Integrate Peace Arch News events publication
 - Attract new “human power” attractions and events (including festivals) and build on this as part of the identity of White Rock
 - Ideas for new events of this nature that are suited to the White Rock area are pedal boats, kayaking, canoeing, wind surfing, and skimming
 - The vision and imagination to create these new events are available in White Rock
 - Additional financial and human resources are required in order to implement new initiatives
 - ◆ Cannot ticket or constrain public access to the experience
 - ◆ The participants acknowledge that the availability of volunteers and sponsorships are limited due to the size of the city
 - Facilitate the addition of new tourism product consistent with the vision and themes for White Rock.
 - Include local tours



- Use volunteers - integrate the Volunteer Centre as part of Ambassador program
 - Stimulate new events and activities: Need lots of things happening in many locations (buskers, etc.)
 - The opportunity may exist to initiate a new arts festival during the off season
 - Explore the opportunity to stimulate major icon attractions with partners such as the railway company, First Nations.
 - BIA to add relevant questions about tourism to its business gap analysis
 - Maintain a focus on arts and culture.
 - There are limited venues, dominated by commercial galleries uptown.
 - Arts groups don't see themselves as being tourism generators.
 - They should be integrated into a tourism strategy
 - Longer term:
 - Need to attract additional boutique hotel or meeting/convention facility. Shorter term: build on small meetings that fit the Ocean Promenade Hotel and take advantage of South Surrey opportunity
 - Undertake a survey of B&B operators to learn about their guests as a key component of the tourism economy.
2. Empower an organization or mandate to direct and facilitate the execution of the tourism plan. In this respect the White Rock South Surrey Chamber of Commerce has operated visitor centres but there is indistinct coordination or leadership of tourism. In order to progress with tourism initiatives it will be essential to empower and fund an organization to provide and facilitate that leadership.
- Key priorities with respect to the operation of the lead tourism organization are:
- Establish sustainable funding
 - Create and maintain a destination development team or Destination Development Board formed of tourism stakeholders, under the leadership of a "tourism visionary or champion to motivate and oversee pursuit of the evolution of White Rock as a year-round tourism destination
 - Address human resources development as a key issue that may constrain the growth of the tourism economy
 - Motivate the tourism industry participants to deliver the highest calibre tourism experience.
 - **Focus on building business outside the summer season**
 - Execute a strategic marketing plan with public and private sector investment.
3. Motivate tourism industry leaders, First Nations, government, and other community leaders to implement the tourism plan
- Tourism industry, government, and other community leaders to form an agreement on implementing the tourism plan
 - Motivate a review of Civic policy to explore opportunities to make the destination more attractive to tourism business investors and to visitors
 - Integrate with the strategies of the White Rock Spirit of BC Committee and the new economic strategic plan.
4. Through a monitoring and evaluation process, track and report on progress towards the vision for tourism.



- Develop an appropriate system to track progress
 - Confirm “measuring sticks” - addressed later in this document
- Report regularly to appropriate audiences on progress and new initiatives (audiences include tourism industry players, City Council, White Rock community organizations, Vancouver Coast and Mountains, local media).

Goal 4: Position and brand White Rock as a desirable, year-round destination consistent with the market opportunity and product offering, the City of White Rock’s plans and goals, other community priorities, and appropriate principles of marketing.

This goal was included to provide initial guidance to destination branding, in light of the City of White Rock’s branding initiative.

Strategy:

Develop and promote a statement of image and identity, a positioning statement and a brand for White Rock.

Objectives:

1. Define and brand White Rock as a destination
2. Position White Rock locally to bring focus to the tourism opportunity
3. Position White Rock in its marketplace to motivate potential visitors to select White Rock

Deliverables:

1. Define and brand White Rock as a destination
 - Define a “White Rock Brand”
 - Use professional guidance
 - Evaluate other relevant branding in White Rock
 - Test in the community (White Rock) and in the primary marketplace (Lower Mainland) using focus group analysis
 - Build an image and identity to focus branding
 - Use input and themes provided through the tourism planning process and other community input
 - Develop appropriate statements and imagery to convey the brand, including perhaps colour and image theming, a logo, and slogan.
 - Establish use and publication standards consistent with the brand
2. Position White Rock locally to bring focus to the tourism opportunity
 - Promote the image, identity, and brand among the residential and business communities to bring focus to stimulation of new tourism product development and related infrastructure development
3. Position White Rock in its marketplace to motivate potential visitors to select White Rock
 - a. Build a clear image and identity for marketing based on the branding research and conclusions
 - b. Ensure that external marketing initiatives are focused through and directly convey the image and identity statements and the branding.

