

Golden

Resort Municipality Initiative

Annual Report 2021



Submitted by:



Prepared by:

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with supporting data
from Tourism Golden*

1. Regional and Local Tourism Context

COVID-19 put a halt to international travel and significantly reduced domestic travel in British Columbia for 2021 which has been devastating for the provincial tourism economy. Providing context on the impacts of COVID-19 and other significant local and regional influences on and of tourism leads to better understanding of both the local tourism economy and the overall progress of the Resort Municipality Initiative (RMI) Resort Development Strategy.

The following table is designed to provide a summary of both positive and negative impacts of COVID-19 and other factors on tourism in *Golden* and any significant local and regional tourism influences for the report year that are outside of municipal control.

Factors Supporting Tourism	Factors Hindering Tourism
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuation of the Resort Municipality Initiative and the advent of other higher level government grants to enable highly valuable tourism infrastructure improvements.• Proximity to the Alberta border allowing for smaller scale, 'weekender effect' market activity.• Rural nature of community allowing for effective physical dispersal of visitors.• Major highway construction projects, creating a temporary but robust long term rental market.• Strong leadership and tools from industry organizations such as Destination BC, TIABC, BCHA, ITBC and ABLEBC and lobbying of government for recognition of the critical impact of COVID on the tourism industry that resulted in tourism-specific grants and other support programs.• KHC project diversions providing an opportunity to showcase our downtown to pass-thru traffic that would otherwise never venture off the TCH.• Outbound international travel restrictions resulted in increased interest and opportunity for raising awareness and visitation from existing and new domestic markets.• DMO focus on consistent quality research provides insight into new and emerging trends pre and post COVID and an ability to respond quickly plus identification of visitor markets and marketing campaign performance.• The lifting of border restrictions between the USA and Canada in August 2021 and international borders in November 2021 resulted in an increase in international visitation in fall and early winter 2021• The KH Canyon Project was in full swing and visiting workers also provided a significant boost to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public health orders including limiting visitation and part closure of some economic sectors, particularly accommodation and food and beverage.• Grant eligibility excluded many businesses from accessing critical support and led to business closures.• Lack of information on the TEP program during and post-pandemic is restricted event organizers from planning 2022 events.• Pre-existing lack of intermodal transport services.• Increased demand at key front-country locations where existing infrastructure does not support an exceptional visitor experience and responsible recreational use (washrooms, waste management, parking, safety, and responsible recreation messaging). This became more obvious in 2021 as the visitor demographic and community travel habits changed dramatically but nevertheless provided insight into the potential for future over-tourism issues.• Increased travel restrictions April 23 - May 25 caused delayed opening of a new tourism experience as well as removing the hope for a strong start to the summer season for all businesses which rely on summer revenues.• Misinformation that highway closures for the multi-year KHC project will impact accessibility and visitor experience in the peak season.• Whilst Golden was not directly threatened by wildfires, tourism operators experienced cancellations because of dramatic media headlines and a lack of geographical knowledge. There was an impact on the touring market, and tourism operators also experienced cancellations due to concerns over smoke and air quality, something that particularly affects outdoor destinations such as Golden.

accommodation occupancies during the fall extended closure period.

- The opening of the new Golden Skybridge under the management of Pursuit, an experienced attraction operator, provided a significant boost to our own PR and marketing efforts and reflects confidence in Golden as a tourism destination.

- Labour shortages had a critical impact on businesses' ability to operate at maximum capacity and service quality. Our local population is not large enough to replace the TFS and other international worker programs that support our seasonal peaks, and many businesses lost local employees to other industries less hard-hit by the pandemic as well as to the KH Canyon project.
- Labour shortages were compounded by a lack of affordable or available housing. A combination of an increase in demand for STRs because of the pandemic, coupled with an influx of management and permanent workers for the KH Canyon project reduced housing options and increased prices to an extent that they became unattainable for the average hospitality and tourism employee.



