Columbia Valley Services Committee Meeting Agenda

August 1, 2019
6:15 pm

Members: *Director Sterzer (Chair), Director Miller (Vice Chair), Director Reinhardt, Director Clovechok and Director Wilkie*

> ## Voting Rules
> Unless otherwise indicated on this agenda, all Directors have one vote and a simple majority is required for a motion to pass.

Who Votes   **Count**

1. **Call to Order**

2. **Addition of Late Items**

3. **Adoption of the Agenda**

4. **Adoption of the Minutes**

    4.1   June 6, 2019 Meeting

5. **Delegations and Invited Presentations**

6. **Correspondence**

    6.1   Valley Visitor Services – 2019 Strategic Plan

7. **Unfinished Business**

8. **New Business**

    8.1   Columbia Valley Physician Recruitment Funding

    8.2   Victim Services (Discussion)

    8.3   Columbia Valley Bylaw Enforcement (Discussion)

9. **Bylaws**

10. **Late Agenda Items**

11. **Reports from Directors**

12. **Adjournment**

MINUTES OF THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF EAST KOOTENAY **COLUMBIA VALLEY SERVICES COMMITTEE** MEETING HELD AT THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OFFICE IN CRANBROOK BC ON **JUNE 6, 2019**

PRESENT

Committee Chair Karl Sterzer	Village of Canal Flats
Director Allen Miller	District of Invermere
Director Clara Reinhardt	Village of Radium Hot Springs
Board Chair Rob Gay	Electoral Area C
Director Susan Clovechok	Electoral Area F
Director Gerry Wilkie	Electoral Area G

STAFF

Shawn Tomlin	Chief Administrative Officer
Shannon Moskal	Corporate Officer
Connie Thom	Executive Assistant (Recording Secretary)

Committee Chair Karl Sterzer called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Agenda

MOVED by Director Miller
SECONDED by Director Clovechok

THAT the agenda for the Columbia Valley Services Committee meeting be adopted.

CARRIED

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

Minutes

MOVED by Director Wilkie
SECONDED by Director Clovechok

THAT the Minutes of the Columbia Valley Services Committee meeting held on May 2, 2019 be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS

48550
CV Transit
MOU

MOVED by Director Miller
SECONDED by Director Wilkie

THAT the CAO be authorized to sign the BC Transit Expansion Memorandum of Understanding for the Columbia Valley Transit System.

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourn to Closed

MOVED by Director Reinhardt
SECONDED by Director Clovechok

THAT the meeting adjourn to a Closed Columbia Valley Services Committee meeting to consider the following matter:

Columbia Valley Transit Contract – Section 90(1)(k) of the *Community Charter* – negotiations and related discussions respecting the proposed provision of a service that are at their preliminary stages.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned to closed at 5:02 pm.

CERTIFIED CORRECT

_____   _____
Committee Chair Karl Sterzer   **Shannon Moskal, Corporate Officer**

VALLEY VISITOR SERVICES

STRATEGIC PLAN, 2019

Mission

Valley Visitor Services oversees the direction and future of the visitor service network throughout the Columbia Valley.

Vision

To offer year-round, world class visitor service network experience throughout the Columbia Valley.

History

Valley Visitor Services (VVS) is the name given to a collaborative approach to provide visitor information throughout the Columbia Valley. VVS formed in 2016 as a result of a funding opportunity presented by the RDEK.

In 2013, the Columbia Valley Directed Funds Committee made up of five Columbia Valley Elected Officials and three members of the public commissioned a study to determine the Columbia Valley Community Priorities. That study identified economic development as a priority of which tourism was identified as a key economic driver.

In 2014, the Columbia Valley Community Directed Funds Committee requested an examination of Columbia Valley visitor services, including service methods and efficiencies, and recommendations for the design and delivery of a single, coordinated and equitably funded service. Restructuring the Columbia Valley's visitor services programs supported two of the priorities identified in the *Community Priorities Plan*:

A. *Branding, Marketing and Promotion* – Visitor services programs are uniquely positioned to deliver on branding and marketing messages due to their direct interaction with visitors.
B. *Economic Development and Business Growth: Tourism* – The plan identifies the need for greater cooperation in the tourism sector as well as combining human and financial resources. A single visitor services program directly supports this goal.

The purpose of the report was to describe the operations of the Visitor Centre Network Program in the Columbia Valley and provide suggestions for the design and delivery of a single visitor services program.

The resulting report was completed in April 2014 by Andrew Mcleod of the RDEK.

https://www.columbiavalleypioneer.com/news/valley-visitor-services-programs-may-get-streamlined/

In 2016, the Radium Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce (RHSCC) signed an agreement with the RDEK for $100,000 to provide Visitor Services throughout the Columbia Valley in Collaboration with the Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce, and the Fairmont Business Association. The RHSCC signed

indemnity agreements with the two partner organizations. In 2018, Canal Flats sent a representative to attend the VVS meetings as an observer and as of January 2019 The Village of Canal Flats, District of Invermere and The Village of Radium Hot Springs all have a voting member on the VVS Committee. In the last three years the VVS committee have met 24 times culminating in the VVS strategic planning meeting that took place May 7, 2019 to produce the information and determine direction contained in this report.

Overview

Valley Visitor Services is a collaboration of partners, through committee, with representation from Canal Flats to Spillimacheen, dedicated to providing a visitor service network throughout the Columbia Valley.

The purpose of the network is to provide consistent levels of visitor services throughout the Valley and to ensure that visitors have easy access to information about:

- The Columbia Valley (Canal Flats to Spillimacheeen) (history, attractions, events, culture, accommodation vacancy etc.);

- Services (transportation, health care, etc.);

- Resources (maps, materials, etc.);

- Emergency Updates (highway, fire, flood, animal, trail conditions, avalanche, etc.)

VVS does this through information sharing of materials created and provided by the individual communities, businesses, the Provinces of BC & Alberta, Kootenay Rockies Tourism, National & BC Parks, Chambers of Commerce, Destination BC (DBC), Destination Management Organizations (DMO's) and staff at the Visitor Information Centres.

The VVS is also responsible to research, collect, compile, and distribute internal and external information.

This includes:

- Resource Materials for Visitors

- Emergency Information for Visitors (current and up to date)

- Close any gaps discovered in the loop of information

- Information from Visitor experiences for future planning and implementation

- Information from Staff Exit Interviews (see Appendix A)

- Data share for strategic positioning within the Province

The VVS is responsible to promote local events and attractions, they are not responsible to market the Valley or coordinate events. The VVS supports and promotes the work of Chambers of Commerce, Business Associations, Tourism & Marketing Organizations, Business Services and Economic Development organizations through the provision of information to visitors.

VVS currently operates year-round through the Radium and Invermere Visitor Centres (the Village of Radium and District of Invermere hold the Destination BC certificate for the Visitor Centres, the respective Chambers of Commerce hold the contract to manage the Visitor Centres with the municipalities). Seasonally, the VVS also operates through the Invermere Downtown Kiosk and the Fairmont Business Association Kiosk.

SWOT Analysis
See Appendix B.

Current Activity
- Providing up to date information for Visitors to the Columbia Valley.

- Training of Visitor Information Councillors
    - RHSCC Manager Kent Kebe is a certified Destination BC (DBC) Trainer and provides education to Supervisors and Visitor Information Councillors.
    - DBC manuals and material and local material is used in training Supervisors and Visitor Information Counsellors.

