REGIONAL TRAIL STRATEGY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - GOLDEN + ELECTORAL AREA A

PREPARED FOR:

CSRD
COLUMBIA SHUSWAP REGIONAL DISTRICT

COLUMBIA SHUSWAP REGIONAL DISTRICT +
REGIONAL TRAIL STRATEGY WORKING
GROUP

July 13, 2018

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01 PROJECT INTRODUCTION

With a total area of 13,735 square kilometers, the Columbia Shuswap Regional District Electoral Area A surrounds the Town of Golden, and includes the unicorporated communities of Blaeberry, Donald, Habart, Parson, Nicholson, surrounding rural area, extending east to the community of Field. Bordered by the Rocky Mountains, Columbia Mountain ranges, and in close proximity to some of the most stunning National Parks within Canada, the beauty of the natural environment and active and passive recreational opportunities within Area A are outstanding. The area is experiencing rapid growth in tourism and in the public and commercial outdoor recreation sector for a broad range of user groups including motorized and non-motorized recreational activities. Recreation has become a top priority and the creation of an area-wide regional trail strategy presents an opportunity to manage this growth intelligently, create a comprehensive inventory of existing assets, strengthen local partnerships, minimize conflicts, support environmental, social, cultural, and health values, while contributing to the local and provincial economies.

In 2016, the communities of Golden and Electoral Area A engaged in two facilitated meetings to investigate collaborative opportunities to inventory, develop, and maintain a trail network within the region. These facilitated meetings gathered a wealth of local expertise

and diversity of perspectives throughout Area A. The outcome of the facilitated consultation sessions was a consensus to proceed a Regional Trail Strategy for Golden and Area A. The existing Area A Parks Plan, Golden Backcountry Recreation Access Plan, current bylaws, and planning documents listed within the Request for Proposals (RFP) provide a solid foundation to inform this Regional Trail Strategy. This Regional Trails Strategy supplements the existing Electoral Area A Parks Plan which may be updated from time to time.

To achieve the goals and desired outcomes for this Regional Trail Strategy, the project has been structured into the following phases:

01 PHASE 1: PROJECT START-UP

02 PHASE 2: REVIEW OF EXISTING SYSTEMS

03 PHASE 3 – NEEDS ASSESSMENT + COMMUNITY/STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

04 PHASE 4 – IDENTIFICATION + PRIORITIZATION OF OPTIONS – CONNECT INVENTORY NEEDS

05 PHASE 5 - FINAL REPORT

REGIONAL CONTEXT + STUDY AREA

Area A is comprised of the rural communities of Parson, Field, Nicholson, Habart, Blaeberry, and Donald along with the rural areas of McMurdo, Beaverfoot, Willowbank, Moberley, the North Bench, surrounding the Town of Golden. Area A is the largest Electoral Area in the Columbia Shuswap Regional District (CSRD). The area has become world renowned for the incredible scenic beauty of the natural environment. Area A is also with close proximity to six National Parks including Banff, Glacier, Jasper, Kootenay, Mount Revelstoke and Yoho.

The area has a full spectrum of active and passive recreation in all four seasons. Established recreation areas within Area include the Moonraker Trails, CBT Trails, Mount 7 Trails, Mountain Shadow Trails, Kicking Horse Mountain Resort, Dawn Mountain Nordic Centre, Golden

Golf Club, Nicholson Eco-Ranch, Blueway trails on several larger rivers, with mechanized snowmobile access throughout Area A.

The area is experiencing rapid and sustained growth in the outdoor recreation sector for public and commercial, motorized and non-motorized, and aquatic recreational activities. These recreation experiences range from remote backcountry access to front country vehicle access experiences. There are opportunities to manage this growth so that it best contributes to the local and provincial economy while supporting social and environmental values while attempting to minimize user conflict.

In addition to the Recreation Areas found throughout the region, Golden and Area have important wildlife and habitat areas.

SHUSWAP, KTUNAXA, METIS NATIONS

We recognize that this Regional Trail Strategy occurs on the traditional territory of the Shuswap and Ktunaxa Nations. Heritage trails in this area have been used for centuries by indigenous people for access and to reach the bison herds east of the Rocky Mountains. Earliest records of access through the Athabasca and Howe's Pass Heritage

Trails date as far back as 1807 with the Kinbasket People guiding David Thompson and other early settlers to the area.