2. Resort Municipality Initiative Context and Vision

Golden has participated in the RMI program since 2007. The Resort Development Strategy (RDS) Vision is: *Golden's spectacular natural setting, history and tradition inspire visitors from Canada and internationally to discover, explore, and stay in Kicking Horse Country.*

2.1. Resort Development Strategy Goals


The table below lists *Golden's* RDS Goals and provides an overview of progress made on each.

Resort Development Strategy Goals	Summary of Progress on Resort Development Strategy Goals
1. Improve and Enhance the Built Environment	The Kicking Horse River Dike Improvement Project was substantially completed as well as the south entrance sign.
2. Enhanced Cultural Vibrancy and Identity	Freeride World Tour, Golden 24 events immensely successful, pre pandemic.
3. Enhance Key Existing Tourism Product Infrastructure	Significant progress in ensuring world class quality and maintenance of summer and winter trail networks for cycling and snowmobiling.
4. Establish and annually Report on Performance Measuring	Tourism Golden now implements a consistent reporting of key metrics that are germane to the RMI program and community tourism performance.
5. Increase Summer Visitor Traffic by 10%	Total activity attendance up 8% during RDS term.
6. Increase Winter Visitor Traffic by 10%	Total activity attendance up 5% during RDS term
7. Diversify municipal tax revenue by 5%	MRDT increased over 18% during RDS term (Bounced back +37% over 2020 but less than 2019 by -19%)
8. Increase overnight stays by 10%	Summer stays at 2.8 nights (no change over RDS term). Winter stays at 3.2 nights (up 7% over RDS term). (-16% YOY 2020/2021)
9. Increase snowmobile visitation by 10%	Over 90% increase over 4 years.
10. Increase performance and event attendance by 10%	Average attendance sporting events up 10% over RDS term; cultural events up 5%

2.2. Project Details

The following section provides project status and details on the individual projects outlined in the RDS. The financial breakdown for the projects can be found in Appendix 1.


Project Title	<i>Trail Systems</i>		
Project description	<i>The full description can be found in the 2019-2022 RDS. The project includes capital projects as identified in the <u>Regional Trail Strategy for Golden and Electoral Area A</u> and operational projects in the form of maintenance of current infrastructure.</i>		
Project Category	<i>Infrastructure/Amenities AND Programs and Services</i>		
Other themes	Accessibility related / Sustainability		
Project rationale/goal/objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the designation of the Golden area as a <i>Resort Region</i>, efforts must be made to ensure a meaningful portion of RMI funds are dedicated to the rural area to address priorities of both the municipality and the regional district as established through broad community processes. This project specifically supports Tourism Infrastructure and Sustainability. <i>The project is broadly supportive of developing/enhancing infrastructure or amenities, delivering remarkable visitor experiences, and supporting sustainable tourism.</i> 		
Project Spending in Reporting Year	\$0		
Project status		In Progress/Ongoing	Completed
Project activities and/or outcomes for the reporting year	<i>There were no project activities undertaken.</i>		
Stakeholder Involvement:	The Golden Cycling Club is a key partner in all planning and implementation of trail system work in the area. The club and the town hold a Memorandum of Agreement for development with permissions and expectations included. Development in accordance with the Regional Trails Strategy inherently includes the sanction and support of many user groups and vested interest stakeholders in the area.		

