



**MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL DISTRICT TAX PROGRAM  
FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN**

**Designated Recipient** Hope Business and Development Society DBA “AdvantageHOPE”

**Community** Hope, Cascades & Canyons is a destination brand representing communities located within Fraser Valley Regional District Area A (including Boston Bar and North Bend), Area B (including Sunshine Valley, Dogwood Valley, Emory Creek, Yale, and Spuzzum), and Area D (including Bridal Falls and Popkum). Additionally, Area H of the Okanagan Similkameen Regional District (Manning Park) is included in the partnership. Included in this area are several First Nations, including Chawathil, Yale, Union Bar, and Shxw'ōwhámel.

**Date Prepared** 2018

**MRDT Term  
Expiry Date**

**Five Year Period** 2019-2023

**SECTION ONE: FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC OVERVIEW**

**Vision** The Hope, Cascades & Canyons region is known in our target markets for our incredible nature and our recreation opportunities as well as our rich history and culture. Having visited, a discerning number of visitors choose to make this region their home. The tourism economy is respected by all as an important contributor to economic vitality and community vibrancy.

**Mission** The mission of the Tourism Advisory Committee is to provide strategic direction to AdvantageHOPE in regard to investment of tourism funds to achieve agreed objectives with a focus on:

- Increasing awareness of Hope, Cascades & Canyons as an overnight

- destination of choice in identified target markets
- Supporting local businesses that service travelers with training and education related to the delivery of remarkable experiences
- Establishing relationships and partnerships within and beyond the communities found in Hope, Cascades & Canyons that are both respectful and mutually beneficial

## **Strategic Context**

Following the decline of the logging industry, Hope's economy shifted towards serving the traveling public. This shift has sustained the community with minimal marketing efforts and resource allocation. An economic development plan conducted in 2009 by Lions Gate Consulting highlighted the importance of aligning tourism and economic development efforts. Since then, AdvantageHOPE has been working to establish tourism as a key pillar of the economic development strategy for the community.

Hope, Cascades & Canyons is a marketing partnership of all communities located within Fraser Valley Regional District Area A (including Boston Bar and North Bend), Area B (including Sunshine Valley, Dogwood Valley, Emory Creek, Yale, and Spuzzum), Area D (including Bridal Falls and Popkum) and Area E. Additionally, Area H of the Okanagan Similkameen Regional District (Manning Park) is included in the partnership. Included in this area are several First Nations, including Chawathil, Yale, Union Bar, and Shxw'ōwhámel.

This area – particularly those communities and tourism products in the Fraser Canyon – has been involved in an ad hoc marketing partnership for a number of years. One of the goals of Hope, Cascades & Canyons was to create structure and sustainability for those efforts.

In addition to forming the eastern anchor of the Scenic7 partnership, Hope, Cascades & Canyons adjoins "The Fraser Valley" partnership between Langley, Abbotsford, and Chilliwack to the east and "Gold Country" to the north.

With over 40 accommodation options (hotel, motel, and campground), businesses are near saturated from June 1 – September 30. However, overnight stays in the shoulder and winter seasons drop off considerably. As a result, accommodators hire mainly seasonal staff and many businesses struggle to remain viable from October – May.

A number of strengths and opportunities have been identified by stakeholders as being the drivers of overnight stays:

Strengths:

- Location: all highways lead to Hope. Hope is at the junction of Highway #1, #5 and #3 drawing travellers from all directions. Hope is within easy distance of YVR and the Tsawwassen ferry terminal for travellers en route to another destination.
- Challenging road/driving conditions create increased opportunity for overnight stays

- Proximity to Northwest Washington
- Hope offers visitors raw, wild nature within a 2 hour drive of the Lower Mainland including accessible mountains, alpine meadows, rivers, and lakes (and the cleanest water) and dark skies
- World-class whitewater rafting
- Alpine skiing, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, and ice skating
- Incredible hiking opportunities independently and with Hope Mountain Centre for Outdoor Learning programming
- Two provincial parks with free interpretive programs (Manning Park and Skagit Valley)
- Intriguing history: Fraser Canyon, HBC (1849) Heritage Trail, Othello Tunnels, Historic Yale, Tuckkwiowhum, Kettle Valley Rail Trails, Chinese and Japanese history, and *Rambo* filming locations
- Walkable/bikeable town for all skill levels
- Community pride is high
- Small town feel that hasn't been overly commercialized or overcrowded. Hope is still an authentic mountain town (rather than a contrived resort town) with lots of green space and a welcoming community
- Hope is affordable and family-friendly
- Hope Bike Park (with disc golf coming soon)
- Infrastructure to support activities such as mountain biking, trail running, marathons/10k's, sport tourism/tournaments