Consultation and involvement of the Shuswap, Ktunaxa, and Metis Nations are a top priority to inform this Regional Trail Strategy and efforts have been made to build these relationships as early in the

planning process as possible to strengthen the sustainability of the recreation network and to ensure all stakeholders have been given the opportunity to provide input throughout the strategic planning process. Several meetings were held with the Shuswap Territorial Land Stewardship Team and the Metis Nation. There is tremendous opportunity to undertake further study for archaeological, cultural, and heritage values to ensure stewardship of the land. There are also many opportunities to explore partnership agreements for planning and ongoing maintenance and access improvements.

PROJECT WORKING GROUP

The Regional Trail Strategy Working Group is represented by members of the Area A Parks Advisory Group and a dedicated collective of selected volunteers from the broader community who represent differing perspectives drawing from their diverse recreation backgrounds. The Working Group has been engaged throughout the project process to review all project materials, provide feedback and direction to the Project Team to ensure the Regional Trail Strategy is technically sound, transparent, and acceptable to the public and stakeholders. A total of 6 Working Group Meetings were held throughout the course of this project.

02 VISION + GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Vision and Guiding Principles for the Regional Trail Strategy (PG 9) were developed collaboratively between the Consultant Team and the Working Group at the first working group meeting June 20, 2017. When revisited in January, 2018, the Working Group felt that the Vision and Guiding Principles remain consistent with vision for the project and the recreation network for Golden and Area A.

Developing a common vision for the Electoral Area A: Regional Trails Strategy was a critical first step in the planning process. Establishing a vision statement establishes group and societal values. The agreed upon vision shapes the framework for decision making in later project phases. Any debate can be referred back to and validated in terms of compatibility with the project vision. The vision statement projects long term, it does not describe what is found today.

VISION STATEMENT

Golden and Electoral Area A will be an internationally recognized outdoor recreation destination with a recreation network that is environmentally responsible, intelligently connected, and a model of sustainability. The community works collaboratively and constructively to provide 4 season support and funding. The trail network throughout Golden and Area A will be authentic, diverse, designed and constructed to meet trail standards, and considered a valuable asset to the community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- *"Made in Golden" - The plan will be informed by the Community*
- *Align with the Golden Backcountry Recreation Access Plan (GBRAP) land use designations*
- *Environmental Sustainability*
- *Collaboration and Cooperation*
- *Stewardship – Community, Trails, Environment*
- *Cultural Values and Heritage*
- *Inclusive*
- *Equity – (all come to the same level, not equality)*
- *Respectful Communication*
- *Equity of Assets – to ourselves and others*

- *Healthy Community*
- *Safety and Awareness*
- *Recognize intrinsic values of environment, natural areas, wilderness, wildlife*
- *Maintain value to community while recognizing the significant biodiversity of the area*
- *Trails are well signed and well maintained*
- *Innovation*

03 STAKEHOLDER + COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The Regional Trail Strategy project held **39 STAKEHOLDER + COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS** which are summarized in Section 3 of the Strategy starting on PG. 10. The approach of relationship building through genuine face to face conversations with community members and stakeholder groups is not a new concept, but was a key element in getting community buy-in and authentic and meaningful engagement.

The engagement sessions included **6 WORKING GROUP MEETINGS**, **6 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION SESSIONS** (July 2017), 24 face-to-face meetings with 41 different stakeholder groups, **2 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION SESSIONS** (October 2017), and **1 COMMUNITY SURVEY** in October 2017 that received responses from **274 PARTICIPANTS**.

These engagement sessions were informative in identifying emerging trends and key findings which formed a large part of the future SWOT Mapping and Decision Making Matrix evaluation process.

04 TRAIL CLASSIFICATION

This trail classification draws from established best practices that are recognized provincially and internationally. The trail classification within this Strategy (PG. 15) combines the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) standards with the Whistler Trail Standards - Environmental and Technical Features, and the BC Rec Sites and Trails Chapter 10: Recreation Trail Management.

These reference standards and other relevant best practices serve as the foundation for developing a trail classification for Golden and Area A. Through detailed analysis and extensive stakeholder and public engagement combined with the integration of established standards, the following trail classification has been developed specifically for Golden and Area A .