Project Title	<i>Dikes and Waterfronts</i>		
Project description	<i>The full description can be found in the 2019-2022 RDS. This project includes beautification of a section of the Kicking Horse River dike and lane adjacent to Golden's downtown. The outcome will be a radically changed 300 m with spanning concrete, paving stones, benches, lighting, design aesthetics, and public art if possible.</i>		
Project Category	<i>Infrastructure/Amenities</i>		
Other themes	Accessibility related / Emergency Preparedness / Sustainability		
Project rationale/goal/objectives	This project is a small part of a much larger initiative that will see this section of dike have its utilities buried and a system of piles and concrete wall raised along its entire length for the purposes of flood protection. In doing so, the former dirty alley will become a pedestrian waterside walkway that serves its functional purpose above, but just as importantly will transform our downtown, introducing a vibrant attraction to our riverfront, and spurring economic diversification and growth in the commercial area along its length.		
Project Spending in Reporting Year	\$1,118,152		
Project status		In Progress/Ongoing	
Project activities and/or outcomes for the reporting year	 <i>This project is a combination of a sizeable infrastructure grant for flood control and the RMI portion for beautification and economic appeal. The year saw most of the spending and activity in completion of the floodwall, final installation of utilities and the transformation of the former gravel alley into a pedestrian thoroughfare. The project introduced concrete hardscaping, soft landscapes, furniture, architectural structures, lighting, and other structural renewals, and is fully accessible. Private sector response has been robust with several businesses physically pivoting to face the new promenade, introduction of a new accommodation provider, and aesthetic improvements to building facades.</i>		
Stakeholder Involvement:	<i>As RMI Advisory Committee members, Tourism Golden, the Chamber of Commerce, and Kicking Horse Culture have all played meaningful promotional and advisory roles in the project. The entire community was consulted prior to project implementation for approval and suggestion, and the 6 property owners along its length have been integrally involved. Local companies and vendors supplied a measure of both materials, labour and structural components.</i>		

Project Title	<i>Public Spaces and Facilities</i>		
Project description	<i>The full description can be found in the 2019-2022 RDS. This project originally included the creation of an amphitheatre in spirit square and shade sails; this was abandoned to ensure budget solvency for the promenade portion of the project.</i>		
Project Category	<i>Infrastructure/Amenities</i>		
Other themes	Accessibility related/Sustainability		
Project rationale/goal/objectives	While there has been significant revitalization and enhancement of the downtown core, including the creation of Spirit Square, continued revitalization is required to further animate the area, which will help to attract and keep visitors in the downtown core. This project has meaningfully transformed in form, texture and use, a key landscape in the area and its success as a tourism draw is now growing.		
Project Spending in Reporting Year	\$0		
Project status		In Progress/Ongoing	
Project activities and/or outcomes for the reporting year	<i>Nil</i>		
Stakeholder Involvement:	<i>RMI Advisory Committee members fully supported the project and the amendments that were made to its scope and budget during its implementation.</i>		

Project Title	<i>Vehicle Corridors</i>		
Project description	<i>The full description can be found in the 2019-2022 RDS. This project built in part upon previous RDS projects: the Highway One corridor enhancement and the visitor sign program. This continued project will now focus on the third phase of Highway One landscaping and see the installation of a smaller version of the iconic community entrance sign at the junction of Highways 1 and 95 at the south entrance to the municipality adjacent to Highway 95 as well as upgrading sign boards on existing signs through town.</i>		
Project Category	<i>Infrastructure/Amenities</i>		
Other themes	Sustainability		
Project rationale/goal/objectives	<p><i>This project underwent an amendment in budget and deliverables following consultation and agreement amongst members of the RMI Advisory Committee. The third phase of landscaping on the Trans-Canada Highway corridor has been placed in abeyance to the next RDS with the funding by unanimous agreement shifted to the Dike Project.</i></p> <p><i>Otherwise, the south entrance sign project continued under this envelope and was substantially complete in 2021.</i></p>		
Project Spending in Reporting Year	\$135,598		
Project status		In Progress/Ongoing	
Project activities and/or outcomes for the reporting year	<i>Activities for the year included the successful tender and substantial completion of the community south entrance sign.</i>		
Stakeholder Involvement:	<i>The RMI Advisory Committee was the determining collective for activity in this envelope.</i>		

