



# Resort Development Strategy 2022-2024

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# 1. Background

Golden is in the spectacular Southern Rocky Mountain Trench flanked by the Purcell Mountain Range to the west and the Canadian Rockies to the east. The community is 2.5 hours (262 kms) west of Calgary on the Trans Canada Highway, 90 minutes east of Revelstoke, and one hour north of Radium Hot Springs. Golden's population is 3,986 as at the last Census (2021), an increase of 278 people, or 7%<sup>1</sup>. 360 residents identify as Indigenous, with Metis making up 71% of the Indigenous population.

Golden is situated on the traditional territories of the Ktunaxa Nation and the Secwepemc Nation (Shuswap Band). The Ktunaxa people have always been here. The Ktunaxa language is unique to these homelands, but their language is critically endangered with fewer than a dozen fluent speakers in the world. Their culture is embedded in their language and teaches who they are and where they come from through our stories and songs. In Ktunaxa, the word for the town of Golden is ?aknuqluk- a word that describes the muddy/silty colour of the water as it runs down into the Columbia.

The Shuswap/Secwepemc people lived harmoniously with the seasons and resources throughout the territory, referred to as 'seasonal rounds.' They developed an intricate system of travel corresponding with the seasons, as well as an important social and political system that governed their interactions with each other and the use of their traditional lands. They entered their "winter homes" (pit house/kekulis) in November and would remain in that location throughout the winter. The pit house was vital for survival in the harshest season when the water froze, and the ground covered in snow, making travel difficult. These permanent homes/villages can be found by archaeological evidence throughout the Columbia Valley and surrounding regions. The salmon that were abundant in the Columbia River system was integral to the Secwepemc culture and identity. Fishing camps could be found along the Columbia River, mouths of Windermere and Columbia Lakes and they would remain there for large harvests of salmon to be divided amongst families, stored and prepared for long winter months and journeys.

The Metis are a Nation created through the arrival of the European people who were encouraged to find wives among the indigenous people. François Morigeau came into the Windermere area in 1819. He had nine children with his second wife Isabella Taylor, who was Metis. François is considered the first white settler to live in the Columbia Valley. As the settlements grew, the Métis in the 1800s were not only guides and trappers but also business owners, community leaders, musicians, builders and family men and women. Two of the Morigeau children, Sophie and Baptiste opened Golden's first general store in 1881. It is said that Baptiste changed the name of the Cache to Golden, thus naming the town of Golden. Baptiste also blazed the right of way for and was the foreman on the Kootenay Central railroad from Golden to Cranbrook.<sup>2</sup>

Hunting trails extended throughout the area and tied in with several portage trails all the way north to Boat Encampment and connected with the trail over Athabasca Pass to Jasper House. These trails also connected to the prairies in Alberta where the Ktunaxa hunted buffalo two or three times a year. Many of these passes, such as Howse Pass that connects to Jasper House, are still known today. Another trail branches out and connects to the Selkirk Mountains north of present-day Golden toward Revelstoke (Ktunwakanmituk miłqaaqas). These trails preceded mining settlements and are attributable to the Ktunaxa and latterly by the Kinbasket before becoming the highways now travelled by car.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://townfolio.co/bc/golden/demographics>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.tourismgolden.com/about/indigenous-peoples>



Much of the town's history is tied into the Canadian Pacific Railway and the logging industry. While its industrial heritage – forestry, transportation, and mining – still comprises a major part of Golden's economy, the development of Kicking Horse Mountain Resort (KHMR), along with a myriad of outdoor adventures, has created a robust tourism economy. Golden is now a service-based economy, with 33% of the labour force working in sales and service.<sup>3</sup>

The area's mainstay tourism presence continues to be Kicking Horse Mountain Resort (KHMR), which offers world-class skiing and mountain biking. It hosts annual international events such as the Freeride World Tour, the Canadian National Junior Freeride competitions, and the Canadian Downhill Mountain Bike Championships. KHMR continues to attract industry accolades and now employs 115 full-time equivalents year-round, increasing to 500 during the winter season.