#### Opportunities:

- Capitalize on the growing interest of travellers passionate and motivated by mountain biking, trail running, enduro type events
- Capitalize on the growing demand for eco-tourism experiences
- Growing market interest in authentic Aboriginal cultural experiences combined with increased First Nations community interest in developing and offering such experiences
- Growing segment of 'conscious' travelers choosing not to travel to the United States
- Capitalize on growing segment of travellers motivated by 'learning and educational' experiences
- Strong base of potential partners for events and marketing both within Hope, Cascades and Canyons and beyond

As with many regions, Hope, Cascades & Canyons has a number of weaknesses to be addressed and threats to be faced by tourism stakeholders as together they strive to increase overnight visitation. Many of these challenges can be addressed through marketing efforts.

#### Weaknesses:

- Travellers perceptions of Hope, Cascades & Canyons being too far from the Lower Mainland, being just a 'pit stop,' and/or having poor road conditions for much of the winter

- Current traffic flow bypasses much of downtown and stakeholder businesses
- Inconsistent levels of visitor service throughout the community
- Trail networks not all legalized and lacking signage
- Inadequate boat launch/river access points
- Limited equipment rental opportunity
- Limited resident understanding of the value of tourism and the role that each individual plays in the visitor experience
- Tourism infrastructure investments needed – a history of underfunding is now manifesting itself in poor signage, bad road conditions to Othello Tunnels, etc...
- Accommodation mix is missing a 4\* or higher property
- Lack of communication and coordination within the business community
- Weak uptake of community brand by local businesses
- Broad appeal across many passions and demographics creates unclear brand positioning
- Under-developed tour operator relationships
- Limited public transportation/shuttle options connecting experiences throughout Hope, Cascades & Canyons
- Growing number of experiences and larger marketing budgets in neighbouring communities and communities targeting similar markets (Harrison, Merritt, Squamish, and Chilliwack)

Hope, Cascades & Canyons is seeing modest growth however the destination's ability to further seize opportunities, build year round visitation and address current weaknesses is limited by available resources. Incremental and sustainable funding can be derived through the successful petition for application of the Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT).

**Current Visitation Trends**

Statistics from the Hope Visitor Centre in 2017 and 2018 indicate that the majority of travel occurs in the peak summer months of July and August, followed by early and late summer months. Most visitors are from BC with the next largest area of origin being European travellers. The vast majority of parties to the Visitor Centre only stay the day in the Hope area. Visitors are interested in information about tours and activities, camping and parks (in addition to the traditional requests for directions and washroom facilities). These statistics support the objective of growing year round visitation to Hope, Cascades & Canyons area and encouraging longer lengths of stay.

**Overall Goals, Objectives, and Targets**

Hope, Cascades & Canyons' has identified the following measurable objectives for the five-year period from 2019 - 2023.

- Growth in annual MRDT collected
- Increase the average length of stay of visitors
- Increase in Net Promoter Score
- Increase in shoulder season visitation levels

- Increase in value of leveraged resources, partnerships, and collaboration
- Increase in the number of businesses servicing the travelling public
- Existing businesses servicing travelers are increasingly successful
- Increase in number of tourism sector employees
- Increase in number of businesses lengthening their season and hours of operation

In year one, an investment in primary market research will be made in order to establish baseline measures for each of the objectives. With the baseline in place, specific quantifiable targets will then be established for each subsequent year.