- Organizing a valley familiarity tour (FAM tour)
    - open to attendance from visitor information councillors, students and frontline employees of any business in the region

- Operating the facilities at the following locations within the Columbia Valley:
    - Radium Visitor Information Centre (Parks Canada Building)
    - Invermere Visitor Information Centre (Crossroads Building)
    - Invermere Downtown Kiosk
    - Fairmont Business Association Kiosk (Fairmont Plaza)

- Gathering information for future planning and implementation thru:
    - Staff exit interviews (see Appendix A)

     o Visitor experience feedback

- Data share for strategic positioning within the Province

- Annual reporting and presentation to RDEK

- Maintaining financial records

1-Year Strategic Objectives & Goals

1. **MOU to clarify relationship and insurance coverage with:**

   - Radium Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce

   - Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce

   - Fairmont Business Association

     a. **Measurable:** MOU signed document on or before July 31, 2019. Committee of the whole, efforts coordinated by Erin.

2. **Standards of Operation document, including:**

   - DBC guidelines

   - Level of service

   - Standard operating procedures

     a. **Measurable:** Define standards of operation including organizational structure on or before October 1, 2019. Subcommittee of Kent, Pete and Dianna.

3. **Explore innovative visitor services delivery opportunities and feasibility**

   - Feasibility study

     a. **Measurable:** Feasibility study on or before March 31, 2020. Exploratory Committee Chris, Pete, Kent and Sarah.

4. **Governance Clarification** – Develop a model of management and accountability to outline and ensure the Interests, responsibilities and roles on the committee are being achieved.

     a. **Measurable**: create a defined governance plan by December 31, 2019

3-Year Strategic Objectives & Goals

1. Engage and fine-tune communication, planning and collaboration between stakeholders, partners and communities including external partners (i.e. Columbia Valley Tourism Marketing Society).

2. Advocate for signage to direct traffic to the Visitor Centres and the kiosks.

Conclusion

This document forms the work and vision of the committee for the next three years and will be reviewed annually. This plan does not preclude outside opportunities that may arise.

Appendices

A. 2014 Visitor Centre Operations and Future Coordination Report
   by Andrew McLeod

B. VVS Questionnaire Compilation Document, May 2019 (Board and Staff)

   Questionnaire Prepared and Compiled by MK Facilitations

Columbia Valley Visitor Services:

Visitor Centre Operations and Future Coordination

April 30, 2014

Prepared for: Columbia Valley Community Directed Funds Committee

Prepared by: Andrew McLeod, Special Initiatives Coordinator, RDEK

1.0 Introduction

The Columbia Valley Community Directed Funds Program is a partnership between the Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) and the Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK) to support the delivery of CBT's Community Development Program funds in the Columbia Valley sub-region. The Columbia Valley *Community Priorities Plan* was completed in December 2013 following consultation with key stakeholders and the public in the Columbia Valley. The plan establishes and articulates key strategic priorities identified through the consultation process necessary to support social, economic and environmental development throughout the Columbia Valley. The result is a strategic approach to funding projects and initiatives that are directly aligned with community priorities.

The Columbia Valley Community Directed Funds Committee has requested an examination of Columbia Valley visitor services, including service methods and efficiencies, and recommendations for the design and delivery of a single, coordinated and equitably funded service. Restructuring the Columbia Valley's visitor services programs supports two of the priorities identified in the *Community Priorities Plan*: [1]

1) *Branding, Marketing and Promotion* – Visitor services programs are uniquely positioned to deliver on branding and marketing messages due to their direct interaction with visitors.
2) *Economic Development and Business Growth: Tourism* – The plan identifies the need for greater cooperation in the tourism sector as well as combining human and financial resources. A single visitor services program directly supports this goal.

The purpose of this report is to describe the operations of the Visitor Centre Network Program in the Columbia Valley and provide suggestions for the design and delivery of a single visitor services program. While primarily focused on the Visitor Centres, non-traditional concepts of "visitor services" will also be addressed.

2.0 Visitor Centre Network Program

"Visitor services" is a very broad term meaning the provision of tourism related information to visitors. Destination British Columbia oversees a number province-wide visitor services programs including the Visitor Centre Network Program. In the Columbia Valley, the Visitor Centre Network Program is delivered by the Radium Chamber of Commerce in the Village of Radium Hot Springs, and by the Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce (CVCC) for the Invermere and Fairmont Hot Springs areas.

2.1 Destination British Columbia

Destination British Columbia is an industry-led Crown corporation that works collaboratively with tourism stakeholders across the province. In support of the long term, sustainable growth of the provincial tourism industry, Destination British Columbia fulfills several leadership responsibilities

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[1] RDEK. *Community Priorities Plan – Columbia Valley Community Directed Funds*, December 2013, pages 13-14.

including marketing at the international, provincial and regional levels, training, and other tourism industry support services. Among its programs is the Visitor Centre Network. [2]

2.2 Visitor Centre Network

The purpose of the Visitor Centre Network is to provide a consistent and professional level of service to visitors. The corporate identity and logo enables visitors to recognize official Visitor Centres in British Columbia where they will receive a high level of service.[3] A quality visitor service experience supports the growth and development of the tourism industry at all levels.

The Visitor Centre Network is comprised of approximately 110 community-operated Visitor Centres located throughout the province. Each Visitor Centre is owned and funded by a sponsor organization within the community. Typical sponsor organizations include chambers of commerce, regional districts, municipalities, and economic development offices. Destination British Columbia provides funding, training, counseling, program information and support to assist the community Visitor Centres.

2.3 Community Visitor Centres

Community Visitor Centres provide a full range of tourist information services to increase awareness of local, regional and provincial tourism services and products. A key objective in the provision of local and regional tourism information is to enhance the quality of the visitor's experience. This in turn promotes longer stays and return visits thus maximizing the economic benefits of tourism to the community and region. Services provided by Visitor Centres often include travel information, reservations, ticket sales and retail sales.[4] A Visitor Centre is often the showpiece of a community's visitor services program.

There are two levels of Visitor Centres in the Visitor Centre Network: Full Status Visitor Centres and Information Booths. The Radium Chamber of Commerce and the CVCC both operate a full status Visitor Centre. Information booths are meant to complement the Visitor Centre Network, and are operated on a seasonal basis by many small communities, but these operations do not carry the Visitor Centre logo. However, some full status Visitor Centres also operate satellite information booths as part of their program and these do carry the provincial logo. This is the case for the CVCC's satellite operation in Invermere. In 2014, the CVCC will apply to include the Fairmont information booth under the Destination British Columbia logo as well; in 2013 that booth did not carry this designation.

2.4 Membership Requirements and Funding

Membership in the Visitor Centre Network requires that each member adhere to a set of operational guidelines. The guidelines set the minimum standard of visitor servicing. By applying minimum standards to all Visitor Centres, the visitor is assured of receiving a consistent level of service throughout British Columbia.

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[2] Destination British Columbia. "About Us." http://www.destinationbc.ca/abt.aspx
[3] Destination British Columbia. "Visitor Centre Information Package."
[4] Destination British Columbia. "Visitor Centre Information Package."

In 2014, some of the operating requirements for full status Visitor Centres include: prescribed hours of operation, statistics and record keeping, training and uniforms, branding, signage and brochure racking.

Full status Visitor Centres are eligible for "Fee for Service" funding provided by Destination British Columbia in recognition of the provincial and regional services provided by the community Visitor Centre. The fee for service helps offset the operational cost of running a Visitor Centre and is most often used for the wages of seasonal staff. Destination British Columbia does not provide capital funding for the operation of Visitor Centres.

The amount of funding per Visitor Centre is dependent on Destination British Columbia's annual Visitor Centre Network budget. The funding model for calculation of the fee for service is based on three parameters: base rate of $10,000; visitor parties per hour; and, annual hours of operation.[5] The amount may be adjusted up or down and in 2012 increases were capped at 25%.[6]

3.0 Columbia Valley Visitor Centres

In the Columbia Valley, there are two visitor services programs and each one operates a full status community Visitor Centre.