Golden offers multiple outdoor adventure activities and experiences including: white water rafting on the Kicking Horse River, paragliding and hang gliding from Mount 7, mountaineering in the surrounding Rocky Mountain and Columbia Mountain ranges, heli-skiing and cat skiing, backcountry lodges and backcountry terrain accessed from Rogers Pass, snowmobiling, cross country and downhill mountain biking, and golfing. In addition to outdoor activities, the town offers an increasing diversity of attractions and experiences including spa and wellness retreats, culinary experiences, nightlife, live music and events.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden, British Columbia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden,_British_Columbia)

The continuing multi-million-dollar improvements to the Trans-Canada Highway, a fully functioning airport able to accommodate up to and including Dash 8 series aircraft, and over 1,400 bed units in the immediate area are assets that contribute to tourism development.





## Tourism Industry Context

The tourism industry continues to play a significant role in BC's economy. In 2016, tourism employment grew to 133,100 jobs, and tourism GDP accounted for \$8.85 billion.<sup>4</sup> The Resort Municipality Initiative communities, of which Golden is one, contribute 29% (\$265M) of the tourism taxes in the province annually and generate 30% of the tourism export revenues (\$1.97B) annually.<sup>5</sup> In 2019, tourism generated \$1.8 billion in provincial and municipal tax revenue.<sup>6</sup>

In Golden in 2019, there were 285 tourism businesses, bringing in \$124.5M in tourism revenues, representing 75% of gross business revenues.<sup>7</sup>



However, COVID-19 had a devastating impact on the tourism industry worldwide, including in BC. Prior to the pandemic, tourism was the third largest employer in the province, employing 150,000 people.<sup>8</sup> From 2019 to 2020, employment in key tourism industries decreased by 64%, tourism revenues fell from \$20.3 billion in 2019 to \$7.1 billion in 2020 (64.9% decrease), and estimated room revenue declined by 54.9% (based on MRDT communities). The industry's unemployment rate averaged 15.5% in 2020, substantially higher than pre-pandemic levels in 2019 (3.2%).<sup>9</sup>

Fortunately, all signs are pointing to a rapidly rebounding tourism sector. Domestic visitation (Canadian visitors) to the Kootenay Rockies, while still down 10% in Q1 2022 compared to 2019, was up 6% compared to 2020 and 25% from 2021. BC visitor numbers to the Kootenay Rockies was 41% higher in Q1 2022 than in Q1 2021 (up 2% compared to Q1 2020, and down 6% from Q1 2019). The number of visitors from Alberta has remained relatively steady over the last three years (Q1), about 17% below 2019 numbers.<sup>10</sup>

The number of unique visitors in June 2022 – both domestic and international – have increased from 2021, with the number of international visitors increasing 458% from 2021. The majority of Canadian visitors continues to be residents of AB and BC, followed by ON.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/data/statistics/business-industry-trade/industry/tourism>

<sup>5</sup> Whistler Centre for Sustainability's *RMI key messages 2018*.

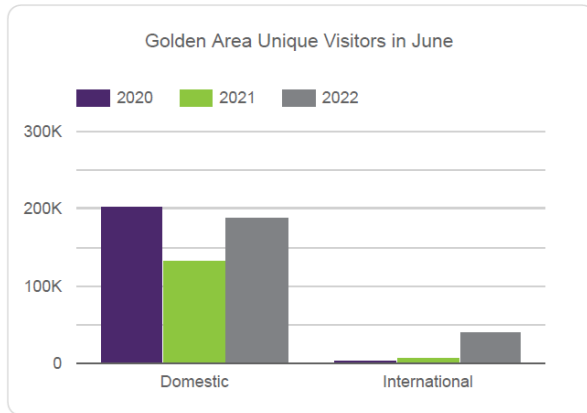
<sup>6</sup> Strategic Framework for Tourism 2022-2024

<sup>7</sup> Tourism Golden: Value of tourism in Golden, April 22, 2020

<sup>8</sup> Strategic Framework for Tourism 2022-2024

<sup>9</sup> Strategic Framework for Tourism 2022-2024

<sup>10</sup> Canada, British Columbia & Alberta Monthly Visitor Highlights 2022, Kootenays Rockies Region, BC Regional Tourism Secretariat

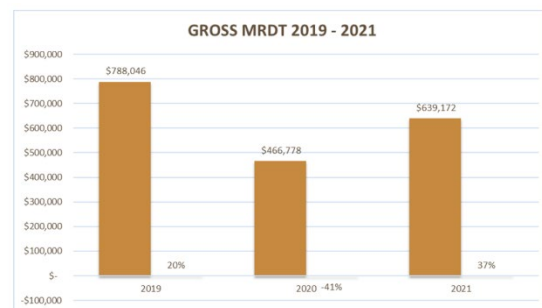


While the average length of stay of domestic visitors is similar between 2022 and 2020, for international visitors, the average length of stay is significantly lower. However, the number of visitors staying for one night in 2022 has surpassed the number in 2020.