## **Brand Positioning**

Hope, Cascades & Canyons is connected – to nature, to community to oneself. The messaging across markets will convey:

- **Our vision** of the community as a vibrant downtown centre with a flourishing and inviting mountain culture; high quality of life; and sharing experiences that are environmentally and culturally sensitive;
- **Our values** surrounding environmental and town stewardship, positivity, progressivism, and authenticity;
- **Our offer** of an intimate and stunning mountain setting which allows visitors to feel alive and connected to nature, the community, and oneself while maintain comfortable access to big city amenities;
- **Our personality** as being relaxed, modest, calm, easygoing, friendly, adventurous, helpful, kind, and polite; and
- **Our positioning** as the transportation hub which connects the Lower Mainland and the Interior. Our physical positioning also provides a place to rest and recharge and makes us an accessible soft adventure hub through which visitors can be emotionally moved by awe-inspiring natural encounters

Hope, Cascades & Canyons is naturally aligned with the British Columbia brand as we are on the edge of raw wilderness and urban refinement

## **Target Markets**

Priority target markets have been identified as:

- **Primary Traveler Profiles**
  - Cultural Explorers
  - Authentic Experiencers
  - Cultural History Buffs
  - Gentle Explorers
- **Primary Geographic Markets**
  - Lower Mainland
  - Okanagan
  - Alberta
  - Europe (Germany, Netherlands, UK)
  - Australia / New Zealand
  - Pacific Northwest

- **Primary Activity / Purpose**
  - Outdoor Recreation Enthusiasts
  - Sports tourism / tournaments
  - Getaways from the city
  - Touring in private vehicles
  - Motorcycle touring
  - Vancouver-based tour companies offering day and overnight experiences for new immigrants
  - Families on road trips
  - Passionate anglers
  - Rafting enthusiasts
  - Festival/event goers

In addition to the priority markets, we have identified a number of secondary markets that are to be monitored and pursued as opportunity and resources become available.

- Travelers visiting family/friends
- Travelers going to/from Vancouver Island
- Cycle touring
- Travelers on the Whistler-Kamloops mountain bike circuit
- Fixed wing / grass airstrip touring
- Hope Mountain Centre for Outdoor Learning program attendees
- Enduro event participants (Fat Dog, etc...)
- Travelers staying elsewhere (e.g. Harrison Hot Springs Resort), but looking for activities (day hikes, etc...)

**Five Year  
Strategies – Key  
Actions**

Tourism stakeholders have identified the following priority strategies/actions to achieve the agreed objectives and make progress toward the vision:

- Build awareness of Hope, Cascades & Canyons as a preferred overnight destination in target markets using media relations, social media networks, outreach to tour operators in the Lower Mainland, development of cooperative marketing programs for tourism stakeholders and participation in a variety of marketing partnerships
- Invest in sport tourism promotion both on a standalone basis for Hope, Cascades & Canyons and in partnership with other communities (e.g. Ride to Conquer Cancer)
- Invest in partnership programs such as Scenic7, Gold Rush Trail, Experience the Fraser and the emerging Highway 3 marketing partnership
- Invest in development and continued delivery of signature shoulder season events that motivate travel to Hope, Cascades and Canyons such as the Dark Skies event launched in 2018 at Manning Park, Brigade Days in September
- Invest in the experiential quality offered to visitors by providing training and facilitating access to programs such as DBC's Remarkable Experiences
- Support the development of additional market-ready indigenous cultural experiences by neighbouring First Nations communities
- Periodically invest in primary market research to truly understand who is coming today, what motivates them, what influences them, and how they could be motivated to return, stay longer, come in the shoulder season, etc
- Hire Tourism coordinator position to lead implementation activities
- Fund an appropriate level of administrative costs

See attached budget spreadsheet for more detailed five-year resource allocation.

**Management,  
Governance,  
and  
Administration**

Hope, Cascades & Canyons has successfully collaborated in the past and secured leveraged funding through Destination BC's Cooperative Marketing Program. Administration of funds has historically been managed by AdvantageHOPE. Given the infrastructure already in place and the strong desire to maximize funds available for actual marketing investments, AdvantageHOPE will continue to lead Hope, Cascades & Canyons as the eligible entity through this five-year strategy.

Governance of MRDT funds would be provided by a Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) of 9-13 members.