White Rock - The Destination

Primary Opportunities for Destination Development

The planning process identified several priorities for destination development in White Rock. These are:

- ❖ Hotel accommodation
 - White Rock has only one hotel and a selection of B&Bs. There is accommodation in nearby South Surrey. Additional commercial overnight accommodation in White Rock would contribute growth to overnight stay visits. However, investors would require confidence in their business opportunity in order to develop. There appears to be insufficient land available for a larger resort-style property with meeting rooms, although a developer may be able to assemble an appropriate property.
 - Develop boutique hotels for overnight stays
- ❖ Meeting spaces
 - There is minimal space for meetings and that constrains the ability of White Rock to attract even medium-sized corporate and other meetings. This opportunity is further constrained by the scarcity of hotel accommodation. Multi-day meetings and conventions involving overnight accommodation produce strong economic benefits for the community.
- ❖ Commercial attractions and activities
 - The planning group concludes the opportunity exists to add commercial attractions and activities with adequate marketing. This is a primary component of pursuing the vision for White Rock as a destination. Many opportunities appear to exist on the beach front, pier, on the railway, and uptown. Public policy would need to be conducive to this form of commercial development.
 - Fill gaps in tourism inventory (overall theme, sub themes)
 - Add moorage capacity for visiting boaters.
- ❖ Festivals and events
 - New festivals and events, particularly those that are “human powered”, may be conceived or attracted to White Rock in pursuit of the vision.
 - New festivals consistent with primary tourism themes
- ❖ Develop infrastructure and facilities (venues, activities, transportation) consistent with enhancing tourism
 - Enhanced local transportation and parking strategies should be addressed to bring further integration stimulating economic activity from visitor spending into more of the city’s precincts.
 - It is appropriate to review city policy to explore options for overflow parking in summer month such as valet, shuttle and perhaps lower rates in the off season to help improve competitiveness with surrounding areas
 - Take advantage of the dramatic change in elevation between the beachfront and uptown areas
 - Options might include innovative linkages such as themed stairways, a “Lombard Street” road, etc.
 - A planning task force might address this issue.



- Parking challenges in White Rock negatively impact the benefits of tourism. It is essential that the City of White Rock finds a way to deal with its parking challenges. While the revenue accruing to the City from parking is a significant source of funds, it is important to explore alternatives to facilitate parking. Most visitors will arrive with their own vehicles and they will become aggravated or leave if they cannot park: that is inconsistent with the “laid back and relaxed” image of White Rock. Tourism employees also reported concerns with respect to parking for work.
- Visual and thematic branding
 - It would be valuable to explore the opportunity for new strategies for White Rock with respect to signage, lighting, flagging, streetscapes, street-level activity, etc., to produce an environment of excitement and activity that is themed to the precincts and represents the life visitors expect in a destination that reflects the vision of the planning group.
 - Configure and brand the destination areas (include flagging).
- Ensure tourism-related planning is consistent with other official White Rock plans (OCP, Economic Strategy).

Strategy for Destination Development

An action plan for the evolution of White Rock as a destination will continue to evolve as new initiatives are revealed. Formation of a “tourism board” is proposed by the planning group to guide destination development.

It must be noted that three types of stakeholder are involved in destination development:

- ❖ Local government
 - Local government would need to produce a legislative and planning environment that is conducive to facilitating White Rock as a destination
- ❖ The destination development facilitator
 - The proposed tourism board would continue to explore opportunities for destination development, motivate developers and business people to invest in White Rock, and assist in facilitating local communication appropriate to the development. This is significantly a business and economic development role.
- ❖ The investor
 - Investors will make commitments to White Rock provided they can see a business and government environment that is appropriate to their needs. In most cases tourism initiatives are private sector initiatives. However, the opportunity also exists for local government to undertake tourism infrastructure and business investments.

Tourism Marketing Strategy

Tourism research suggests the following geographic markets as primary targets for White Rock a tourism destination:

- ❖ Residents of South Surrey and the Lower Mainland
 - Population concentration in our near-in markets provides the opportunity for significant growth in the volume of visitors to White Rock.
- ❖ Visitors to the Lower Mainland
 - Leisure, convention, and business travellers visiting the Lower Mainland may be attracted to visit White Rock during their stay. While it would be a benefit to secure their commitment before they leave home, it is more likely that they will be attracted during their visit.
- ❖ Non-residents of White Rock evaluating a move to the seaside or retirement opportunities
 - White Rock is a magnet for people choosing to live in good weather, out of the “major centres”, and by the sea. Marketing alliances with realtors focused on pursuing mutual benefits would be consistent with the market trends and enhance market penetration.
- ❖ Residents of the US Pacific Northwest
 - Residents of near in communities may be attracted to White Rock to attend events and activities and may be attracted for a “day out”.
- ❖ Transient travellers
 - North/south highway traffic offers good opportunity. Attracting those travellers would require strong signage supported by marketing initiatives focused on their trip planning.