The number of American visitors has increased 380% in June 2022 compared to June 2021, with the majority of US travellers coming from California.<sup>11</sup>

Golden saw an increase in MRDT of 37% from 2020 to 2021, a 23% increase in occupancy and 31% increase in RevPAR.<sup>12</sup>



## Visitor Segments and Motivating Experiences

Tourism Golden retained a consultant to develop target segments using PRIZM, a segmentation system developed by Environics Analytics that categorizes each Canadian or US household into one of 67 consumer segments (lifestyle types). Each lifestyle group is linked to a postal or zip code. The data provide better understanding of customers based on their behaviours, insights on how to appeal to them, and how to reach them. For Golden visitors, like consumer segments (of the 67 mentioned above) were combined into 5 segments, representing 45% of the Canadian market:

<sup>11</sup> Tourism Golden Visitor Report, Telus Insights, June 2022

<sup>12</sup> Tourism Golden Annual Report, 2021

- Authentic Winter Warriors (Urban and suburban upscale/wealthy families and couples or empty nests with a university degree)
- Diverse Summer Learners (Upscale and middle-income urban and suburban, young and older families with a university degree)
- Rural Year-Round Rejuvenators (Older and middle-aged couples and families, upscale and middle-income rural homeowners with a technical degree. Most with children between 10-19 at home)
- Year-Round City Escapists (Urban, upper-middle income singles, couples and families. Most likely with a university degree and not likely to have children at home)
- Year-Round Suburban Families (Younger and middle-aged, upscale middle-income suburban families. Most likely with a technical degree and more likely to have younger children at home)

Fitness walking, camping, and cycling are the top three activities preferred by all five PRIZM segments. Each PRIZM segment can be aligned with specific EQ (Explorer Quotient) types to better understand their tourism experience interests. The top three EQ markets for Golden are:

- The FREE SPIRIT – the traveller’s traveller...they seem to love everything about travel and as in life, they embrace the experiences it offers with arms wide open.
- The CULTURAL EXPLORER – an avid traveller who values learning and discovery while travelling. They don’t want to feel like a “tourist,” preferring just to blend in and have the most authentic experience possible rather than being confined to group tours and schedules
- The AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCER – a more learned, understated traveller. Travel is not their only interest in life, but they certainly appreciate it when they go. They prefer to do their own thing while at a destination, having control over what they see & when they see it.<sup>13</sup>

Destination BC’s Highway 1 Corridor Situation Analysis identified the following interest groups and passions for visitors in the region:<sup>14</sup>

Touring and Exploring	Hiking/Parks/ Mountains	Golf	Lakes and Rivers	Skiing & Snowboarding
Camping	Cycling (road/mountain)	Agritourism & Culinary	Family Vacation	Arts/Culture/Heritage

And the following demand generators:

- National Parks – Yoho, Glacier, Mount Revelstoke
- Mountain Resorts – Kicking Horse, Revelstoke, Sun Peaks
- Water-based experiences including house boating, rafting, paddling, and angling
- Trails-based experiences – hiking, mountain biking
- Cat skiing experiences
- Snowmobiling experiences
- Backcountry lodge-based experiences from rustic to luxe
- Other winter recreation including Nordic skiing and snowshoeing
- Sport Tourism

<sup>13</sup> Tourism Golden Strategic Plan 2017-2021

<sup>14</sup> Destination BC Highway 1 Corridor Situation Analysis 2018



- Golf – championship courses can be experienced along the entire route
- Signature festivals and events in various communities and hosted at mountain resorts

The top five activities and reasons for visiting Golden in the summer and winter (2019) respectively were:<sup>15</sup>

### Top 5 Reasons for Visiting Golden

1. Family Vacation (22%)
2. Break from Driving/Convenient Place to Stop (21%)
3. Visiting National Parks (9%)
4. Mountain Biking - General (7%)
5. General Relaxation (6%)