There are **12 TRAIL TYPES** classified in this strategy including:

TABLE 01: GOLDEN AND AREA A TRAIL CLASSIFICATION SUMMARY	
TRAIL TYPE	**DESCRIPTION**
Type 1	2.0 - 3.5 meter wide paved trail - double track - suitable for all user groups
Type 2	1.25 - 2.0 meter wide gravel or natural surface trail - double track - suitable for all user groups
Type 3	0.75 meter wide native soil trail - single track - intended for uses such as leisure hiking, biking, equestrian, etc.
Type 4	0.5 meter wide native soil trail - single track - intended for advanced biking and hiking
Type 5	0.3 meter wide natural trail - low use wilderness trail - intended for backcountry hiking and equestrian use
Type 6	1.8 meter wide natural surface trail - single track wide - intended for adaptive trail users and children
Type 7	2.0 - 5.0 meter wide gravel/natural forest service road - intended for access for biking and vehicles, and as motorized trail network
Type 8	1.5 meter wide single track - shared use trail - intended for shared use between biking and motorized use
Type 9	0.5 - 2.0 meter wide natural surface trail - off highway motorcycle specific trails
Type 10	3.0 - 5.0 meter wide - double track - groomed snowmobile trails
Type 11	1.5 - 4.0 meter wide - groomed and ungroomed - xc ski and snowshoeing
Type 12	Waterways suitable for paddling

05 INVENTORY + ANALYSIS

The Trail Inventory + Analysis (PG. 21) is a comprehensive mapping exercise that takes inventory of all the existing authorized trails within the CSRD Electoral Area A. The maps include a classification for all existing trails and were confirmed with feedback from the working group, public consultation, and various governmental organizations. A GIS database of all the existing trails has been created and shared with the CSRD for future trail planning.

The following represents a summary of the existing recreation network throughout Golden and Area A, as described in SECTION 04:

TABLE 02: GOLDEN + AREA A EXISTING TRAIL SUMMARY		
	LENGTH (M)	LENGTH (KM)
Existing Authorized Trails	494,935.5	**494.9**
Planned Trails (XC Ski)	2,454.6	**2.5**
Trails Under Application Review (RSTBC)	31,298.5	**31.3**
Total	528,688.5	**528.7**

06 TRAIL SIGNAGE

Proposed Trail Signage and symbology was developed for this Regional Trail Strategy on PG. 32 of the report. This section establishes proposed icons for permitted and restricted uses and a trail difficulty rating system (adapted from the Shuswap Trail Alliance and IMBA Standards. A key element within an effective recreation network is establishing consistent sign types to address different user groups, regulations, and to convey the correct information and appropriate level of detail at strategic locations throughout the trail networks.

07 STRENGTH, WEAKNESS, OPPORTUNITY + THREAT [SWOT] MAPPING

Building upon the inventory and needs assessment data developed throughout the stakeholder and public engagement phase, the project team undertook a hybrid PEST/SWOT Analysis approach (PG. 37). The needs assessment generated an unfiltered collection of over 100 ideas, opportunities, deficiencies, and potential projects for consideration. The PEST approach analyzes big picture opportunities and threats (Political, Economic, Socio-cultural, and Technology). By looking at these external trends, it informs the development of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). The project team has undertaken a series of mapping exercises to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats represented throughout the Electoral Area A boundary. The SWOT analysis approach allows the project team and working group to analyze the spatial relationships of underutilized spaces, barriers, land ownership, wildlife, vegetation, potential development areas, and critical linkages through the lens of the vision and guiding principles. These SWOT analysis maps have been developed in tandem with the decision making matrix to filter the extensive needs assessment list while taking into consideration the community desires, demographics, environmental, political and financial complexities.

The SWOT mapping exercise incorporates community feedback about existing issues and opportunities. Feedback was gathered through the public open houses, the community survey, input and information from the working group, and through direct contact with trails organizations / user groups / First Nations / governmental officials. Where possible this knowledge has been spatially included in the mapping.

The criteria for identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats is all considered in the context of establishing trails. Strengths and Weaknesses are "internal" or specifically related to a trail, piece of infrastructure, organization, or trail area. Opportunities and Threats are "external" and relate specifically to non-existent or non-trail-related factors that need to be considered before deciding to support (or not) trail development. Ex: An area of high ecological value is an overall strength of Area A, but it would threaten any trail development. For the mapping purposes, it's been identified as a threat to trail development.