AdvantageHOPE as the eligible entity for MRDT funds will establish this Tourism Advisory Committee comprised of:

- MRDT collectors (4-5 seats) representing the breadth of geography

in the MRDT catchment (e.g. Boston Bar rep, Manning Park rep, Bridal Falls rep, District of Hope reps)

- Arts/Culture/Heritage representatives (1-2 seats) – e.g. Historic Yale
- Activity operators (1-2 seats) – e.g. Rafting Company, Hope Mountain Centre
- Restaurants/retail (1 seat)
- At large (1 seat)
- AdvantageHOPE (1 seat)

The Tourism Advisory Committee will be responsible for recommending to the Board of AdvantageHOPE the annual marketing plan that specifies marketing investments to be made with the MRDT and other destination marketing/management funds. The recommended plan must be supported both by the majority of TAC members *and*, by the majority of MRDT collectors with seats on the TAC, before proceeding to the Board of AdvantageHOPE for consideration and final approval.

Staff and contractors of AdvantageHOPE would be responsible for executing the TAC recommended and Board approved destination marketing plan including the annual reporting requirements to Destination BC and the Ministry of Finance.

Selection of representatives for TAC has taken place through an open call for applicants and a subsequent application process that requested the applicant to provide their qualifications for participation. A combination of 1-2 year terms would be managed to ensure effective committee management.

AdvantageHOPE retains fiduciary and legal responsibilities and is therefore be responsible for administration, bylaws, annual general meetings, financial statement preparation/reporting, monitoring of implementation progress, and approval of strategic plans as recommended by TAC.

An annual forum to engage all tourism businesses would be hosted by TAC to ensure that every stakeholder is aware of the progress that has been made and can have an opportunity to contribute thoughts, ideas, and market intelligence on plan updates.

## **Sources of Funding**

Current funding: \$30,000 invested annually in destination marketing by AdvantageHOPE (District of Hope Economic Development organization)

Estimate of MRDT: \$80,000

Leveraged funds from partners and grants such as Open Pool: \$30,000

Visitor Services (incl. DBC Visitor Network grant): \$100,000



## SECTION TWO: ONE YEAR TACTICAL PLAN

### Marketing

**\$50 000** - Build awareness of Hope, Cascades & Canyons as a preferred overnight destination in target markets.

**Activity Title: Engage with visitors throughout the path to purchase to showcase compelling reasons to visit Hope, Cascades and Canyons for multi-nights at all times of year.**

#### Tactics:

- Design and begin phased launch of interactive website showcasing a range of experiences – allowing visitors to ‘click’ their passion to see the range of options in the area
- Execute social media advertising campaigns using key words / geotargeting
- Secure editorial coverage in key target markets (print and digital) featuring suggested itineraries (either passion-based or time-based)
- Acquire content for marketing use - invest in high quality images, videography, and curate content in a steady feed to social channels and influencers
- Offer site visits / familiarization tours / collateral with Vancouver-based tour operators and receptive tour operators
- Implement other cooperative marketing initiatives designed with participating stakeholders

#### Implementation Plan:

##### Quantifiable Objectives:

- Website analytics – show increasing number of unique visitors and increasing length of stay on website
- Social media impressions
- Advertising equivalency of editorial coverage
- Number of site visits by Vancouver based tour operators
- Investment of marketing \$\$ by local partners in coop initiatives

#### Rationale:

Hope, Cascades and Canyons is relatively unknown as a spring, fall and winter destination and even in the peak summer months, travellers’ average length of stay is short (measured in hours or one night only) indicating a market perception of the destination as a ‘pass through’ only on the way to

somewhere else. Development of a compelling website, effective social media engagement and the use of influencers to change this perception and build awareness is essential in the first five years of marketing. Year One begins this process and it is expected that this investment will continue to be made each year.

### **Action Steps:**

#### **Website:**

- Secure website designer and share existing branding information to inform design – review top performing websites of regional destinations to determine better practices and identify opportunities to make engagement interactive i.e. ‘click on your passion’ and all associated experiences appear on map of Hope, Cascades and Canyons
- Work together with TAC and all tourism stakeholders to create compelling suggested itineraries and multi-day stays at all times of year
- Design, review and launch new website
- Monitor website performance and continue to adjust and make improvements

#### **Social Media Advertising Campaigns:**

- Identify key words and geotarget travellers with advertising that promotes events, itineraries and reasons to stay multi-nights in Hope Cascades and Canyons
- Review returns from Google ads, Facebook ads, native placements and optimize and refine campaign based upon results achieved
- Consider services of a social media contractor (e.g. WarRoom or other similar specialist)
- Promote #exploreBC locally with visitors