3.1 Radium Visitor Centre

3.1.1 Operations Overview

The Radium Visitor Centre is located at 7556 Main Street East. It is operated by the Radium Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Tourism Radium, the Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the Radium area. The Visitor Centre is overseen by Kent Kebe, Manager, Tourism Radium Hot Springs Association. The Visitor Centre is open 362 days a year with varying seasonal hours to accommodate the highest levels of visitation and use. In the summer, there is 8 staff with 6 positions dedicated to Visitor Centre operations.

The Visitor Centre occupies a federally owned building in partnership with Parks Canada's Kootenay National Park operations. The Radium Visitor Centre operates no satellite information booths, and Parks Canada is responsible for its own summer visitor services program independent of Radium Visitor Centre operations.

3.1.2 Financing

For general comparison purposes, in 2012 the revenue to operate the Radium Visitor Centre was as follows:

Funding Source	Amount
Village of Radium Hot Springs grant	$20,000
Destination BC grant	$25,000

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[5] Destination British Columbia. "Visitor Centre Information Package."
[6] Nancy Fredrickson, Manager, Visitor Services Network Program, interview, January 22, 2014.

Chamber of Commerce Memberships	$24,000
Employment Partnerships (Canada Summer Jobs grants and other)	$11,000
Misc. revenue (website advertizing and other)	$20,700

3.1.3 Visitation

Radium is the busiest Visitor Centre in the Columbia Valley and among the top 15 most visited Visitor Centres in BC. This is because of its co-location with the popular national park services, and it is closest to the most common entry point to the Columbia Valley for visitors arriving by vehicle. The Radium Visitor Centre served 53,113 visitors in 2012 and 49,482 in 2013. Additional visitation statistics are found in the following table:

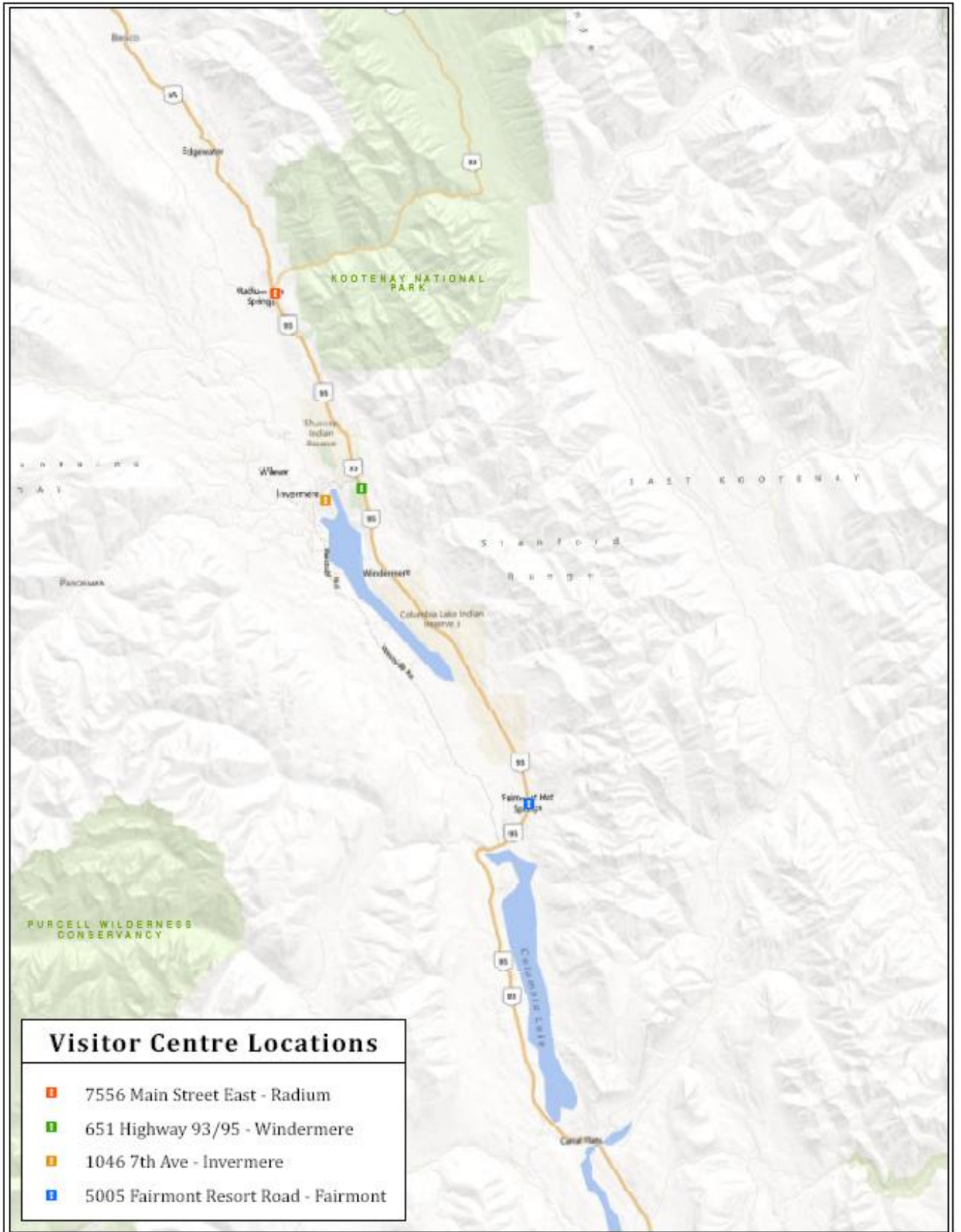|	**2012**	**2013**
Number of Operating Hours	3025	3000
Number of Parties	25,532	23,790
Number of Visitors	53,113	49,482

3.1.4 Training

Beginning in 2011, staffs from both the Radium and CVCC Visitor Centres have been provided Visitor Centre training by Kent Kebe. The training includes Destination British Columbia's training program in Visitor Centre operations and general provincial visitor services information. It also includes general regional and Columbia Valley tourist information. Ensuring that staff in each location has community specific knowledge and local expertise is important in order to best serve clients. This is most efficiently achieved by the two programs re-hiring local residents with community knowledge, however, the annual challenge of adequately funding seasonal Visitor Centre operations make this difficult to accomplish.

3.2 Columbia Valley Visitor Centre

3.2.1 Operations Overview

Visitor services for the Invermere and Fairmont Hot Springs area are coordinated by the CVCC. The main Visitor Centre is located at 651 Highway 93/95 near the intersection with Athalmer Road. The building is owned by the CVCC and Visitor Centre operations are overseen by Susan Clovechok, Executive Director, Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce. The CVCC also operates two satellite information booths during peak summer season. One is located in Invermere at 1046 - 7th Ave. The other is located in Fairmont Hot Springs at 5005 Fairmont Resort Road. In peak season there is a total of four staff dedicated to visitor services at the three locations, plus the Executive Director.

At the main centre, the CVCC provides visitor information services five days a week, eight hours per day January - April; six days a week, eight hours per day May - June; and 7 days a week July - August. After the September long weekend, the centre is open six days a week for eight hours per day.

Visitor Centre Locations

- 7556 Main Street East - Radium
- 651 Highway 93/95 - Windermere
- 1046 7th Ave - Invermere
- 5005 Fairmont Resort Road - Fairmont

During peak season, July - August, the Invermere information booth is open 5 days per week from 9:30 - 17:30.

In 2013, its first year of operation, the Fairmont information booth was only open for six weeks, 10:00 – 18:00 , Wednesday to Sunday and it did not carry the Destination British Columbia logo. The funding for the booth came from the Fairmont Business Association (FBA) and was administered by the CVCC. Training was provided by Radium.

