



CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING

DECEMBER 18, 2024, AT 9:00 AM

OKANAGAN LAKE ROOM (COUNCIL CHAMBER)

A G E N D A

1) CALL TO ORDER

2) LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As chair of the City of Vernon's Tourism Commission, and in the spirit of this gathering, I recognize the City of Vernon is located in the traditional territory of the Syilx people of the Okanagan Nation.

3) ADOPTION OF AGENDA

4) ADOPTION OF MINUTES

a) November 28, 2024 (attached)

5) UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6) NEW BUSINESS

- a. 2025 Annual Plan Presentation – *Torrie*
- b. Roundtable Update

7) NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Tourism Commission is scheduled for **January 22, 2025**.

8) ADJOURNMENT



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

MINUTES OF THE TOURISM COMMISSION MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 28, 2024 AT 3:30 PM OKANAGAN LAKE ROOM (COUNCIL CHAMBER)

PRESENT: VOTING:
Dan Proulx, Great Vernon Chamber of Commerce
Cassandra Zerebeski, Ski
Mayor Cumming
Janine Collard, Attractions
Clara Snedden, Accommodation Provider, Chair
Shawna Patenaude, Arts & Culture
Rebecca Barton, Arts & Culture
Councillor Durning, Council Appointed
Jessica Dowswell, Accommodation Provider

NON-VOTING:
Ian Jenkins, Silver Star Mountain Resort

ABSENT: Claus Larsen, Accommodation Provider
Peter Kaz, Downtown Vernon Association
Kris Fuller, Sports & Events
Gerran Thorhaug, Restaurant

STAFF: Torrie Silverthorn, Manager, Tourism
Karen Savill, Visitor Services Coordinator
Hanna Lucich, Tourism Marketing Coordinator
Hilary Irvine, Tourism Marketing Coordinator
Gemma Patterson, Administrative Assistant
Shawn Knuhtsen, Manager, Building & Licensing
Jennifer Pounder, Records/Committee Clerk

ORDER The meeting was called to order at 3:33 p.m.

**LAND
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** *As Chair of the City of Vernon's Tourism Commission, and in the spirit of this gathering, I recognize the City of Vernon is located in the traditional territory of the Syilx people of the Okanagan Nation.*

**ADOPTION OF THE
AGENDA** Moved by D. Proulx, seconded by J. Collard:

THAT the agenda of the November 28, 2024 Tourism Commission meeting be adopted.

CARRIED

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

Moved by J. Collard, seconded by C. Zerebeski:

THAT the minutes of the October 23, 2024 Tourism Commission meeting be adopted.

CARRIED

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

MANAGERS UPDATE

Manager, Tourism, provided an update to the Committee that entailed the framework for the 2025 Annual Plan.

FUTURE MEETING TIMES

Discussion was had on future meeting scheduling times. T. Silverthorn will distribute a poll to members and bring the results to the next scheduled meeting.

HOLIDAY MIXER

The Tourism Commission Holiday Mixer is planned for December 11, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. at Eatology.

ROUNDTABLE

A roundtable discussion was held.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Tourism Commission is set for December 8, 2024 at 3:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting of the Tourism Commission adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

_____ Chair

2025 Tourism Plan

An aerial night photograph of a city, likely Salt Lake City, showing a dense urban area with numerous lights from buildings and streets. In the background, a large, illuminated mountain peak is visible against the dark night sky. The city lights create a warm, golden glow, while the mountain is lit with a cooler, blueish-white light. The overall scene is a vibrant and detailed view of a city at night.



2024 Tourism Vernon Annual Plan

Prepared By



2024 TACTICS

Build Strong Partnerships

Work with Downtown Vernon Association and City of Vernon to improve visitor access to the downtown core

Continue existing work to showcase downtown via the visitor guide, website and marketing channels. Partnership initiatives to drive public art participations opportunities and the continuing Support Local Campaign initiative in partnership with Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Vernon Association we will encourage residents and visitors to shop local which plays a key role in supporting tourism businesses and the local economy.