Project Title	<i>Pedestrian</i>		
Project description	The Pedestrian project is focused on encouraging more walking and exploring of the community on foot by improving safety through installation of pathway lighting bollards and improving wayfinding.		
Project Category	<i>Infrastructure/Amenities</i>		
Other themes	Indigenous Tourism / Accessibility related / Sustainability		
Project rationale/goal/objectives	As we increase our initiatives in enhancing the downtown, Spirit Square and the walking trails along the river, more visitors will wish to get around the community by walking. Improving safety and wayfinding for pedestrians is crucial to encourage and support increased walking, improve the visitor experience, and provide additional opportunities for activity that could extend visitation – length of stay as well as time of year.		
Project Spending in Reporting Year	\$0		
Project status	Not Started	In Progress/Ongoing	Completed
Project activities and/or outcomes for the reporting year			
Stakeholder Involvement:	Nil		

Project Title	Tourism Activity Services																																																				
Project description	Annual contribution of funds toward the costs of grooming popular snowmobile routes in the area, totaling over 50kms and priority maintenance within a 300km network of single track mountain bike trails.																																																				
Project Category	Infrastructure/Amenities				Programs and Services																																																
Other themes	Indigenous Tourism / Accessibility related / Sustainability																																																				
Project rationale/goal/objectives	Mountain biking has been identified as one of the top five summer activities and reasons for visiting Golden and is seen as growth market. Good trail maintenance is essential to the mountain bike experience and for drawing visitors back, as well as for continuing to host popular events such as the Golden24. Similarly, snowmobiling has been identified as a growth market for the winter visitor.																																																				
Project Spending in Reporting Year	\$50,000																																																				
Project status	Not Started		In Progress/Ongoing			Completed																																															
Project activities and/or outcomes for the reporting year	<div>Another successful snowmobiling grooming year, with tangible increases in visitation over the prior season. Ridership continues to grow over time. In the midst of a pandemic, ridership jumped substantially. Local membership rose to new levels.</div> <table><tr><th>Area</th><th>2021-22 4 more weeks of riding left</th><th>2020-21</th><th>2019-20</th><th>2018-19</th><th>17-18</th><th>16-17</th><th>15-16</th><th>14-15</th></tr><tr><td>Quartz Creek</td><td>5781</td><td>8592</td><td>6082</td><td>6896</td><td>7105</td><td>7243</td><td>7719</td><td>6445</td></tr><tr><td>Gorman Lake</td><td>2766</td><td>2445</td><td>2031</td><td>2678</td><td>2497</td><td>3427</td><td>3610</td><td>3317</td></tr><tr><td>Silent Pass</td><td>2084</td><td>3037</td><td>1794</td><td>1668</td><td>1846</td><td>2410</td><td>2298</td><td>1766</td></tr><tr><td>Total</td><td>10631</td><td>14074</td><td>9907</td><td>11242</td><td>11448</td><td>13080</td><td>13627</td><td>11528</td></tr></table> <div><p>The cycling trails saw the continuation of maintenance activity on existing networks, carried out by the Golden Cycling Club. This important work ensures professional upkeep of one of the area’s greatest tourism draws. The project typically employs 2 full time workers for over 4 months.</p></div>								Area	2021-22 4 more weeks of riding left	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	17-18	16-17	15-16	14-15	Quartz Creek	5781	8592	6082	6896	7105	7243	7719	6445	Gorman Lake	2766	2445	2031	2678	2497	3427	3610	3317	Silent Pass	2084	3037	1794	1668	1846	2410	2298	1766	Total	10631	14074	9907	11242	11448	13080	13627	11528
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Stakeholder Involvement:	The Golden Snowmobile Club and Golden Cycling Club are DMO stakeholders directly responsible for the RMI funds use.																																																				