3.2.2 Financing

For general comparison purposes, the CVCC Visitor Centre operations are funded as follows:

Funding Source	Amount
District of Invermere grant	$30,000
Destination BC grant	$12,500
Employment Partnerships (Canada Summer Jobs grants and other)	$7500
Visitor Centre Retail	$5000
Fairmont Business Association grant	$3500

3.2.3 Visitation

The main Visitor Centre (Hwy 93/95 location only) generated 10,864 visitors in 2012 and 11,712 visitor in 2013. Additional clients visited the Invermere and Fairmont information booths but are not reflected in the following statistics:

	2012	2013
Number of Hours	2420	2457
Number of Parties	5012	5400
Number of Visitors	10,864	11,712

3.2.4 Training

Training is provided by the Kent Kebe of the Radium Visitor Centre.

4.0 Experience in Other Communities

4.1 Kimberley

As a result of recent economic development planning and branding initiatives in the community, the City of Kimberley is taking a strategic approach to the delivery of visitor services. Traditionally, visitor services were provided by the Kimberley Chamber of Commerce and over time the Chamber become predominately a visitor services focused organization. The City has recently assisted the Chamber in moving away from visitor services to become more of a business advocacy organization. Visitor services are now provided by Tourism Kimberley, which is the DMO for the City.

DMOs are primarily tasked with administering the additional hotel room tax for global marketing initiatives. Kimberley has also charged the organization with overall tourism management, meaning the full spectrum of tourism activities and planning, including visitor services. By operating the Visitor Centre, Tourism Kimberley is able to link visitor services with the City's entire tourism strategy, including matching the marketing messages to the on-the-ground visitor experience. The Visitor Centre also has access to all of Tourism Kimberley's investment information in order to help convert visitors into potential investors and residents; the co-location of services provides a one stop shop for investment, tourism and marketing resources. The Visitor Centre operates on about a 40/60 split in funding from Destination BC and the City of Kimberley. The Chamber of Commerce owns Tourism Kimberley's offices, including the Visitor Centre, and leases the space.[7]

4.2 Fernie

The Fernie Chamber of Commerce operates a year round full service Visitor Centre on Highway 3 at the north entrance to the City, and in partnership with the local museum, a year round satellite location downtown. The Visitor Centre operates with funding from Destination BC, a grant from the City of Fernie, and summer job grants for seasonal staff. Funding to operate the Visitor Centres to Destination BC standards is an annual challenge and wouldn't be possible without summer job grants to retain extra staff.

The Chamber works closely with the Fernie DMO to ensure that local visitor services complement the external marketing messages. One innovative visitor servicing strategy being undertaken in Fernie is a local tourism industry trade show for all front line staff from across the local tourism sector. This enables front line staff to become more familiar with the range of tourism services and products the Fernie area has to offer. In turn, service industry workers can better market Fernie to the guests and visitors they come in contact with.[8]

4.3 "Regional Visitor Centres"

There have been a number of attempts in various regions of the province to establish a "Regional Visitor Centre." Destination British Columbia advises that these initiatives have generally not lived up to their promise of either streamlining the delivery of services or reducing costs. The reasons for this are varied and include a perceived loss of control and reduced service at the local level. After the "regional" centres began operating, other local initiatives re-emerged, and the regional vision was lost.[9]

5.0 Issues

5.1 "Non-Traditional" Visitor Services

The Visitor Centre is the traditional method of delivering visitor services: a physical building, staffed with trained counsellors, filled with take-away pamphlets and information about local services and

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[7] Kevin Wilson, Economic Development Officer, City of Kimberley, interview, January 20, 2014.
[8] Rachel Fitzios, Membership and Visitor Services, Fernie Chamber of Commerce, email, March 7, 2014.
[9] Nancy Fredrickson, Manager, Visitor Services Network Program, interview, March 27, 2014.

tourism attractions. These buildings have often been the first stop for travellers arriving at a community.

A successful visitor services program is based upon the needs and wants of the visitor and as traveller behaviours change, modern visitor servicing strategies are looking at alternative methods of providing tourist information. As a result, more communities and regions are developing broad-based visitor servicing strategies that include more than the traditional Visitor Centre. Today, many tourists acquire their travel information online before they depart, on mobile devices and apps during their trip, and through social media and other information networks. Destination British Columbia reports that there is a province-wide trend of declining visits to Visitor Centres despite overall tourism growth and increased visitation to the province. This is likely an indicator of the changes occurring in visitor behaviour.[10]

As Visitor Centres become more costly to operate, tourism agencies are realizing that the traditional methods may not be the most efficient or the most effective means of delivering information services to visitors. As proof, Kelowna, Prince George and Tofino have all downsized their Visitor Centre operations in the past year or two. Even the notion of a "Centre" is changing with remote electronic kiosks, roaming travel counsellors, and virtual information centres fulfilling the roll of the traditional Visitor Centre in some communities.[11]

In consideration of these global and provincial trends, and the experience and changing practices in other BC communities, an examination of visitor services and the role of Visitor Centres in the Columbia Valley is timely. It also signals the need for a more comprehensive assessment of visitor preferences in the delivery of a broader range of local information services.

5.2 Funding

5.2.1 Chamber of Commerce Memberships and Visitor Centre Operations

The valley's two Visitor Centre programs, run by the respective Chambers of Commerce, are very different in terms of their use of Chamber membership fees and in the value of program revenue to overall operations. This means that any restructure of Columbia Valley visitor service programs, or the loss of Visitor Centre revenue to either Chamber, will have different impacts on the respective organization.

The Radium Chamber of Commerce is almost entirely a visitor services focused organization. One hundred percent of membership revenue goes into Visitor Centre operations. Membership fees buy an elevated profile for a business in the Radium Visitor Centre in terms of brochure racking, website and other advertizing. Because of its valley "gateway" location and high visitation, exposure in the Radium Visitor Centre is important enough that many Columbia Valley businesses purchase memberships in

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[10] Nancy Fredrickson, Manager, Visitor Services Network Program, interview, March 27, 2014.

[11] Mark Hume. "B.C. communities rethink visitor centres as tourists switch to smartphones." The Globe and Mail, August 30, 2013. http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/smartphones-use-forces-rethink-of-visitorcentres/article14032293/

both Chambers. Because of the partnership with Parks Canada, office space and operational overhead are nominal and the majority of program revenue goes directly into wages for Visitor Centre staff.

Visitor services is one of several programs offered by the CVCC, with its primary focus being business development and support services. The CVCC uses no Chamber membership revenue to operate its Visitor Centre program, although membership does purchase an elevated profile for a business at the main Visitor Centre. Conversely, about 25% of Visitor Centre revenue is used to subsidize the operation and financing of the CVCC building. This means that the loss of the Visitor Centre program would impact the Chamber's other services and an alternative revenue source, such as a new building tenant, would be needed to compensate for the lost revenue.

5.2.2 Local Government

The District of Invermere and the Village of Radium Hot Springs provide an annual grant to their respective Chamber of Commerce to deliver visitor services in their community and operate a Visitor Centre. Invermere's funding is conditional on the CVCC operating a satellite information booth downtown. The RDEK provides no funding to either service despite hosting a large number of the benefitting businesses and tourist attractions. An equitably funded visitor services program would include annual funding from the RDEK.

Regional funding for Columbia Valley visitor services and Visitor Centre programs requires the establishment of a regional district service. This will allow funds to be raised through property taxation to pay for the service. The area covered by the service could include all Columbia Valley local governments thereby regionalizing the financing of the valley's visitor services programs.

If a single, valley-wide visitor services program is desirable, then a single regional service and funding arrangement would be appropriate.   A number of options for establishing a regional visitor services funding formula exist. Taxation revenue could be apportioned based on assessment, population or other criteria as permitted by the *Local Government Act*. This new source of regional funding would replace the two existing municipal grants.