### Top 5 Reasons for Visiting Golden

1. Resort Skiing/Snowboarding (66%)
2. X Country Skiing (7%)
3. Backcountry Skiing (6%)
4. Break from Driving/Convenient Place to Stop (3%)
5. Visiting Friends and Relatives (3%)

### Top 5 Activities in Golden

(in addition to reasons for visiting – see below)

1. Hiking in Golden area (28%)
2. Hiking at National Parks (18%)
3. Grizzly Bear at KHMR (17%)
4. Mountain Biking (15%)
5. Whitewater Rafting (8%)

## SWOT Analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

A SWOT is a compilation of strengths (existing assets, programs, policies, etc., in the community) that have a positive impact on tourism; weaknesses (gaps, challenges in the community) that need to be addressed or strengthened; external opportunities (positive trends, circumstances) that can be leveraged to benefit the community; and threats (negative trends and risks) that need to be mitigated or managed. By analyzing a community's SWOT, we can determine how to take advantage of the key strengths and opportunities while reducing the risks and weaknesses that may have a negative influence on tourism, to better inform the selection of RMI projects.

The input for the SWOT came from the Tourism Golden Strategic Plan 2017-2021 and the Town of Golden RMI Annual Report 2021.

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wealth of world class outdoor activities</li> <li>• Scenic beauty &amp; nature – mountains, rivers</li> <li>• Abundant multi-season outdoor opportunities and experiences including KHMR</li> <li>• Abundance of maintained trails for biking, snowmobiling &amp; xc skiing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of historic showcases</li> <li>• No reliable transportation services between airports, town, and resort</li> <li>• Aesthetics of town at the highway do not reflect the destination</li> <li>• Lack of awareness of Golden as a multi-night destination in target markets</li> <li>• Some 'legacy' perceptions of Golden as ugly, highway 'strip' and with activities for the hard core only</li> </ul>

<sup>15</sup> Tourism Golden Visitor Surveys, Summer and Winter 2019

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proximity to air access at Calgary International airport &amp; primary transportation routes</li> <li>Proximity to 6 national parks</li> <li>A 'real' town; friendly, welcoming community with authentic history and heritage</li> <li>Excellent food &amp; restaurants</li> <li>Unique experiences – wolves, grizzly bears, buffalo, sky diving, paragliding</li> <li>Proximity to Alberta border</li> <li>Rural nature of community allowing for effective physical dispersal of visitors.</li> <li>Continuation of the Resort Municipality Initiative program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited current base of social influencers with large social following to 'hitch' onto</li> <li>Increased demand at key front-country locations where existing infrastructure does not support an exceptional visitor experience and responsible recreational use</li> <li>Shortage of available and affordable housing, partly exacerbated by use of units for short-term rentals (for example, for KH Canyon project workers)</li> </ul>
External	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rocky Mountains are an aspirational destination for many international travellers</li> <li>Parks Canada celebrating 150 years; new opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>Challenging Alberta economy is supporting more 'staycations' and closer-in travel</li> <li>Favorable exchange rates in target markets enhances Golden's value proposition</li> <li>Growth in mountain biking tourism sector and opportunities for biking in nearby national parks</li> <li>Passionate community of bird watchers that travel internationally to see varied species</li> <li>More destination weddings being planned</li> <li>Sporting events seeking new locations in welcoming destinations</li> <li>Growth in third party produced mountain cultural events</li> <li>Growing interest in health and wellness (yoga, healing, etc.)</li> <li>The opening of the new Golden Skybridge under the management of Pursuit</li> <li>KHC project diversions providing an opportunity to showcase our downtown to pass-thru traffic that would otherwise never venture off the highway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labour shortages affecting quality and consistency of visitor experience</li> <li>TransCanada Highway road closures &amp; roadworks</li> <li>Alberta economic decline and uncertainty</li> <li>Continued climate change impacts, including wildfire risks and smoke</li> <li>Lingering impacts of global pandemic; risk of continued and/or new pandemic</li> <li></li> </ul>



## 2. Vision

Golden's spectacular natural setting, history and tradition inspire visitors from Canada and internationally to discover, explore, and stay in Kicking Horse Country.