Project Title	Events		
Project description	The Events project is about increasing our events programming. It includes increasing shoulder season festivals and activities as well as providing event support for existing events.		
Project Category	Infrastructure/Amenities	Programs and Services	
Other themes	Indigenous Tourism / Sustainability		
Project rationale/goal/objectives	Destination BC has identified “Arts/Culture/Heritage including First Nations cultural experiences, and Culinary” as a primary motivating experience for visitors to the Golden area. The “Cultural Explorer” is also one of the main explorer quotient segments visiting the area. Evidence has shown that arts/culture/competitive events in Golden are very successful; experiential sport competitions such as the Freeride World Tour and Golden 24 and Ultra have been immensely popular, providing economic benefit and sport tourism exposure to Golden.		
Project Spending in Reporting Year	\$20,000		
Project status	Not Started	In Progress/Ongoing	Completed
Project activities and/or outcomes for the reporting year	The pandemic effectively shuttered this project in 2020. It is hoped that a limited opening up of opportunities may present itself in Q3 of 2021.		
Stakeholder Involvement:	Tourism Golden is the key stakeholder and implementer for these funds. Through the lens of a contribution agreement with TG and the Town of Golden, it was mutually agreed to place the terms of the agreement in abeyance until provincial pandemic regulations and the marketplace allowed activity to resume.		

Project Title	Program Administration		
Project description	Travel allowance to the annual RCC forum to a maximum amount, supplemented by municipal funds as necessary. Measuring performance against stated project outcomes to accurately report on the level of success of projects		
Project Category	Infrastructure/Amenities	Programs and Services	
Other themes	Sustainability		
Project rationale/goal/objectives	Measuring performance is a key necessity in establishing the utility of projects and the value of the RMI program in general. The Province has recognized this and provided for an allocation of program funds to ensure it is undertaken adequately.		
Project Spending in Reporting Year	\$9,000		
Project status	Not Started	In Progress/Ongoing	Completed
Project activities and/or outcomes for the reporting year	The annual RCC event was not held due to the pandemic. No travel expenditures were accrued. Tourism Golden continued its performance measurement activities, as an integral component of its DMO mandate.		
Stakeholder Involvement:	N/A		

3. Economic Outcomes

The data in this section is collected by both the resort communities and/or the WCS Engagement and Planning (WCS). While specific projects can impact these results, the results in this area only show trends over time and should be considered as a long-term impact of investments in infrastructure, projects and programs.