"Economic Development" is a service that a regional district can establish by the participating jurisdictions consenting on behalf of their electors, avoiding the need for a costly or time consuming referendum or petition for services. Visitor servicing would be an appropriate program to support under that service. The service could fund one or more visitor service and Visitor Centre programs. A Columbia Valley economic development service area might also be helpful in advancing other objectives in the *Community Priorities Plan*.

5.2.3 Destination British Columbia

Destination British Columbia provides a combined annual grant of $37,500 to fund the two Visitor Centre programs in the Columbia Valley. This funding is provided with no guarantee of money in

subsequent years. Destination British Columbia will not commit to retaining the existing funding levels if the two Columbia Valley visitor services programs are restructured.[12]

Two issues are worth noting regarding Destination British Columbia grant funding. First, the existing Visitor Centre Network Program is a visitor services model that is unique to British Columbia, not only in Canada but amongst other jurisdictions with well developed visitor services programs. Second, provincial tourism programs have been regularly restructured and reorganized over the past 30 years; the provincial government Core Review process is presently on-going, as is an internal review of existing programs by Destination British Columbia. In light of the evolving nature of modern visitor services, a financially sustainable Visitor Centre program in the Columbia Valley should not rely on the current grant funding provided by Destination British Columbia.

5.3 Shared Resources?

On the one hand, the Columbia Valley shares many of its tourism resources. The region is a distinct geographical and social unit comprised of three municipalities, a number of rural communities, several resort areas and a variety of significant natural attractions and outdoor recreational amenities such as lakes, hot springs, golf courses, downhill and Nordic skiing facilities and backcountry activities. In addition, the valley shares and celebrates an array of diverse cultural tourism experiences including artisanal food and beverage offerings, events and festivals, art galleries and historic sites.[13] Visitors to the area are likely to take in a variety of attractions, amenities and services around the valley as opposed to only patronizing one community or service provider.

On the other hand, local identities and historic relationships have prevented closer integration in the provision of tourism related services. The Columbia Valley contains two Chambers of Commerce, two DMOs, two primary Visitor Centres, and a similarly fragmented online presence. Despite this duplication of services, some major valley attractions are either omitted or barely mentioned by these business and marketing services.

A valley-wide tourism branding and marketing strategy is outside the scope of this report, but the absence of one does impact the delivery of visitor services, and the visitor experience, before and after visitors arrive. The division of services between Invermere and Radium is symptomatic of a region that, to some observers, appears to be competing as much with itself as with other regions.[14] Amalgamating the delivery of visitor services and the Visitor Centre program would be a first step towards coordinating the marketing and branding of the Columbia Valley's tourism resources.

The Columbia Valley's two Visitor Centre programs duplicate a lot of efforts including preparing employment grant applications, supervision, budgeting and reporting. At present, the only shared component of the two programs is Visitor Centre staff training. While a single visitor services program

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[12] Nancy Fredrickson, Manager, Visitor Services Network Program, interview, March 27, 2014.

[13] Steve Thorne Consulting & Columbia Cultural Tourism Association. *A Tapestry of Place: A Place-Based Cultural Tourism Strategy for the Columbia Valley*, 2013, pages 43-53.

[14] RDEK. *Community Priorities Plan – Columbia Valley Community Directed Funds,* December 2013, page 12.

would make the entire service a larger one, theoretically there should be advantages and efficiencies in coordinating visitor services and Visitor Centre operations under a single service provider.

Both Visitor Centres are challenged on an annual basis to adequately fund their operations and a single visitor services function will require new funding arrangements. To do this properly will require careful consideration of how the two Chambers organize and finance their respective operations, including the role of membership fees.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The Columbia Valley Community Directed Funds Committee has requested an examination of Columbia Valley visitor services, including service methods and efficiencies, and recommendations for the design and delivery of a single, coordinated and equitably funded service.   The following are the key conclusions and recommendations of this study:

1) The Visitor Centre is still a valuable and necessary component of a visitor servicing strategy. Despite declining Visitor Centre use province-wide and the rise of new visitor servicing approaches, the traditional Visitor Centre still meets the needs of many visitors, including: the value of face-to-face interaction with a local expert; the provision of more accurate information or information that is not available online; and assistance with emergencies.[15]

2) Create a RDEK Columbia Valley economic development service to fund valley visitor services. Given the importance of tourism to residents and businesses across the entire Columbia Valley, it is recommended that the service area cover the entirety of both electoral areas and all three municipalities. This will provide RDEK funding for the program and correct the present inequity where only Radium and Invermere contribute. This financing would replace the existing municipal grants to their respective Chambers of Commerce with a regional funding formula to finance visitor services.

   A formula for financing the service among the participating jurisdictions will need to be determined at the time of service establishment. Assuming a generous annual visitor services operating budget of $200,000, a breakdown of potential costs for the service based on assessment is as follows:

Jurisdiction	Cost
Radium	$18531
Invermere	$43056
Canal Flats	$5978
Area F	$115473
Area G	$16962
Tax rate: $0.0457/$1000	*$200,000*[16]

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[15] City of Vernon. "FAQ about Visitor Services and the Centralization of Vernon Visitor Services."
[16] The approximate annual cost to run the two existing visitor services programs is $160,000/year.

Creating a regional service to fund visitor services and Visitor Centre operations can occur independently of any other changes to the delivery of the two existing visitor services programs. In combination with Recommendation 7), funding a comprehensive visitor servicing strategy, these two items are the most important steps to ensuring the long term financial stability and effectiveness of valley visitor services.

3) Restructure the delivery of valley visitor services by contracting for a single valley-wide visitor services program through a "fee for service" arrangement with the Radium Chamber of Commerce. Radium is the logical choice given its long standing experience delivering the larger of the two visitor services programs in the Valley, the physical location of its Visitor Centre operations, the relationship with Parks Canada, and its current role in delivering training.

   To be clear, a single "regional visitor centre" as described in section 4.3 is not being proposed; it may be that the funding for the program includes conditions on where and how visitor services are provided in order to ensure that local service levels are considered (see Recommendation 4) below). Rather, this report is recommending that funding for the service be regionalized and that delivery of the service be provided through a single agency. A single service provider has the potential to realize efficiencies in service delivery and to help move the valley towards a single branding, marketing and promotional program, consistent with the Columbia Valley *Community Priorities Plan*.

4) Re-assess the return on investment of having four visitor information locations in the Valley. At a maximum, consider one or two additional locations to complement the Radium Visitor Centre. Examine options for strategically locating additional Visitor Centres, including:
   a) Providing a southern "gateway" to the tourism amenities of the Columbia Valley where there is also a concentration of visitors, such as at Fairmont Hot Springs. This would eliminate the need for the FBA contract with the CVCC for the information booth.
   b) Locating it where there is going to be the largest economic impact, such as in downtown Invermere. Research indicates that visitors, once out of their vehicle in a pedestrian friendly setting, are four times more likely to spend money and time in the community.[17] While this fact speaks against retaining the existing Visitor Centre location in the CVCC building, there may be other benefits to locating visitor services at this location. Alternatively, look at other ways of serving the Invermere area, such as providing a roaming service during events and festivals, on weekends and holidays, and during the peak summer season.

5) Restructuring visitor services will impact the two Chambers of Commerce and additional negotiations with both organizations will be necessary. Among the issues to be addressed are: the role of membership fees; human resources; CVCC building operations; program transition; and, the impact on other initiatives and programs. The involvement of the District of Invermere and the Village of Radium in these discussions is recommended.

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[17] City of Vernon. "FAQ about Visitor Services and the Centralization of Vernon Visitor Services."