## 3. RDS Goals

1. Enhance cultural vibrancy and identity.
2. Enhance key existing tourism product infrastructure.
3. Diversify municipal tax revenue.
4. Increase visitation.
5. Increase length of stay.
6. Enhance environmental sustainability and climate adaptation.
7. Increase Indigenous tourism opportunities in collaboration with the Ktunaxa, Secwepemc, and Metis Nations.

## 4. Stakeholder Consultation

The development of this RDS was informed by the active involvement of the RDS Advisory Committee (RAC).

The RAC continues to serve as both an advisory body and operational partner. As advisors, the members work collectively to strategize and prioritize the tourism infrastructure needs for the general community, balancing community, and industry-specific requirements.

Tactically, members of the RAC serve as operational partners, leading or facilitating specific projects independently or in collaboration with the Town of Golden. This serves to keep the RAC both solvent and relevant during the term of the RDS. The RAC members include:

- CAO of the Town of Golden
- CAO of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District
- President of the Kicking Horse Country Chamber of Commerce
- Executive Director of Tourism Golden
- Operations Manager at Kicking Horse Mountain Resort
- Executive Director of Kicking Horse Culture
- Golden Campus Manager of College of the Rockies



The RAC has met to identify the projects in this strategy, review the input from their own stakeholder networks, and finalize the proposed projects in the RDS.

The Town of Golden will further offer the RDS for public commentary and specifically invite feedback and ideas from the Ktunaxa Nation and the Shuswap Indian Band of the Secwepemc First Nation.



## 5. Linkages to Other Plans

The RDS aligns with the *Strategic Framework for Tourism in British Columbia* as follows, referencing the three pillars and commensurate goals:

### **People: Tourism Supports Healthy, Inclusive Societies**

Our RDS projects aim to increase inclusivity and accessibility, and to increase promotion of arts and culture.

We will work toward increased Indigenous tourism through our partnerships with the Ktunaxa Nation and Shuswap Indian Band of the Secwepemc First Nation; we anticipate this RDS to be the first in engaging these important regional entities to build ideas and execution of eventual projects that have their direct involvement.

### **PROSPERITY | Sustainable Growth of the Visitor Economy**

Our RDS projects aim to provide additional offerings to attract visitors during the shoulder seasons, to encourage longer stays and repeat visits, and to attract increased visitors in growing tourism and recreation markets.

### **PLANET | Harness Opportunities for Tourism to Contribute to Clean Growth**

Our new RDS projects include ones that build a cleaner tourism industry, create climate adaptive infrastructure, and encourage responsible, respectful, and safe outdoor recreation.

The RDS also aligns with the following regional and local documents:

- ✓ Town of Golden Official Community Plan
- ✓ Town of Golden Council Strategic Priorities 2019-2022
- ✓ Tourism Golden Strategic Plan 2017-2021
- ✓ Destination BC Highway 1 Situation Analysis 2018
- ✓ Destination BC Highway 1 Destination Development Strategy
- ✓ Regional Trail Strategy for Golden and Electoral Area A
- ✓ Past implemented RDS plans

## 6. RMI Projects

Our 2022-2024 RDS projects are identified as follows:

### Tourism Infrastructure, Capital, or Amenities

1. Dikes and Waterfronts (carry-over)
2. Vehicle Corridors (carry-over)
3. Community Mural
4. Community Shuttle
5. TCH Beautification
6. Spirit Square Washroom