Continue building relationships with Okanagan Indian Band

Indigenous Tourism is an impactful cultural pillar for attracting visitors to Canada and British Columbia. The City of Vernon has monthly meetings with the Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB) where joint economic development and tourism initiatives are discussed. An OKIB representative sits on the Vernon Tourism Commission to build this relationship and collaboration. Tourism Vernon will continue building relationships with OKIB and staff are here to support their tourism journey and promote product development opportunities.

Hotelier collaboration and increasing the role of travel trade in sales efforts

Via the Hotelier Engagement Program, staff will continue to engage local hoteliers building relationships in the sector and facilitating partnerships. Improving the ability to forecast and report hotel occupancy levels in a timely manner is a priority. Staff will continue to promote the Small Accommodators Fund and educate those on the program to better utilise funds.

Staff will further existing work with accommodation providers and resorts to identify how Tourism Vernon can support their travel trade marketing and sales efforts. Staff will develop campaigns to support corporate groups, meetings and business travel as this industry fully recovers. Specific focus will be given to aligning with active explorer and sport-specific industry and interest markets.

Support Vernon economic development in climate action

Collaborating with city departments, stakeholder initiatives will be geared to supporting Vernon tourism businesses in combatting climate change, reducing business emissions, leveraging incentives and subsidies to switch to cleaner energy and retrofits, and e-vehicle infrastructure.

Tourism destinations are successful when the local community is supportive and there is buy-in, but destinations really thrive when the local community is actively engaged and has a sense of ownership in tourism development. The local passion and pride among Vernonites is palpable, and Tourism Vernon is in a unique position to leverage residents as an essential asset in promoting and shaping the Vernon visitor experience.



2023 Highlight

ANNUAL INDUSTRY CONFERENCE

Building on the success started in 2022, this annual event has gained status as the flagship community event for the local tourism industry. **Tourism Vernon's Industry Conference** brings industry leaders together to network, establish partnerships while educating stakeholders about industry trends.





Geography and segments

PRIZM and TELUS insights

Geographic analysis of visitors to Vernon includes two data sets

- PRIZM: identifying Canadian visitors to Vernon's downtown core and SilverStar resort who live at least a 2 hour drive away from Vernon.
- TELUS Insights: identifying all visitors to the town of Vernon.

The TELUS insights data is more comprehensive, but more of the visitors identified are lower revenue short-haul visitors (day trips) or visitors who are not tourists (e.g., hospital visits, overnight stay when passing through Vernon).

Short-haul visitors

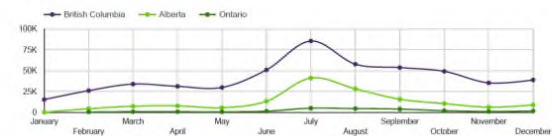
Short haul visitors have a similar age distribution compared to medium- and long-haul visitors, but lower incomes (40%+ have household incomes under \$79K). They are much more likely than medium- and long-haul visitors to be travelling in pairs rather than as a larger family unit (55%+ are a family size of 2). Short-haul visitors make up a large portion of visitors to Vernon, but their short stays and lower incomes produce less revenue than the size of the group might suggest.

American and other international visitors

International visitors are overwhelmingly travelling as couples, many fitting the characteristics of the Near Retirement segment. Peak visitation from the US is in September, October, and November, with other countries bringing too few visitors to Vernon to give reliable estimates of trip timing or group composition.

The Near Retirement segment is a promising group for the travel trade to promote Vernon to. For the travel trade, iconic experiences are key (e.g., same day ski and golf, Sparkling Hill, orchards and wineries). As Tourism Vernon develops marketing assets, images of these iconic experiences will be essential to growing the travel trade business. Travel trade customers often think in stereotypes and may choose a travel package on the basis of a single image.

Monthly total trips by province



Our Role

To **promote, protect and enhance** Vernon's position as one of North America's premier holiday and lifestyle destinations through:

- leading the execution of targeted marketing programs
- supporting destination development programs
- advocating for the sustainable growth of tourism in Vernon

We will be the most innovative and effective Destination Management Organization in the Thompson Okanagan in inspiring our target markets to experience our destination.