6) Design the financing of the Visitor Centre program mindful of the uncertainty regarding annual Destination British Columbia funding. In other words, ensure that the regional service, if created, has the capability of financing 100% of program costs.

7) Develop a comprehensive Columbia Valley Visitor Services Strategy to broaden and refine the visitor services program to meet the evolving needs of visitors to the region. This is a separate project that could be budgeted and funded through the regional service.

8) Use the re-organization of Columbia Valley visitor services as a first step to developing a valley-wide tourism marketing and branding program. Consistent with the *Community Priorities Plan*, a Columbia Valley branding, marketing and promotional strategy, including the harmonization of online resources, promises to reconcile the visitor services program with the external marketing messages, and increase the Valley's exposure and appeal to new and existing markets.[18]

9) Following the receipt and adoption of some or all of the recommendations in this report, it is recommended that the Chair of the Columbia Valley Community Directed Funds Committee present the Committee's position to the three municipal councils, the Boards of the Radium and Columbia Valley Chambers of Commerce and the executive of the FBA.

7.0 Implementation

Responsibility for enacting the recommendations of this report falls primarily to the RDEK Columbia Valley Directors. Implementation falls into three broad categories: a new regional service and funding, a single delivery agent, and new initiatives.

7.1 New Regional Service and Funding

This step will correct the current absence of regional funding for visitor services and make the programs more financially sustainable. Creating the service is a regional project and will require the consent of the RDEK Board of Directors and RDEK administrative support. The Columbia Valley Directors will need to consider the importance of establishing this service in relation to other RDEK and Columbia Valley priority projects. The process and possible timeline to make this happen is as follows:

a) Presentation of the Committee's position on the report to the three municipal councils; 2014 or 2015.

b) Ensure that an economic development/visitor services project appears on a future work plan for RDEK administration; 2015.

c) Establish the service area. An economic development service can be established relatively simply; the participating jurisdictions can consent on behalf of their electors meaning Council resolutions and Electoral Area Director letters are all that is required. Coinciding with its

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[18] RDEK. *Community Priorities Plan – Columbia Valley Community Directed Funds* (December 2013, page 13).

establishment, the Columbia Valley Directors may adopt guiding policy or principles for the operation of the service; 2015.

d) Taxation and program funding usually follows the year after the establishment of the service; 2016 at the earliest, assuming the service is created in 2015.

7.2 Single Delivery Agent

Restructuring the delivery of the visitor services programs, including contracting a single service provider and relocating Visitor Centre operations, would align well with a new regional funding arrangement. Ideally, this step will occur with the approval of Radium and Invermere, and the willing participation of the two Chambers. The process to make this happen is as follows:

a) Presentation of the Committee's position on the report to the two Chamber Boards and the FBA.

b) Consultation with the two Chambers to work out the details surrounding a single visitor services program and the associated impacts to the two organizations.

c) Consultation with Destination British Columbia to ensure continued enrollment of all Visitor Centre locations in the Visitor Centre Network Program.

d) A fee for service agreement with the Radium Chamber of Commerce to be negotiated after the RDEK service area is established.

7.3 New Initiatives

Restructuring visitor services presents an opportunity to advance the Columbia Valley's priorities of valley-wide branding and marketing, and greater cooperation in the tourism sector. By locating these types of services under a single authority charged with meeting valley-wide interests, greater regional cooperation and integration will become necessary. While a Columbia Valley Visitor Services Strategy and a valley-wide branding and marketing program are logical next steps, the range of issues and interests involved in these two projects increases and gets more complex. If and when these projects are pursued, terms of reference, timelines and budgets can be established then.

Contained within the above recommendations and implementation steps are a number of other potential options or variations that may achieve some or all of the same program objectives and outcomes. These will become apparent as each step advances. More detailed analysis of these alternatives can be completed if and when they come to light and following the initiative of the RDEK Columbia Valley Directors to restructure the financing and administration of Columbia Valley visitor services.

VVS Questionnaire Compilation Document

May, 2019

1) **What would you like the horizon line to be for the Strategic Plan we will be creating?**
   a. 1 year
   b. <mark>3-year – All respondents highlighted this</mark>
   c. 5-year

*Note: one respondent commented:

Visioning for 5 years, planning specifics for 3 years, determining action plan for 1 year.

2) **What is your current understanding of the services the VVS delivers and how are they delivered?**
   - *VVS is delivered from Canal Flats to Radium Hot Springs with visitor centers (kiosks) located in Canal flats, Fairmont, Invermere at the Crossroads, the downtown kiosk in Invermere, and the visitor centre in Radium. The initiative in funded by the RDEK in the amount of $100,000 and also by the 4 partners to make up the difference. The model of service delivery is a staffing model.*
   - *A resource for current travellers to have access to information about our valley (history / attractions / Culture etc.) and the services (transportation / health etc.) we provide.*
   - *To advocate to potential investors and to attract investors.*
   - *Currently being delivered in multiple aspects:*
     - *In person - through the Radium and Invermere Visitor Centres; with three additional kiosks in the high season. DT Invermere, Fairmont and new to 2019, Canal Flats.*
     - *Marketing – multiple media outlets – Both Radium and Invermere's website, Facebook, Twitter, newspaper advertisements, featured videos (Whiteway, Why I love the CV etc) radio broadcasts and mail outs to specific targeted audiences for certain attractions (winter in motion etc.).*
     - *Partnerships with Imagine Kootenay and working alongside the economic development officer.*
     - *Both Radium and Invermere Visitor Centres through their personal Chambers, host a number of committees that focus on specific key elements. (tourism/events, marketing, business, etc.)*
     - *Training for hospitality - Fam tours – Prepare front of line staff, from across the valley that work in hospitality with the tools and knowledge of the valley to be able to provide an excellent experience for visitors.*
     - *Each Chamber / Visitor Centre having a presence with key events (Valley appreciation day, snowflake festival, radium farmers market etc.)*

What is your current understanding of the services the VVS delivers and how are they delivered? (Cont'd)

- *Funded by RD-Staff shared throughout the program-limited by said funding though.*
- *VVS operated by the Radium Chamber of Commerce was created so that a single entity could hire, train, schedule staff and operate visitor information centres throughout the Columbia Valley with a view to provide a consistent level of service and accuracy of information to people visiting the Columbia Valley regardless of where in the valley that they stop for information.*
- *My understanding is that VVS provides the visiting public with information on accommodation, dining, local business, points of interest in our valley. I am not sure on how much marketing is actually done by VVS both digitally, print and as a presence at events. And of course they have washrooms for the travelling public! I am a bit of a newbie in the group,but there seems to be several organizations collaborating and contributing financially and in guiding the organization. How much each entity is contributing financially and in guidance is unclear to me. With Radium being in the same building and have VVS staff and Parks Canada Staff both operating in this one building, it must be difficult to separate out who is assisting visitors for the park and who is assisting thru visitor services.*
- *Hiring staff, managing staff, scheduling staff, budgeting/finances for the funds from RDEK, organizing and executing training including a FAM tour, post summer follow up survey to staff.*
- *My understanding is that Kent hires/manages/schedules for Radium and Fairmont – possibly Inv Kiosk? And that Sarah hires/manages/schedules for the CV VC.*
- *In the past 2 years Susan and Kent have organized the FAM tour – Susan was lead for 1st year.*
- *Radium Chamber handles the books/finances for the funds from RDEK. CVCC bills back to RC for staff costs, from RDEK funds.*
- *Kent leads the in person/in centre training for all VCs.*
- *I believe I understand the delivery and management. Not so clear on taxation structure.*

3) **Name a minimum of 2 STRENGTHS of the services that are currently being delivered.**