08 DECISION MAKING MATRIX

The Decision Making Matrix, on PG. 48 of the report, is a tool used to prioritize actions developed through the Strategy. The Decision Making Matrix incorporates the SWOT Mapping and the Needs Assessment list. The decision-making criteria allows for multiple factors (Cost, Location, Constructibility, Public Support, Environmental Impact, Cultural Factors, Funding Opportunities, etc.) to be applied to the evaluation and scoring of each list item. This allowed the project team to prioritize and rank initiatives in an objective manner that is transparent and defensible. The result of the SWOT Mapping Analysis and Decision Making Matrix is a short list of initiatives to be formulated into phasing opportunities summarized in SECTION 10 - IMPLEMENTATION. This short list was presented to the Client and Working Group within Technical Memoranda #3 and publicly available after incorporating comments and revisions.

The Evaluation Criteria for the Decision Making Matrix includes:

1. *Compatibility with the GBRAP*
2. *Environmental Considerations;*
3. *Economic Considerations;*
4. *Social Considerations; and*
5. *Cultural Considerations.*

09 TRAIL PLANNING + DESIGN

Trail Planning & Design can be found on PG. 58 of the Regional Trail Strategy report and summarizes industry best practices. This section includes: Environmental Considerations for Trails Planning (9.01), an Environmental Screening Tool (9.02), and Sustainable Trail Design Principles (9.03).

10 IMPLEMENTATION

The Implementation section can be found on PG. 62 of the report and builds upon the Decision Making Matrix and SWOT mapping analysis in Section 7 and Section 8 to provide a short list of actionable recreation initiatives, phasing, financial projections, and a framework for implementation. This section includes a writeup regarding Asset Management for trails (10.01) and highlights potential Funding Opportunities (10.02). The Implementation Matrix (10.03) describes the highest priority actions as a result of the project process and is summarized below:

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

This Implementation Matrix builds upon the results of the Decision Making Matrix and SWOT Map analysis. This summary synthesizes the results of the extensive community and stakeholder driven process and consolidates the information into the following Short List of development recommendations and initiatives formulated into phased approach. Priorities have been classified using the following breakdown:

- *Recreation Initiatives that score between* **84 -100** *are classified* **HIGH PRIORITY**
- Recreation Initiatives that score between **65 - 83** are classified **MEDIUM PRIORITY**
- Recreation Initiatives that score between **0 - 64** are classified **LOW PRIORITY**

FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

- Less than $1,000 are classified **LOWEST**
- More than $1,000 are classified **LOW**
- $10K - $50K are classified **MEDIUM**
- $50k - $150K are classified as **HIGH**
- Greater than $150,000 are classified **VERY HIGH**