Our Goals

Increased year-round visitation.

Increased visitor satisfaction.

Increased stakeholder engagement.

Increased community support for tourism.

Active Explorers



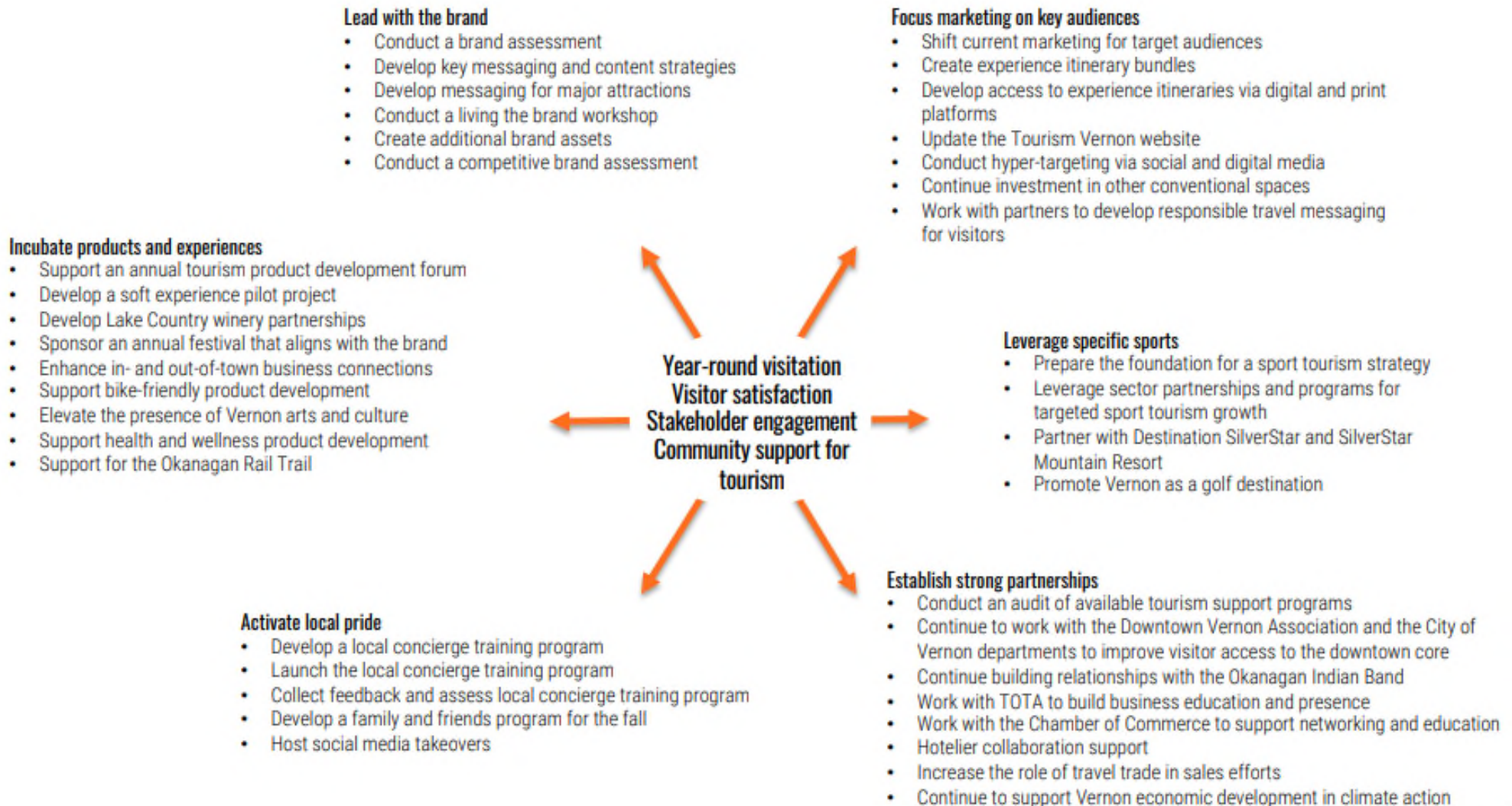
Near Retirement



Specific Sports



Strategy at a glance



	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
Lead with the brand					
Conduct a brand assessment	X				
Develop key messaging and content strategies	X	→			
Develop messaging for major attractions	X	→			
Conduct a living the brand workshop		X			
Create additional brand assets		X		X	
Conduct a competitive brand assessment				X	
Focus marketing on key audiences					
Shift current marketing for target audiences	X				
Create experience itinerary bundles		X			
Develop access to experience itineraries via digital and print platforms		X	→		
Update the Tourism Vernon website	X				
Conduct hyper-targeting via social and digital media		X	→		
Continue investments in other conventional spaces		X	→		
Work with partners to develop responsible travel messaging for visitors		X	→		

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Develop messaging for major attractions	X	→			
Conduct a living the brand workshop		X			
Create additional brand assets		X		X	
Conduct a competitive brand assessment				X	
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Work with partners to develop responsible travel messaging for visitors		X	→	→	→



Recommended activity plan

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
Leverage specific sports					
Prepare the foundation for a sport tourism strategy	X				
Leverage sector partnerships and programs for targeted sport tourism growth		X	→	→	→
Partner with Destination SilverStar and SilverStar Mountain Resort		X	→	→	→
Promote Vernon as a golf destination		X	→	→	→
Establish strong partnerships					
Conduct an audit of available tourism support programs	X				
Continue to work with the Downtown Vernon Association and the City of Vernon departments to improve visitor access to the downtown core		X	→		
Continue building relationships with the Okanagan Indian Band	X	→	→	→	→
Work with TOTA to build business education and presence		X	→	→	→
Work with the Chamber of Commerce to support networking and education		X	→	→	→
Hotelier collaboration support	X	→	→	→	→