These markets hold travellers who are motivated to travel and whose values and interest match the product that is available in White Rock.

Overall Strategies

- ❖ Strategic marketing
 - Following the critical success factors for destination marketing
- ❖ Marketing alliances
 - To increase the emphasis and power of the marketing investment
- ❖ Powerful communication
 - Local communication, local/external media relations,
 - Need clear and consistent communication among stakeholders and those who can influence the marketplace
- ❖ Motivating residents to promote White Rock
 - The opportunity is to motivate 18,500 local ambassadors to actively promote White Rock
- ❖ Branding
 - To bring consistent and motivated focus to destination development and marketing
- ❖ Signage, flagging, visuals - *It's "a feeling"*
 - To induce increased awareness of precincts, destination areas, and tourism attributes and attractions
- ❖ Competitive positioning



- Understanding the competitive marketplace provides the opportunity for White Rock to be positioned so that visitors choose White Rock in a competitive environment
- ❖ Awareness and motivation of Lower Mainland residents and visitors
 - Special initiatives need to be developed to raise awareness of White Rock as a “private jewel” for the Lower Mainland population and their visitors.

Marketing Plan

- 1) Establish, empower, and fund an organization to lead the tourism initiative
 - a. Establish a “Team of Champions”
 - b. Build and empower appropriate partnerships and alliances focused on medium to long term gains (Real estate industry alliance)
- 2) Build and execute a strong and consistent media relations plan to continually discuss White Rock with travel writers and specialized media focused on the assets that characterize White Rock (e.g., food and beverage, beach, retail, getaways, etc.)
 - a. Editorial included in newspapers, magazines, on radio, and on television is exceedingly powerful. It has high credibility in the eyes of its (dedicated) audience and will contribute significantly to attracting new visitors and stimulating re-visits. This requires ongoing attention and support by White Rock’s lead tourism organization and the White Rock tourism industry
 - b. A campaign plan will be documented in the detailed development of the marketing plan.
- 3) Branding - Create a unified theme to draw visitors and to focus product definition; include theme focus; Branding theme and message to guide inclusiveness of the vision with comprehensive communication
- 4) Establish and implement a detailed destination marketing plan
 - a. Implement marketing strategies
 - b. Focus on sustainability and ROI
 - c. Build integration with neighboring communities and stakeholders.

Marketing Hierarchy

Tourism marketing takes place in a hierarchy, all focused on pursuing the economic benefits of tourism within their jurisdiction. A significant proportion of marketing initiatives take place in partnership with the next highest Destination Marketing Organization to obtain the greatest leverage on marketing investments:

- Canadian Tourism Commission is Canada’s Destination Marketing Organization. It’s job is to attract visitors to Canada in the competitive world tourism market
- Each province has its own destination marketing organization to attract visitors interested in Canada as a destination to choose their province for a visit.
 - Tourism British Columbia is BC’s Destination Marketing Organization
- BC (as is the case in other provinces) is divided into six geographic regions, each of which has a Regional Destination Marketing Organization. These organizations each pursue opportunities to attract visitors interested in BC to come to their region.
 - Vancouver Coast and Mountains is the Regional Destination Marketing Organization in whose area White Rock is located.
- Communities compete to attract visitors interested in their region to spend money in their community
 - White Rock Tourism will be White Rock’s destination marketing organization
- Individual tourism operators (e.g., hotels, restaurants, attractions, etc.) directly promote their own product, frequently as a part of initiatives staged by their local community destination marketing organization.

Leisure Travel Marketing

Emphasis will be placed on:

- ❖ Communicating White Rock's theme concepts, with strategic assets, to targeted markets
- ❖ Changing perceptions of White Rock where present perception does not reflect today's White Rock.
- ❖ Creating intrigue and desire for White Rock as a modern destination.
- ❖ Motivating travelers in targeted markets to select White Rock as their destination.
- ❖ Continue with short range marketing initiatives

Product Targets

- ❖ Build day trip (families) and overnight trip (adults) thrusts
- ❖ Packages promoting White Rock's destination themes (focus on romantic getaways, shop and beach, F&B, heritage, festivals and activities, etc.)