### Tourism-related Programs, Services, or Events

7. Events
8. Tourism Services Learning
9. Regional Trail Maintenance
10. Trail Development and Management Plan

### Program Administration

11. Program administration:
  - a. Travel to RCC meeting
  - b. Performance measurement

## 7. Three Year Financial Plan

	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total RMI Allocation
Carryover from previous year	856,433	1,183,133	126,018	108,903	856,433
Interest earned on carryover	-	-			-
Anticipated RMI Funding	795,700	613,885	613,885		2,023,470
<b>Total Funds Available</b>	<b>\$1,652,133</b>	<b>\$1,797,018</b>	<b>\$ 739,903</b>	<b>\$ 108,903</b>	<b>\$ 2,879,903</b>
Anticipated Spending					
<b>Carry Over Projects:</b>					
South Entrance Sign	100,000				100,000
Dikes and Waterfronts	150,000				150,000
<b>Tourism Infrastructure, Amenities, or Capital Purchases:</b>					
Spirit Square Washroom	20,000	350,000			370,000
Phase 3 TCH Beautification	10,000	1,000,000	490,000		1,500,000
Community Shuttle		150,000			150,000
Community Mural	50,000				50,000
					-
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$ 330,000</b>	<b>\$1,500,000</b>	<b>\$ 490,000</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 2,320,000</b>
(Minimum 70% over 3 year term)					
<b>Tourism Services, Programs or Events:</b>					
Trail Dev. And Mgmt. Plan		30,000			30,000
Event Funding	80,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	230,000
Online Tourism Services Learning	50,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	80,000
Regional Trail Maintenance		70,000	70,000	40,000	180,000
					-
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$ 130,000</b>	<b>\$ 160,000</b>	<b>\$ 130,000</b>	<b>\$ 100,000</b>	<b>\$ 520,000</b>
(Maximum 30% over 3 year term)					
<b>Administration (if applicable):</b>					
Program Administration	9,000	11,000	11,000		31,000
					-
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$ 9,000</b>	<b>\$ 11,000</b>	<b>\$ 11,000</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 31,000</b>
(up to \$20,000 per year)					
<b>Total Spending:</b>	<b>\$ 469,000</b>	<b>\$1,671,000</b>	<b>\$ 631,000</b>	<b>\$ 100,000</b>	<b>\$ 2,871,000</b>
<b>Carry forward (if any):</b>	<b>\$1,183,133</b>	<b>\$ 126,018</b>	<b>\$ 108,903</b>	<b>\$ 8,903</b>	<b>\$ 8,903</b>

## 8. Performance Measurement Approach

The Town of Golden recognizes the requirement and necessity for performance measuring application against all projects. Tactical metrics associated with construction and material acquisition will be tracked by the municipality as an exercise in both meeting RMI program obligations but those associated with Asset Management principles for corporate asset management needs.

Metrics measuring performance such as visitor experience including net promoter scores, experiential statements, activity accounts, occupancy and visitation rates, and scope and nature of visitors will be tracked by Tourism Golden as a part of its annual performance measurement program including media channel monitoring, community and event surveys, and acquisition of sector data reports and third-party partner research.

Moreover, annual reporting will include:

- a. *Total MRDT remitted annually and by month/season* (RM to report: Annual/Seasonal Total, Annual/Seasonal % and \$ growth)
- b. *Total number of tourism business licenses issued* (Report: Annual Total, Annual % and # growth)





## Appendix 1: Stakeholder (RAC) Letters of Support and Outreach Consultative Letters to First Nation Indigenous Peoples

## Appendix 2: Detailed Project Sheets

# Resort Municipality Initiative 2022-2024 Project Outline

**\*\*This form must be submitted as a digital PDF. Scanned forms will not be accepted.\*\***

Project Title		Project Lead	
RMI Program Category	Project Status	Start Date	Completion Date
<div>Project Description Please provide a brief decription of the project (max 250 words).</div>			
<div>Detailed Project Works Please describe the detailed project works that will be achieved with the RMI funds.</div>			
<div>Project Goal(s) Please describe which of your RDS goals this project will support.</div>			
<div>Program Objectives Please identify the RMI program objective(s) this project supports and describe.</div>			

**Performance Measurement** Please identify the RMI program outcome(s) this project supports and describe the performance measures that will be used to measure outcome.

Please indicate if the project supports one or more of the following initiatives. Select all that apply.

Indigenous Tourism

Diversity & Inclusion

Emergency Preparedness

Sustainability

Please describe how the project supports these initiatives:

#### Funding Sources

Total RMI Funding

MRDT Funding (if applicable)

Other Provincial Funding (i.e. provincial agencies such as DBC or Creative BC)

Municipal Funding

Other

Total Cost of Project



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Sustainability

Please describe how the project supports these initiatives:

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Municipal Funding

Other

Total Cost of Project

# Resort Municipality Initiative 2022-2024 Project Outline

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<div>Project Description Please provide a brief decription of the project (max 250 words).</div>			
<div>Detailed Project Works Please describe the detailed project works that will be achieved with the RMI funds.</div>			
<div>Project Goal(s) Please describe which of your RDS goals this project will support.</div>			
<div>Program Objectives Please identify the RMI program objective(s) this project supports and describe.</div>			

**Performance Measurement** Please identify the RMI program outcome(s) this project supports and describe the performance measures that will be used to measure outcome.

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Indigenous Tourism

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