#### **Editorial Coverage:**

- Work with Destination BC and neighbouring DMOs to attract and host media to the Fraser Valley and Fraser Canyon and feature the circle tour to Hope, Yale, Boston Bar, Lytton, Lillooet, Pemberton, Whistler
- Invite media to attend key events e.g. Brigade Days, Dark Skies in Manning Park and other signature events

#### **Content Acquisition and Curation:**

- Conduct a photo contest on Instagram to engage visitors, tourism businesses and secure inexpensive images (prize package to be contributed by tourism stakeholders in return for profile in contesting)
- Engage professional photographers and videographer to secure signature images and create a series of short video clips for use on social media and utilize own channels as well as Destination BC channels to distribute

#### **Fam Tours:**

- Create an invitation, itinerary and host Lower Mainland based tour operators and receptive tour operators to encourage inclusion in

touring itineraries

**Cooperative Marketing:**

- Work with the TAC and other tourism stakeholders to identify potential cooperative (pay to play) marketing offers

**Potential Partnerships:**

Partnerships include: Destination BC (media, travel trade, social media engagement, sharing of content); neighbouring DMOs (Tourism Abbotsford, Tourism Chilliwack); Provincial sector organizations (Fishing BC, tourism stakeholders throughout Hope, Cascades and Canyons).

**Resources: Led by contracted staff and supported by input and monitoring of TAC**

**Sources of Funding: MRDT**

**Timeframe: Immediate and Ongoing**

**Funding: MRDT**

**Budget: \$50,000**

**Product and Experience Management**

**\$ 5,000** – Improve the experiential quality offered to visitors

**Activity Title: Enhance the quality of experiences offered throughout Hope, Cascades and Canyons by engaging, educating and encouraging all visitor touchpoints to recognize and positively contribute to the overall visitor experience.**

**Tactics**

- Facilitate provision of on-line reputation management training to all tourism businesses
- Act as a conduit to front-line service education and training (general training through Go2HR and 'Proud to Live in Hope, BC')
- Educate locals on places to stay/things to do through "Locals' Day" fam trips, open houses, special offers at businesses/restaurants
- Plan to create a resident 'ambassador' program ("ask a local") – Educate ambassadors on available experiences
- Become a *Safe Harbour* community that is known to respect diversity
- Encourage businesses to participate in Destination BC's *Remarkable Experiences Program*
- Lobby for government investments in infrastructure improvements

**Implementation Plan:**

**Quantifiable Objectives:**

- Number of training participants in various programs offered
- Number of locals participating in Locals programs/offers
- Number of resident ambassadors trained and active

**Rationale:** The quality of the visitor experience will directly impact word of mouth, ratings on third party platforms (TripAdvisor, Facebook) and visitor intention to return. All those interacting with visitors must learn to recognize that they are part of the tourism industry and directly contribute to creating a remarkable experiences for travellers.

**Action Steps:**

- Offer support to businesses set up Google MyBusiness listings, TripAdvisor/HelloBC listings, images through Tourism Manager/Visitor Centre Manager
- Utilize Destination BC's Learning Centre and showcase one area each month in regular tourism stakeholder engagement sessions
- Work with Go2HR to identify potential training programs having relevance for Hope, Cascades and Canyons businesses
- Encourage tourism businesses to offer locals' days discounts (in off-season) to build knowledge base of experiences available
- Plan for a resident ambassador program (working together with Visitor Centre – see below)
- Apply to join the Safe Harbour Network
- Identify opportunities for businesses to participate in any offerings of Destination BC 's Remarkable Experiences program or similar
- Advocate for infrastructure improvements that will enhance the quality of the visitor experience

**Potential Partnerships:**

Partnerships can be activated with tourism businesses, residents, Go2HR, local and regional government.