Target Market Summary

Product or package purchasers

- ❖ Bus and other tour operators
- ❖ Spring Break
- ❖ Visiting Friends and Family
- ❖ Select population couples/groups

Travelers motivated or encouraged to travel by:

- ❖ Culinary
- ❖ Culture, arts, and history
- ❖ Outdoor pursuits (Recreation and Sports)
- ❖ Niche Retail

Geographic areas of emphasis:

- ❖ Lower Mainland
- ❖ U.S. Pacific Northwest

Low Season Marketing Plan

Achieve new emphasis of visitor growth in lower season periods (shoulder, winter).

Strategies

The messaging focus will be on motivating travelers to experience White Rock

- ❖ External media strategies in the Lower Mainland focused on destination assets and strengths
- ❖ Development and sales of product and packages
- ❖ Direct advertising and joint promotions
- ❖ Guerilla Marketing.

Visitor Servicing

Increase visitor spending by outstanding visitor servicing and by converting visitor inquiries to action.

Strategies

Develop a focused visitor servicing and response system to stimulate visitor spending and to motivate visitors to learn about and visit multiple destinations in White Rock

- ❖ Examine opportunities to enhance White Rock's benefits from a year-round Tourism BC Visitor Centre on the beachfront, perhaps co-located with the museum.

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is important to monitor achievements and to gather appropriate statistics to assess the growth and nature of the tourism economy.

- ❖ Maintain a tracking system to monitor and evaluate visitor contacts and referrals
- ❖ Conduct a conversion study to determine and optimize the effectiveness of visitor inquiry conversion.

Community Engagement

Develop and execute an ongoing program to engage the community in pursuing its tourism opportunity.

- ❖ Launch a community awareness initiative to convey the importance and benefits of tourism in White Rock and to engage the community in tourism related initiatives. This initiative should be consistent with community values
 - Motivate the community to participate in the promotion of tourism and to welcome and facilitate visitors
 - Establish an initiative to stimulate inclusion of 18,000 residential ambassadors and all of the business people
- ❖ Establish a media program to continually raise awareness of White Rock as a tourism destination among the local population.
 - The benefits of this initiative will be associated with the behaviour of visitors staying with their friends and relatives in White Rock and with local spending by residents and businesses of White Rock
 - Establish a “Best of White Rock” destination awards program in conjunction with appropriate local media to attract attention to excellence in accommodation, food and beverage, retail, local transportation, and attractions/activities/entertainment
 - Publish a regular “tourism times” column in local newspapers to provide a regular opportunity to engage the community on a series of tourism issues
- ❖ Launch a “White Rock (or Peninsula) Pride” ambassador program for all White Rock residents with strong community communication
 - Promote a “White Rock First” purchasing program
 - Stimulate increased awareness of the White Rock’s business community to retain leaked spending
 - Build a sense of community pride that would be realized in attracting visitors to White Rock and exposing visitors to White Rock’s tourism assets
 - Motivate residents to encourage their visitors to experience White Rock rather than leaving for other local destinations
- ❖ Build partnerships in the community, educating people about the benefits of tourism and creating “buy-in” to growth-related initiatives
 - Motivate seniors to participate
 - Attract new volunteers
 - Motivate community organizations to communicate or promote the benefits of tourism
 - Establish a speaking program to engage those attending gatherings of community organizations in tourism.

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is essential to track and the performance of the marketing plan for several reasons:

- ❖ To optimize the plan on an ongoing basis
- ❖ To provide tourism statistics to communicate to stakeholders and the community
- ❖ To track growth
- ❖ To provide data for tourism business investors considering investment in tourism initiatives in White Rock.

The following measures should be tracked:

- ❖ Tourism statistics (trends analysis, # of tourism businesses, employment)
- ❖ Semi-Formal anecdotal or statistical reporting by restaurateurs and retailers, B&B's, and hotel
- ❖ Return on Marketing Investment on marketing initiatives
 - This requires specific initiative-related tracking systems
- ❖ Free media reporting (travel writers)
- ❖ Attendance at events.

Additionally, certain key trends in White Rock can be monitored to track change:

- ❖ Retail longevity
- ❖ Limited space availability (critical mass)
- ❖ Tourists becoming residents
 - Real estate sales to in-migrants (not exclusively tourism)
- ❖ New volunteers
- ❖ Sense of community pride.