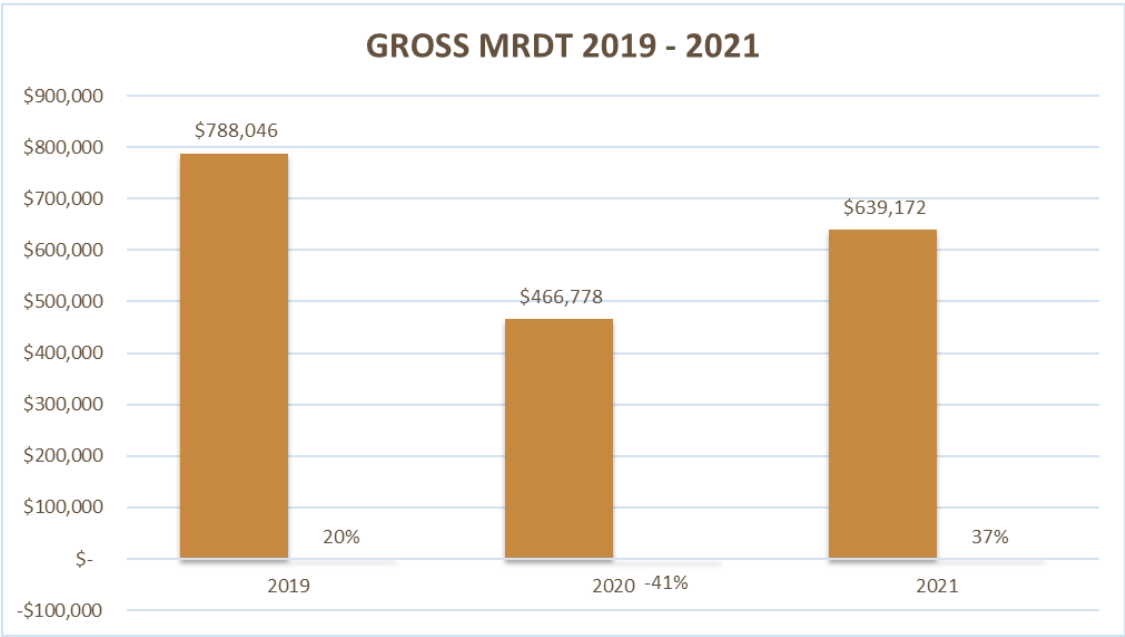
Accommodation Sector Performance

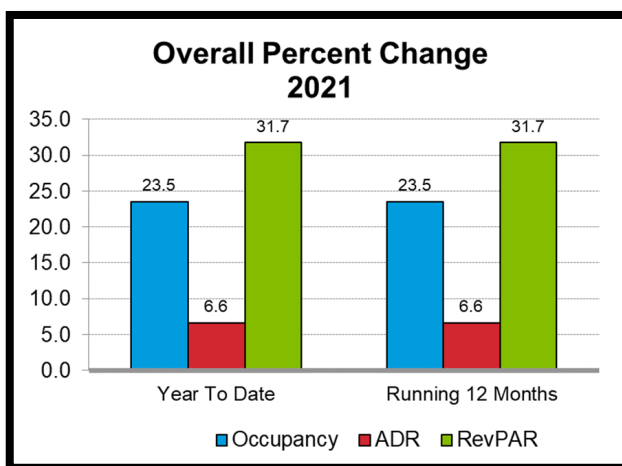
Accommodation sector performance provides an indication of the size and health of the overall tourism economy by tracking changes in MRDT, room revenue or room nights sold. Overnight visitors to the communities tend to participate in more experiences than day visitors, and the additional hours spent in the resort result in increased spending patterns and greater contributions per visitor to the local economy. Considering the variation in this indicator throughout the year provides a window into the community’s success at growing tourism throughout the four seasons.

Overall, there was a huge step towards destination recovery in 2021 although direct attribution to increase leisure visitation is somewhat impacted by the KH Canyon project that began in earnest in 2021 with extended closures as well as an influx of workers.

Gross MRDT revenues increased by 37% against 2020 to \$639,172 but was still less than 2019 by 19%. Significant disrupters were the KH Canyon project, summer wildfires and fall flooding in 2021 in addition to a variety of provincial and international travel restrictions.

Traditional accommodation occupancies increased by 23.5% and ADR by 6.6%.





Visitor Numbers

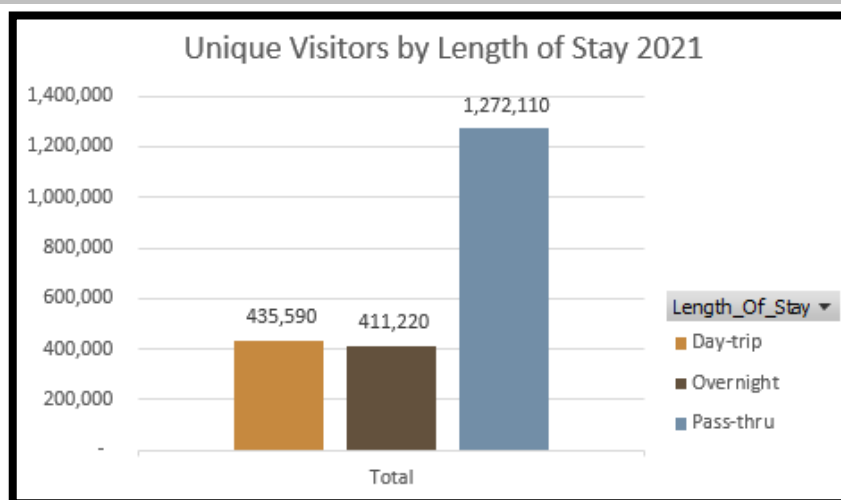
A resort communities' tourism economy is dependent on visitation. Visitor numbers provide an understanding of the health of the tourism economy, as well as the popularity the community as a tourism destination, quality of the service levels, and the perceived value of tourism offerings. Depending on the employed methodology, visitor numbers includes day visitors and overnight visitors differing from accommodation sector performance. Considering the variation in this indicator throughout the year provides a window into the community's success at growing tourism throughout four seasons.