NOTE: Financial projections are approximate

TABLE 03: REGIONAL TRAILS STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Action Number	Description	PPA	Combined Score	Term	Lead	Financial Projection
HIGH PRIORITY INITIATIVES						
1	Form Trails Alliance for Golden and Area A ◦ Establish Trail Alliance ◦ Create Trail Alliance Website - Information Hub ◦ Begin Meetings per TRAIL ALLIANCE FRAMEWORK 11.01	Regional	94	Immed (12 Months)	Partnership: CSRD / Town of Golden + All Trail User Groups	Med - High
2	Complete a phased feasibility study for a multi-modal non-motorized trail within the Highway 95 ROW from Golden to Nicholson (Phase 1)	Regional	94	Med (1-5 Years)	Partnership: Trail Alliance, MOTI + CVGTA	Med - High
3	Complete a West Bench Environmental Impact/Cultural Heritage Study	Regional	92	Med (1-5 Years)	Partnership: Trail Alliance, Wildsight + SBTO	Med - High
4	Complete a phased feasibility study for a multi-modal trail within the Highway 95 ROW from Nicholson to Parson (Phase 2)	Regional	90	Long (5-10 Years)	Partnership: Trail Alliance, MOTI + CVGTA	Med - High
5	Secure annual funding for Asset Management, Trail Maintenance and Rehabilitation	Regional	88	Short (1-3 Years)	Trail Alliance /GCC	Med
6	Work with Multiple Stakeholders to Re-Establish the David Thompson Heritage Trail and Access to the Mummery Glacier ◦ Opportunities for Grant Funding and Sponsorship	Regional	88	Short (1-3 Years)	Partnership: Trail Alliance BCRST, GDTA	Very High
21	Complete/On-going Road Access Improvements to Gorman Lake and Complete Trailhead Improvements ◦ Opportunities for Grant Funding, Tourism Finding, Sponsorship	Quartz/ Gorman	88	Short (1-3 Years)	Partnership: Trail Alliance, MFLNRORD + SBTO	High - Very High
38	Explore Opportunities to Construct an Adaptive Trail within Kicking Horse Mountain Resort Bike Park	KHMR	88	Med (1-5 Years)	KHMR	High
7	Complete a phased feasibility study for a multi-modal trail within the Highway 95 ROW from Parson/South (Phase 3).	Regional	86	Long (10+ Years)	Partnership: Trail Alliance, MOTI + CVGTA	High
15	Work with BC Rec Sites and Trails to formalize the Help Lake/ Blackwater Climbing Area, Trails, and Staging Area	Kinbasket	86	Immed (12 Months)	Trail Alliance/ CVCA	Med
22	Formalize Gorman Climbing Access Trails	Quartz/ Gorman	86	Short (1-3 Years)	Trail Alliance/ CVCA	Low - Med
33	Improve Rec Site Facilities at Redburn Creek (OB) Campground	Blaeberry	86	Med (1-5 Years)	Partnership: CSRD, RSTBC + Trail Alliance	Med - High
34	Improve Trailhead Facilities at Thompson Falls (Syd's Trail)	Blaeberry	86	Immed (12 Months)	Trail Alliance/ GORA	Low

71	Establish a Trailhead and Signage at the Mount 7 Summit Trail from Staging Area	Mt 7/ Mountain Shadows	**86**	Short (1-3 Years)	Partnership: BCRST+ Trail Alliance	Low
72	Complete Schacher Trail to Mt. 7 Summit: Maintenance and Sustainability Improvements	Mt 7/ Mountain Shadows	**86**	Short (1-3 Years)	Trail Alliance/ GCC	High
16	Complete a Kinbasket Heritage Inventory Assessment Study	Kinbasket	**84**	Med (1-5 Years)	Partnership: Trail Alliance + SBTO	Med - High
23	Install Regulatory Signage at Wiseman Lakes indicating Sensitive Environment and Motorized Restrictions if West Bench trail 4 season use is approved.	Quartz/ Gorman	**84**	Short (1-3 Years)	Trail Alliance/ Wildsight	Low
39	Improve Scalli Mag Single Track Trail to Address Environmental Issues and Provide Important Connection within the Trail Network.	KHMR	**84**	Short (1-3 Years)	Partnership: BCRST, KHMR, Trail Alliance	Med
47	Construct Cedar Lake Interpretive Boardwalk in sensitive Riparian Areas	Moonraker/ Cedar Lake	**84**	Short (1-3 Years)	Trail Alliance/ Wildsight/ RSTBC	Med - High
56	Complete Trail Surfacing and Guardrail Improvements for the Rotary Trail to Keith King Memorial Sportsfields	Golden	**84**	Immed (12 Months)	Town of Golden	Med
57	Construct a new Bike Skills Park utilizing Terrain Based Principles	Golden	**84**	Short (1-3 Years)	Partnership: Town of Golden + Trail Alliance	Med - High
73	Plan and Develop New Trails off the Schacher Trail to Create a Looped Trail Network	Mt 7/ Mountain Shadows	**84**	Med		

INITIATIVES REQUIRING FURTHER CONSIDERATION + ACTION

A number of recreation initiatives did not score as high priorities but require further consideration and action (10.04) from the Trail Alliance once formed, specific trail user groups, stakeholders, and governing bodies to determine outcomes that are acceptable to all parties moving forward. These initiatives include but are not limited to:

- *Management Strategy for T4 Alpine Trail;*
- *Motorized Trail Network + Reflection Lake Motocross Track; and*
- *Community Connection: Anderson Road/Edelweiss Slough.*

11 NEXT STEPS

Next steps section covers subsequent actions to be taken after adoption of this document. It includes a draft framework for the formation of a Trail Alliance for Golden and Electoral Area A, an annual planning cycle, and community outreach initiatives. This section can be found on <u>PG. 76</u> of the Regional Trail Strategy Report.