**Resources: Led by contracted Tourism Manager and supported by Visitor Centre Manager**

**Timeline: Immediate and Ongoing**

**Funding: MRDT**

**Budget: \$5,000**

**Destination  
Development –  
Indigenous  
Cultural  
Experiences**

**\$ 2 500** – Support the development of additional market-ready indigenous cultural experiences

**Activity Title: Build relationships, educate to develop and support**

## **market-ready indigenous cultural experiences.**

### **Tactics:**

- Approach Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC) to host and facilitate a tourism opportunities forum with First Nations neighbours to discuss market opportunity and ways to work together
- Work together with First Nations communities to share traditional place names and oral histories
- Encourage indigenous youth to become involved in tourism through a bursary or subsidized work program

### **Implementation Plan**

#### **Measurable Objectives:**

- Tourism opportunities forum successfully held
- Indigenous place name stories developed
- Tourism bursary/scholarship/employment subsidy awarded

**Rationale:** There is a growing interest in authentic indigenous cultural experiences but there are limited market-ready products in the Hope Cascades and Canyons area. Ongoing efforts to build relationships with First Nations communities and showcase the tourism opportunity are an important first step to developing more depth of experience.

#### **Action Items:**

- Contact ITBC to discuss opportunities to host a relationship building/opportunity exploration forum
- Confirm date/location and format for event
- Prepare invitation and distribute to invitation list that includes tourism attractions, business operators, elected/hereditary Chiefs, Councillors, elders and youth
- Work with Stolo Resources and Research Management Centre to develop indigenous place name stories for Hope, Cascades and Canyons area
- Develop plan to share stories with industry, visitors (e.g. training sessions, interpretive signage etc.)
- Launch inaugural tourism bursary or employment subsidy for one indigenous youth from a neighbouring community (consider VC summer student placement)

#### **Partnerships:**

Partnerships will be formed with ITBC, neighbouring First Nations communities, tourism businesses/attractions, local and regional governments

**Resources: Led by contracted Tourism Manager**

**Timeline: Immediate and Ongoing**

**Funding: MRDT**

**Budget: \$2,500**

**Destination  
Development –  
Signature Event  
Support**

**\$ 7 500** – Invest in shoulder season events to motivate travel

**Activity Title: Invest and promote events that showcase Hope, Cascades and Canyons in shoulder seasons (autumn, winter, spring)**

**Tactics:**

- Support existing events with marketing promotions
- Consider opportunity new shoulder season events (autumn/winter)

**Implementation Plan**

**Measurable Objectives:**

- Event attendance
- Accommodation occupancy levels during events

**Rationale:** The creation and marketing of shoulder season events gives a focus to promotional efforts and a reason for travellers to visit. These events can grow in scope and scale each year so as to eventually build many days, weeks or a month of themed activities that motivate travel from target markets.

**Action Items:**

- Coordinate with organizers to expand scope and scale of Brigade Days in September, Dark Skies programming in October and integrate themed events throughout Hope, Cascades and Canyon in parallel
- Work together with accommodators, restaurants and activity providers to create and promote packages for events
- Organize and host media fam tour during signature events (Vancouver Sun; CBC Radio; others TBD)
- Promote via social channels and amplify through DBC social networks where possible
- Investigate 'Pro Photographer Showdown' type event featuring night skies and negotiate image use for future promotion of Dark Skies

**Partnerships:**

Partnerships will be formed with tourism stakeholders.

**Resources: Led by the contracted Tourism Manager with support from Visitor Centre Manager**

**Funding: MRDT**

**Budget: \$7,500**

**Primary Market Research**    **\$10 000** – Invest in primary market research to truly understand who is coming today, what motivates them, what influences them, and how they could be motivated to return, stay longer, come in the shoulder season, etc...

**Activity Title: Deepen market knowledge and understanding of who is coming to Hope, Cascades and Canyons today, what their perceptions are of the destination and what would motivate them to choose Hope, Cascades and Canyons for longer stays at various times of year.**

**Tactics:**

- Design survey and collect visitor intercept data in order to utilize tools such as Net Promoter Score, Explorer Quotient,
- Scan Trip Advisor and booking.com for destination trends
- Investigate opportunity/costs to collect postal codes for future use of Prizm Analysis
- Design and roll-out a common survey to be used across all businesses

**Implementation Plan**

**Measurable Objectives:**

- Summary analysis of current visitation demographics, psychographics, travel motivators, travel influencers and perceptions of Hope, Cascades and Canyons

**Rationale:** There is very limited primary market research regarding travellers to Hope, Cascades and Canyons. An investment in understanding the traveller who is coming today, their current perceptions and travel motivators combined with other secondary market research available through Destination BC will support effective messaging and marketing investments.