- *VVS is well supervised by the Visitor Centre/Chamber Manager in Radium*
- *The staff that are hired receive very thorough training*
- *The collaboration between the partners is going well*
- *We are seeing an overall increase in numbers of visitors*
- *Co - operative working between the partners*
- *The creation of collaborative valley marketing materials and training*
- *In person delivery and having a physical location – A lot of the information for the valley that visitors would like to know, is not easily obtained through online research and could set them in the wrong direction.*
- *Directions, services available, transportation issues and that Invermere is actually a town (a lot of people don't even know that Invermere goes beyond just the crossroads!*
- *Marketing Videos – draws a lot of attraction to travellers and creates a seed for potential investors. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Y8wynwLMb0 - Take Me There - Columbia Valley*
- *2019 new project of way finding – new signage making it easier to navigate and find local sources.*
- *Good partnership between the two Chamber offices and Visitor Centres*
- *Tried – Tested. It works when funded correctly.*
- *Entry to the Valley – Human Customer Service*
- *Training provided to staff*
- *Scheduling to allow for flexibility of schedules*
- *Access to funding that doesn't limit to the hiring of students only*
- *The idea of a familiarity tour for employees.*
- *The people that work diligently each year to continue this work.*
- *The increased communication between the committee members and VCs.*
- *More stable source of funding, as opposed to grants that have been shrinking/changing/disappearing.*
- *Addition of FAM tour and group training by Kent ensures all get same info.*
- *Sharing of in VC collateral – maps, etc.*
- *Great co-operation between the RDEK and chambers.*
- *Willingness to improve visitor's experiences in the Valley.*
- *Good staff training.*

4) Name a minimum of 2 WEAKNESSES of the services that are currently being delivered.

- *The funding that is being allocated could be allocated more efficiently and creatively*
- *The RDEK as a funder has a great deal of involvement*
- *Funding is too little to create a stronger network*
- *Short term employment so staff turn over is less*
- *Valley wide statistical information. We could be producing and retaining more key info to provide to whoever's concerned and have for our own knowledge to be able to grow from.*
- *Presence – online and in person.*
- *Use of more digital media to have a broader presence.*
  - *As much from across seas or to the visitors right in town.*
  - *Mobile visitor counsellors – would like to see them at events.*
- *Doubling up on things that could be better consolidated, IE: events calendars, communication messaging – who sends what information and is it getting to all of our members?*
- *Limited staff can create problems.*
- *Too many info centres (dependent on time of year).*
- *Perceived resistance to creative collaboration and change by some*
- *Staff not willing to move through the different locations*
- *Marketing*
- *Accounting and accountability*
- *Still fragmented, not run like a Valley wide program, understand that funding dictates some split work but one organization should be the lead body.*
- *Finances are mixed in with RC overall budget, should ideally be separate.*
- *Wage disparity between the visitor centres.*
- *Parks Canada relationship.*
- *Finding the staffing "sweet spot": best hours to be open (primarily the 2 seasonal VIC's).*
- *(Fairmont) not serviced by the informational brochures in shoulder and low seasons (skiing, snowshoeing, climbing).*

5) Name a minimum of 2 OPPORTUNITIES for services the VVS could deliver.

- *There is a program delivered in other parts of BC called the travelling Ambassador program where visitor centre staff's are not stationary in a community but travel through out the community interacting with visitors.*
- *There is a desire to have e-kiosks located at visitor centres to replace staff and potentially cut back on costs. Moving forward on this type of initiative could be beneficial but potentially costly for initial purchase and upkeep.*
- *There is an opportunity to increase our collaboration as a valley instead of as individual communities.*
- *Making the Columbia Valley "Whole". Filling the gaps between the communities for whichever reasons – marketing, avoiding stacked weekends (2 large events or more on the same weekend).*
- *Bring businesses together to help create a valley wide atmosphere instead of trying to have visitors stay in only one community for their stay.*
- *Digital kiosks or skype ins in lieu of our kiosks. For example, on weekdays we might not get much traction so it would be nice to have a resource available to have someone call in and "virtually" talk to a representative. Meanwhile we have an extra visitor counsellor that we can now have available for events or just be mobile through the towns and beaches.*
- *Review whether our two centres are being maximized in terms of resources and collaboration.*
- *Figure out what to do with the crossroads (cost per visitor is too high)*
- *Deployable kiosk service*
- *Take over full operation all visitor centres*
- *Create a Whistler Spirit model of training businesses and VVS staff*
- *Electronic kiosks*
- *Outreach outside of Invermere, Fairmont and Radium perhaps with the use of technology i.e. Kiosks in less busy hubs.*
- *Use a regional entity to seek and administer funding and keep financial records, so that so that those with knowledge of our areas are frontline managers.*
- *Electronic/unmanned info stations.*
- *Cloud based, valley wide scheduling software, managed by one person for all centres.*
- *Hybrid of in person and new technology to deliver visitor services.*
- *Shoulder and low season visitor info (Fairmont) via brochures or electronic kiosk.*
- *Electronic kiosk for off-hours/off-season.*

6) Name a minimum of 2 THREATS to the services that are currently being delivered.

- *Moving away from a staffing model could potentially create increased costs to visitor services over time, as technology is ever changing and costly to update/repair.*
- *Changing the current model could potentially upset the way the visitor views the valley.*
- *The information would still need to be readily available.*
- *We would not want to risk the visitor centre designations that Invermere and Radium hold with the BC government.*
- *A committee that have limited knowledge about the service*
- *Realistic expectations of the service*
- *Communication through the sanctioned VVS leaders of each community.*
- *Incorrect information being listed online – need more of a presence to assist with "personal travel stories" being added.*
- *Loss of funding.*
- *Lack of understanding of where the funding goes.*
- *Loss of funding from RDEK*
- *Partners around the table not being willing to consider opportunities for improvement*
- *Unstable funding model*
- *Protectionism - Viewing other as competition - not enough regional focus.*
- *Perceived unknown 'wants' from RDEK.*
- *Needing to apply for funds separately to ensure both CVCC and RC get funds for some programs.*
- *Lack of trust between steering committee members.*
- *RMI funding for FAM tour each year.*
- *Lack of and desire for visitor services delivery in Canal Flats.*
- *Potentially basing funding on # of parties/visitors instead of hours of operation (like it is now)*
- *Moving the VC from the CVCC*
- *Change of funding*
- *Change of governance*

7) What MEASURABLES are in place for the services currently being offered?

- *Staff surveys*
- *Constant contact surveys*
- *Annual report*
- *Visitor Stats collected for Destination BC*
- *Valley Business survey*
- *Finances*
- *How many counsellors we have*
- *Traffic through communities*
- # of Visitors
- *Provincial ranking*
- *Health of surrounding business*
- *Visitor Centre Network stats*
- *Staff satisfaction survey*
- *Business survey*
- *I see number of visitors recorded per site as the reasoning for funding(DBC). This is a subjective, staff determined number and thus is not an objective measurable for success.*
- *Staff exit surveys.*
- *Post summer season survey to staff*
- *Budget to actual*
- *Party/visitor count tracking sheets*
- *Visitor stats*
- *Time of day stats*

8) Identify a minimum of 1 CREATIVE way that services could be delivered in the valley.