Increase the role of travel trade in sales efforts	X	→	→	→	→
Continue to support Vernon economic development in climate action	X	→	→	→	→

Recommended activity plan

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
Activate local pride					
Develop a local concierge training program	X				
Launch the local concierge training program		X			
Collect feedback and assess local concierge training program			X	→	→
Develop a family and friends program for the fall			X	→	→
Host social media takeovers		X	→	→	→
Incubate products and experiences					
Support an annual tourism product development forum			X	→	→
Develop a soft experience pilot project			X		
Develop Lake Country winery partnerships	X	→	→	→	→
Sponsor an annual festival that aligns with the brand		X	→	→	→
Enhance in- and out-of-town business connections	X	→	→	→	→
Support bike-friendly product development		X	→	→	→
Elevate the presence of Vernon arts and culture	X	→	→	→	→
Support health and wellness product development		X	→	→	→
Support for the Okanagan Rail Trail	X	→	→	→	→



Lead with the Brand



Choose a path, and the inspiration will follow.




Welcome to the Trails Capital of BC
 A designation the "Trails Capital of BC" feels like a bold statement for this humble town, but make the trip and you'll find mountain bike single track and downhill parks mixed with trail trails and hiking paths. Add in the routes to our arts, culture, history and farm-fresh offerings and you'll find yourself connected, naturally.

TOURISMVERNON.COM

Canadian Travel and Leisure Magazine





**Discover Vernon,
the Official Trails Capital of BC**




TOURISMVERNON.COM



HAPPY TRAILS



Discover Vernon – The Official Trails Capital of BC

TOURISMVERNON.COM

Saddle Dome set

Focus Marketing on Key Audiences





Leverage Specific Sport

A photograph of two skiers on a snowy slope. The skier in the foreground is wearing a dark puffy jacket, camouflage pants, and a brown beanie, smiling. The skier in the background is wearing a red jacket and dark pants. The background features snow-covered evergreen trees under a clear sky. The text "Establish Strong Partnerships" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Establish Strong Partnerships

Activate Local Pride





Incubate Products and Experiences



Thank
You