**Action Items:**

- Draft RFP for research services and issue to qualified firms (e.g. Align Consulting and others)
- Award contract to design intercept
- Work with Visitor Centre team (including mobile services) to collect data
- Receive and interpret research; combine with scan of secondary research sources and summarize implications for future marketing and destination management investments

**Partnerships:**

Partnerships will be established with tourism stakeholders (possibly for data collection); with Destination BC for secondary research

**Resources: Implementation will be led by the contracted Tourism Manager with support from the Visitor Centre Manager/team**

**Funding: MRDT**

**Budget: \$10,000**

**Sport Tourism  
Promotion**

**\$10 000** – Invest in sport tourism promotion both on a standalone basis for Hope, Cascades & Canyons and in partnership with other communities

**Activity Title: Attract and maximize the yield from sports events and tournaments.**

**Tactics:**

- Support volunteer groups in bid identification, preparation
- Once tournament(s) are secured, promote ‘come early/stay longer’ offers – partner with accommodation, activities, retail, restaurants to maximize yield
- Participate in sport hosting BC programs

**Implementation Plan**

**Quantifiable Objectives:**

- Number of sport teams hosted
- Incremental occupancy levels achieved during events

**Rationale:** Hope, Cascades and Canyons has suitable infrastructure (accommodations, playing arenas etc.) to host regional and provincial sports tournaments. These events are typically held at times of year when occupancies are low. Attracting more of these events and then maximizing the pre/post stay and overall spending while in the area will improve low season business sustainability.

**Action Items:**

- Inventory sport hosting assets and infrastructure
- Secure images and descriptions for use in promotion and create flatsheets for use in each sport (hockey, baseball, soccer etc.)
- Investigate [viasport.ca](http://viasport.ca) grant opportunities
- Build relationships with local volunteer clubs and organizations and offer to support them in bid preparation and hosting logistics
- When events are confirmed such as Ride to Conquer Cancer – August 2019, liaise with tourism accommodation, restaurants, retail and activity providers to provide compelling packages and special offers for participants and their families
- Assist organizers in promoting their event (if open to the public)
- Monitor occupancy levels and general business volumes during events and communicate successes locally

**Partnerships:**



Partnerships will be formed with tourism businesses, with local clubs and sports organizations and with event organizers

**Resources: Implementation will be led by the contracted Tourism Manager**

**Funding: MRDT**

**Budget: \$10,000**

**Partnership  
Marketing**

**\$5 000** – Invest in on-going marketing partnership programs where returns warrant

**Activity Title:**

**Tactics:**

Review upcoming programs offered and consider buy-into

- Scenic7
- Gold Rush Trail
- Experience the Fraser
- Emerging Highway 3 marketing partnership

**Implementation Plan**

**Measurable Objectives:**

- Dependent upon specific partnership marketing initiative

**Rationale:** Hope, Cascades and Canyons sits at the nexus of many experiences and consequently has opportunity to partner with other consortiums such as Scenic 7, the Gold Rush Trail (Fraser Canyon portion), and emerging groups such as Experience the Fraser and the Highway 3 coalition. Leveraging resources and aligning messages with these groups and with Destination BC will contribute to maximizing marketing returns on investment.

**Action Items:**

- Contact lead for each potential partner group and discuss upcoming plans and opportunities to participate
- Review opportunities with Tourism Advisory Committee and participate as appropriate
- Monitor results and returns and communicate to TAC and stakeholders
- Consider new DBC Open Pool opportunities for November 30, 2019 submission date

**Partnerships:**

Partnerships will be formed with various marketing consortiums, neighbouring destinations and experiences as well as with Destination BC (as keeper of the Provincial brand and messaging).

**Marketing –  
Tour Operators**

**Resources: Implementation will be led by contracted Tourism Manager.**

**Funding: MRDT**

**Budget: \$5,000**

**\$0** – Pursue overseas tour operator relationships and inclusions in overseas/reception tour operator itineraries in partnership with Destination BC and Destination Canada. The only costs are to educate Destination BC to be our ambassadors in this market

**Activity Title: Build awareness and educate overseas tour operators on experiences available in Hope, Cascades and Canyons that warrant itinerary inclusion with particular focus on touring itineraries, hiking itineraries.**

**Tactics:**

- Educate Destination BC representatives on Hope, Cascade and Canyon's offerings, opportunities, and strengths in relation to tour operators

**Implementation Plan**

**Measurable Objectives:**

- Number of tour operator itinerary inclusions

**Rationale:** Tour operators offer another distribution channel for accommodation and activity providers and can support growth in shoulder season visitation (May/June, September/October).