- *The travelling ambassador program*
- *Having a mobile app*
- *A full time story teller that talks about the history of the Valley and drives traffic to and engagement with the Visitor Centres*
- *Valley Passport including attractions in each local*
- *Mobile delivery – have someone roam the streets for one on one presence, while at the same time be able to be accessed virtually.*
- *Have accommodation counsellors – work in coordination with the resorts etc. What do their guests want to know? What events are going on with each accommodation?*
- *Mobile info service for Invermere*
- *Electronic Kiosks with an app*
- *Hold a Visit your Valley event, invite business owners to tour the visitor centres over the period of a week as if they were a visitor and wrap up their visit with a coffee and treat to sit down with a couple of committee members to discuss their experience, their perceived value of the service being offered and suggestions for improvement.*
- *Pop up Visitor services at major events in the entire Valley.*
- *Wifi and washrooms are a big part of what folks will stop at a VC for (as well as info), find a way to incorporate those services with a kiosk or app to provide the info to cut down on staff costs and/or alleviate peak periods of visitors.*
  - o *Design the Wifi so that the App is on the 'landing page' and will get downloaded*
  - o *Work with bus/tour operators that come thru frequently to have their guests get the app prior to arriving*
  - o *App/kiosk funding could partially come through sales of listings/ads on the app by accommodators and activity providers*
- *Find out where the visitors went after getting info. What did they do, how much did they spend?*
- *Follow-up survey with comeback offers from Valley businesses/Valley Coupon Book, etc…*

9) What would be a MEASURABLES FOR THIS CREATRIVE WAY of delivering services?

- *The numbers of users of the app or the numbers of people the travelling ambassador interacts with*
- *Increased stat numbers and engagement*
- *Excitement and enthusiasm reflected in blogging stories*
- *Increased visits to Valley Attractions*
- Time
- Do we have enough staff?
- If working with resort staff – how would the day to day travel look like?
- Partnership of payment.
- *# of hits*
- *Usage*
- *feedback*
- *A sign in sheet(name and number in party) for those who take brochures or ask questions/ or a more creative way would be a digital picture of visitors (with their permission) to the booth with no names collected*
- *Downloads of the app (and other measurements dependent on app infrastructure)*
  - *Time of day*
  - *Day of week*
  - *Will give insight into how may visitors are missed with the traditional vc method*
- *Reduction in staff costs and visitor counts in centres*
- *They come back.*

Regional District of
East Kootenay

Information Report
Khf 546 001
Bhh 531 011

Date	July 23, 2019
Author	Holly Ronnquist, CFO
Subject	Columbia Valley Physician Recruitment Funding

BACKGROUND

The Columbia Valley Directors were invited to a presentation by Marilin States, the Community Physician Resource Consultant helping the Town of Creston to attract doctors. The concept of funding physician recruitment in the Columbia Valley (CV) was discussed after the presentation, due to the shortage of doctors in Invermere.

The CV Directors requested an information report with potential funding through the CV Economic Development Service as having more doctors will contribute to attraction and retention of year-round residents in the Columbia Valley.

INFORMATION

The proposed budget for physician recruitment in the Columbia Valley (attached) estimates a cost of $60,000 per year. Staff have estimated a cost of up to $20,000 for 2019, if approved.

There are two options to fund this project through the CV Economic Development Service in 2019:

1. There is an estimated $22,000 available in the taxation funded projects budget in 2019. There has been indication that there may be some proposals coming forward to use some of this amount.

2. The 2019 to 2023 Financial Plan is projecting to have a $69,093 surplus in 2019, which is to be used to support the 2020 budget. The RDEK could use up to $20,000 of the surplus in 2019 and replace that amount through taxation in 2020 or a reduction in the 2020 taxation funded projects budget (currently shown as $50,000).

If option 2 is selected and the cost for the initiative in 2020 is $60,000, the total amount to be funded through taxation in 2020 could be $80,000 (35% increase). The CV Economic Development Service requisition is apportioned by the number of Class 6 properties in each jurisdiction. The requisition and cost per average $335,000 residence for each jurisdiction would be as follows in 2020:

Jurisdiction	Apportionment (by Class 6 Property)	Cost Per Avg. $335,000 Residence
Invermere	$24,754	$ 8
Radium Hot Springs	12,714	10
Canal Flats	3,713	8
Electoral Area F	33,080	4
Electoral Area G	5,738	5

The CV Directors could choose to reduce the taxation funded projects budget by up to $50,000 in 2020, to phase in the tax increase over two years.

After 2020, the budget includes only grant funded projects. If the CV Directors choose to continue funding projects through taxation in 2021, an additional tax increase would be required.

If a 2019 budget for Physician Recruitment in the CV is approved, it will be included in the Financial Plan Amendment, expected to go to the September 2019 Committee meetings.

Attachments

Columbia Valley Recruitment Initiative

Proposed Budget for Professional Recruitment Group
Based on suggestions from Marilin States, Creston Valley Recruitment Manager

Recruitment Manager Remuneration	**$ 27,500.00**
approx 65 hrs/month @ $35.00/hr	
approx 786 hrs/annually	

Recruitment visits, welcome events	**$ 2,000.00**

Arrival of new physician, applicant transition	**$ 1,200.00**

Recruitment expenses, travel, accomodation,meals	**$ 8,000.00**

Conference Attendance for booth	**$ 10,000.00**
<u>minimum of 3 most important conferences</u>	
Rural and Remote Family Physicians - $4500.00	
FMF -$4500.00	
BC College of Family Physicians - $1000.00	

Advertising	**$ 2,975.00**
Banners $800.00, Printing (trifolds, business cards, handout postcards) $800.00	
Promotional Material (pens, swag) $375.00	
Advertising (event programs) $1000.00	

Contingency fund (unexpected expenses)	**$ 3,325.00**

Initial Consulting Fees - first year only	**$ 5,000.00**

	$ 60,000.00
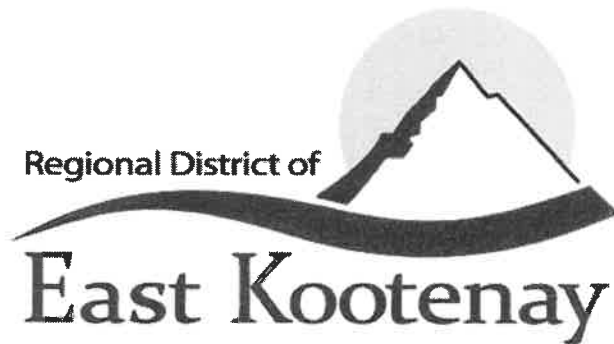
CV Economic Development
Five Year Financial Plan
With Revenues and Expenditures
For the Seven Months Ending July 31, 2019
2019-07-16

Regional District of

East Kootenay

	2019 BUDGET	2019 ACTUAL	2020 BUDGET	2021 BUDGET	2022 BUDGET	2023 BUDGET	2024 BUDGET
Revenue							
Requisition	$226,240	$226,241	$238,699	$258,344	$258,914	$259,494	
Local Government Grants & Regional Transfers	144,173	37,669	215,216	126,756	2,550	2,550	
Prior Period Surplus	104,113	104,113	69,093				
Total Revenue	**474,526**	**368,023**	**523,008**	**385,100**	**261,464**	**262,044**	
Expenditures							
Salaries & Benefits	19,210	7,768	19,401	20,084	20,588	21,102	
Administration & Overhead	17,800	5,953	17,800	17,800	17,800	17,800	
Consulting & Professional Services	85,000	35,417	85,000	85,000	85,000	85,000	
Grants	10,000		10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	
Grant - CV Visitor Services	100,000	30,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	
Grant - Imagine Kootenays	15,000	7,500	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	
Grant - Lake Windermere Ambassadors	10,000		10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	
Resident Attraction/Retention Project	50,000		50,000				
Granted Projects	94,997		212,666	124,206			
Telephone & Utilities	400	30	400	400	400	400	
Shared Overhead	3,026	581	2,519	2,610	2,676	2,742	
Total General	*405,433*	*87,249*	*522,786*	*385,100*	*261,464*	*262,044*	
Total Expenditures	405,433	87,249	522,786	385,100	261,464	262,044	
Revenue less Expenditures	69,093	280,774	222				
Surplus (Deficit)	69,093	280,774	222				