Visitor numbers 2021 provided by Telus Insights study:

Overnight visitors: 411,220

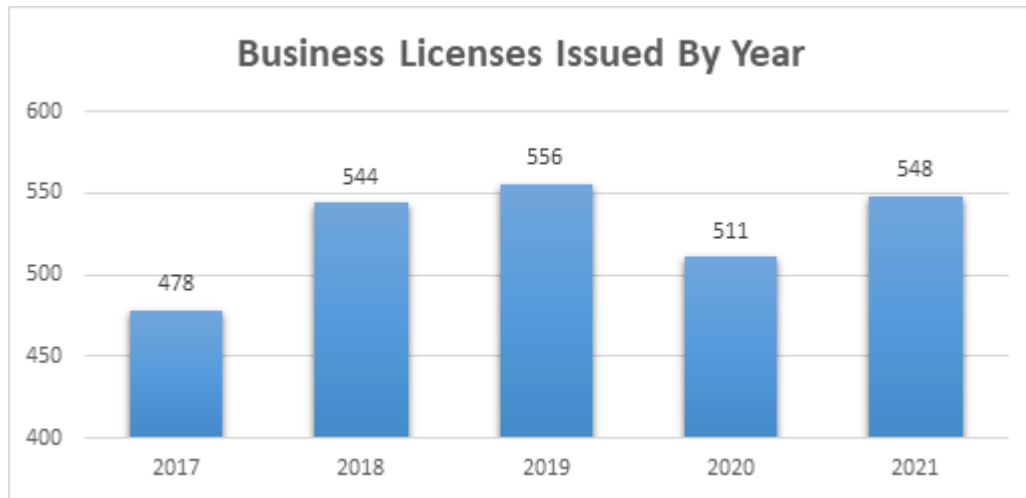
Day-trip visitors: 435,590

There was a 16% reduction in overnight visitors against 2020, despite increased hotel occupancies. This can be attributable to the influx of KH Canyon workers that stayed in hotels but many of which were extended stays and therefore assumed as having Golden as their 'home neighbourhood' within the algorithms of the Telus Insights methodology and so not tracked as visitors.



Number of Business Licenses

The number of businesses in a community reflects economic success and potentially diversity of tourism offerings. Breaking the results out by tourism business can provide a more direct measure of tourism growth.



4. Conclusion and Outlook

The effects of the pandemic continued to impact the local tourism sector in 2021 but we saw a very measurable rebound in tourism visitation over 2020.

The effect upon the Resort Development Strategy over the last 2 years was substantial, largely based on a collapse of capacity by community partners to deliver, supply chain interruptions, general economic slowing across the economy and the inability to host a tourism population.

The RMI Advisory Committee met to re-analyze and agree upon changes to timelines and certain deliverables in the RDS to adapt to the current situation.

The Kicking Horse River Dike Project has transformed a part of the downtown from a dusty garbage strewn alley to a gentrified pedestrian thoroughfare that has changed the look and feel of the community core. Moreover, the private sector is responding with its own beautification and business transformation efforts that will set a new tone in the accommodation and food and beverage local industry.

The completion of the new community entrance sign to the south was timed to welcome the thousands of new people travelling through Golden, detoured as a part of the Kicking Horse Canyon Phase 4 twinning project. Golden is experiencing a development boom larger than ever seen. Housing starts including single family homes and highly desirable condominiums are under construction, downtown business revitalizations are occurring, and the Golden Skybridge is fully operating and expanding its repertoire of adventure experiences.

Thus far the 2022 tourism season has roared back to life to nearly pre-pandemic levels. Chronic staff shortages in the entire sector remains a key factor in crippling the industry's ability to meet this renewed demand. With a lack of affordable housing contributing to this impact, the completion of several key developments in the community is hoped to ease a portion of demand but it is likely that Golden will continue to experience this phenomenon like all other resort communities in the province.