**Action Items:**

- Create Hope, Cascades and Canyons information flatsheet for trade
- Schedule and meet with Destination BC travel trade representatives and provide destination overview; summary of export-ready experiences that are interested in establishing/growing travel trade relationships
- Support information requests, host fam tours as opportunities arise working together with Destination BC and neighbouring DMOs

**Partnerships:**

Partnerships will be established with Destination BC, with tour operators working together with export-ready businesses.

**Resources: Implementation will be led by the contracted Tourism Manager.**

**Funding: MRDT**

**Budget: \$0 (Tourism Manager time only)**

**Visitor Services**    **\$100,000** – Operate the Hope Visitor Centre including mobile visitor servicing at key locations and events

**Activity Title: Offer visitor information services on a year-round basis encouraging travellers to stay longer and experience Hope, Cascades and Canyons. Note: the physical building housing the VC will be remediated for black mould in 2019. Visitor Services will continue to be offered from the temporary trailer immediately adjacent as occurred throughout 2018. Capital improvements to the physical building are being undertaken by the District of Hope from a distinct and separate budget and do not use MRDT funds.**

**Tactics:**

- Rebrand Hope Visitor Centre to Hope, Cascades and Canyons Visitor Centre
- Operate Hope, Cascades and Canyons Visitor Centre on a year-round basis
- Offer mobile visitor services at key locations (Othello Tunnels, various festivals and events)
- Support resident ambassador program
- Support market research efforts
- Support sport tourism participant package development

**Implementation Plan**

**Measurable Objectives:**

- No. of visitor parties serviced
- Average length of stay in Hope, Cascades & Canyons

**Rationale:** Interaction with visitors both at the physical Visitor Centre and through mobile visitor servicing at key locations like the Othello Tunnels creates opportunities to build awareness of the many reasons to stop and stay longer in Hope, Cascades and Canyons. Positive visitor interactions will also contribute to the overall quality of their experience leading to referrals and potential return visits.

**Action Items:**

- Rebrand existing signage to Hope, Cascades and Canyons Visitor Centre
- Hire and train staff (secure summer student employment grants if possible)
- Conduct experience fam tours for staff so they are familiar with all the offerings throughout Hope, Cascades and Canyons
- Offer mobile visitor servicing at peak periods and peak traffic

- locations
- Coordinate and train resident volunteer ambassadors 'Ask a Local' program
- Support visitor intercept research as needed (possibly use staff at mobile locations to conduct interviews once trained by research professional)
- Support sport tourism logistics/creation of attendee packages and offers

**Partnerships:**

Partnerships will be formed with all Hope, Cascades and Canyons tourism experience providers.

**Resources: Implementation will be led by the Visitor Centre Manager.**

**Funding: District of Hope and Destination BC**

**Budget: \$100,000 (this includes VC staffing costs)**

**Marketing Staffing**

**\$50 000** – Recruit and hire a contracted or staff tourism professional

**Activity Title: Contract tourism professional to lead plan implementation.**

**Tactics:**

- Hire a Tourism Manager to implement approved annual marketing plan

**Implementation Plan**

**Measurable Objectives:**

- Successfully implement approved Year One Tactical plan and provide summary reports of results to TAC, Board of AdvantageHOPE and all tourism stakeholders on a regular basis (min. quarterly)

**Rationale:** A dedicated and knowledgeable professional is needed to successfully implement this plan and demonstrate the power of collaborative marketing funded by the MRDT. There is no capacity to execute this plan on a voluntary basis as volunteers are already at their maximum.

**Action Items:**

- Draft job responsibilities and role within the organization structure of AdvantageHOPE
- Advertise for applicants
- Convene a hiring committee to screen and interview candidates
- Hire, train and monitor performance regularly

**Partnerships:**

None.

**Resources: AdvantageHOPE with the advice of the TAC will contract for this position**

**Funding: MRDT**

**Budget: \$50,000**