RDS delivery will be soft in 2022 as approvals for projects are not expected to be final until the 4th quarter. Planning and procurement for capital works in 2023 will comprise the bulk of work as well as completions of former projects as carryover requirements and renewals of programming contracts.



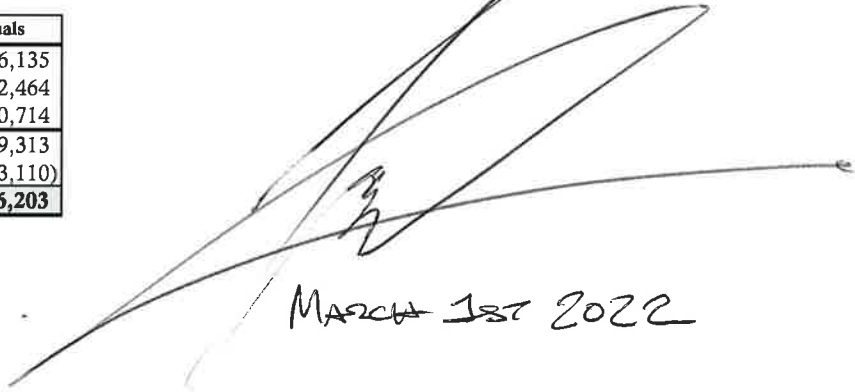
Town of Golden: RMI 2021

Activity	Budgeted Amount (from RDS, 2020 carry over or Amendments)	Jan. 1 - Mar 31 Expenditures	Apr. 1 - Jun. 30 Expenditures	July 1 - Sept. 30 Expenditures	Oct. 1 - Dec. 31 Expenditures	Total Expenditures 2021	Current Status - please update with every quarterly report submission (ex: start date, groundbreaking, bid phase, nearing completion)	Accessibility, Sustainability and Indigenous Projects Update	Upcoming Opportunities & Milestones	CFWD
2015-18 Carry Over projects:										-
Trail Systems	-						Moved to 2019-2021 Project Budget			-
Dikes and Waterfronts	-						Moved to 2019-2021 Project Budget			-
										-
2019-21 Projects										-
Infrastructure:										-
Trail Systems	39,208						(\$8,000 from 2018 cfwd moved to this budget)			39,208
							75% Completion Beautification to be completed by end of summer 2022			
Dikes and Waterfronts	1,368,758			1,122	1,117,030	1,118,152	(\$461,159.77 from 2018 cfwd moved to this budget)			250,606
Public Spaces and Facilities	-						(\$ 35,000.00 from Public Spaces and Facilities moved to this budget)			-
Vehicle Corridors	278,657	28,031	71,239	33,735	2,954	135,958	(\$750,000 from Vehicle Corridors moved to this budget)			142,698
Pedestrian	88,121						(\$35,000 Amphitheater & Post Office Plaza Funds moved to Dike Project)			88,121
Events/Services:										-
Tourism Services	50,000	15,000	15,000		20,000	50,000	20k for cycling trails & 30k for Snowmobile trails			-
Events	100,000				20,000	20,000	RMI Event (Golden Freeride WT)			80,000
Arts, Heritage and Culture Programs	152,954									152,954
										-
Administration :										-
Travel to Spring RCC	2,193									2,193
Performance Measurement	9,000		9,000			9,000				-
TOTAL	2,088,891	43,031	95,239	34,857	1,159,983	1,233,110				755,780

Financial Snapshot	Budget	Actuals
Reserve as of Jan. 1, 2021	1,596,135	1,596,135
Interest earned on reserve amount 2021	13,115	2,464
Funding provided in 2021	590,714	590,714
Total available for 2021	2,199,964	2,189,313
Less: Expenses	(2,088,891)	(1,333,110)
Total currently available (total less expenditures)	111,073	856,203

Please add any other notes below

Carried Forward Budget from 2020	879,362
Budget 2021	1,209,529
Total Budgeted Amount - 2021	2,088,891


MARCH 1st 2022