

2023 Annual Report

Resort Municipality: Golden Report Prepared By: Jon Wilsgard, CAO

Resort Development Strategy Progress

1. Summary

This reporting year represented excellent progress upon RDS projects, with confidence in reaching all project goals by the end of 2024.

The local tourism industry itself continued to recover post pandemic at a rate not anticipated. Overnight visits increased by 24% YOY as did accommodation revenues, up 6.5%. Estimated direct accommodation revenues were up 7.8% to over \$63M. The DMO successfully petitioned its membership to support a 3% MRDT return.

Despite these returns, occupancy decreased by 2% over the previous year and a number of factors likely lessened greater gains being an inflation rate of 6.8%, the effects of wildfires and travel bans, labour shortages, and increasingly unaffordable and available housing for this sector's workers.

Golden remains fortunate in maintaining and increasing its tourism economy despite these outside influences but will continue to pose barriers to growth until both local, regional, provincial and national solutions present themselves.

The RDS has materially impacted the tourism economy by affecting the amenity and cosmetic urban landscape, building capacity in sector worker knowledge, creating logistics solutions for visitors, and providing backcountry means to enjoy recreational pursuits.

2. RDS Goals

1. Enhance cultural vibrancy and identity.

The greatest expression of cultural vibrancy enhancement would have occurred in the rebirth of the Swiss Guides Mural to a modern, colourful and entirely applicable historical interpretation of the same theme. Social media accolades were numerous, and the exhibit is showcased by the DMO as a part of the downtown experience.

2. Enhance key existing tourism product infrastructure.

The downtown plaza revitalization transformed this portion of the community to become a modernized and inviting gathering place that now sees people congregating and remaining in the space for social purposes. It has now become a component of stock photography and videography for the DMO in showcasing the downtown area. The continuing beautification of the Trans Canada corridor makes the community entrance more inviting and pleasing for visitors to stop and during their stay.

3. Diversify municipal tax revenue.

The completion of one multi-family complex and another slated for completion in late 2024 in the downtown area have and will add over 100 more units that are permitted to enter the short-term rental pool. These developments are explicitly linked to the tourism industry while also providing needed housing. Their size and scope will materially increase municipal tax as well as MRDT revenues.



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- 4. Increase visitation.
 - Overnight visits increased by 24% YOY as did accommodation revenues, up 6.5%. Estimated direct accommodation revenues were up 7.8% to over \$63M.
- 5. Increase length of stay.

 Length of stay has maintained a 1.8-night average which is above pandemic years but has yet to recover to 2019 levels.
- 6. Enhance environmental sustainability and climate adaptation. The downtown plaza renewal specifically deleted a decades old fountain, reducing water consumption and associated infrastructure and maintenance thereof. The shuttle pilot program is targeted to reduce GHG emissions and cars on the road by providing a mass transit alternative both from Calgary and within the community. Trans Canada boulevard improvements have included drought tolerant species, replacement of turf with hardscaping, and precision-based irrigation equipment and practices.
- 7. Increase Indigenous tourism opportunities in collaboration with the Ktunaxa, Secwepemc, and Metis Nations.
 - No further progression has been made in this matter other than nuanced improvements and updates to the online learning platform.

3. Performance Measurement

In the peak of summer over a 2-month period visitor surveys were conducted to gauge a number of important metrics for the tourism industry. The methodology included online In-Destination Surveys and Online Follow Up Surveys. Nearly 400 respondents representing a satisfactory 43% response rate provided information for the initiative and the key findings were as follows:

- Alberta was the most common source market (34%) during the peak season which is consistent with 2019 results; however, BC (26% up from 14%) and Other Canada (24% up from 16%) increased notably while the USA and Overseas appears to be underrepresented in 2023 (at 8% each down from 12% and 22%, respectively).
- The majority of peak season visitors were staying overnight. In fact, eight in-ten (78%) visitors were staying overnight in Golden while only 22% were day trippers. The average overnight visitor length of stay 2.7 nights. The trip length is up from 2019 but relatively consistent with 2017 results.
- Golden was the primary destination of 36% of visitors (up from 31% in 2019) but the destination is also a draw for those on a touring vacation (38%).
- On average, visitors' travel party consists of 2.9 people. Three-in-ten parties (31%) are travelling with children under 18.
- Awareness levels of first-time visitors skyrocketed to 65% from 40% in 2019 and 48% in 2017.
- The use of private home rental services (e.g. Airbnb, VRBO) was an important accommodation booking source (17%) which is up from 12% in 2019 and 15% in 2017.
- Most peak season visitors were in Golden for a family vacation (18%), to take a break from driving (15%), and to visit the Golden Skybridge (11%). Convenient location to stop (76%), friendly people (75%), proximity to National/Provincial parks (74%), proximity to nature/wilderness (73%), good value for money (70%), and access to good variety of outdoor recreation activities (70%) are the main drivers of travellers' decision to visit Golden.
- On average, spend has drastically increased over the past four years. In fact, travel parties spent \$1,092 while in Golden in the peak season of 2023 which was up 80% over 2019 results (\$606). This large increase is likely due to natural growth, rapid



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inflation, changes in tourism product offerings and methodology. Some of the change is likely due to the change in responding to this online versus an interviewer asking it.

- Golden summer visitors rated their overall experience as very goo/ excellent (93%) and the majority were very likely to return (81%). Both are consistent with 2019 results (93% and 83% respectively).
- Nearly nine-in-ten (88%) peak season visitors were satisfied with their trip in Golden. This was not previously collected therefore comparison will be made going forward.
- Golden's peak season visitors appear to consider sustainability when travelling and have a positive impression of the destination's sustainability efforts.

1. Visitor Centre Washroom Expansion

Program Outcome #1: Enhance Visitor Experience

Performance Measurement – Visitor Surveys

Progress: Project not started. Public sentiment will be gathered upon completion in Q2 2024.

Program Outcome #2: Improve Accessibility, Sustainability, and/or Indigenous Tourism

Performance Measurement – Ensure Accessibility Standards

Progress: Project not started. Public sentiment will be gathered upon completion in Q2 2024.

2. Phase 4 Trans Canada Highway Beautification

Program Outcome #1: Enhance Visitor Experience

Performance Measurement – Visitor Surveys

Progress: Public sentiment will be gauged by Visitor Centre staff in 2024.

Program Outcome #2: Improve Accessibility, Sustainability, and/or Indigenous Tourism

Performance Measurement – Visitor Survey Data on Accessibility

Progress: Public sentiment will be gauged by Visitor Centre staff in 2024.

3. Community Mural

Program Outcome #1: Enhance Visitor Experience

Performance Measurement – Community & Visitor Feedback – *Collected anecdotally and through Kicking Horse Culture's digital feedback*

Progress: Over 50 explicitly positive posts were received on Kicking Horse Culture's feed about the mural.

Program Outcome #2: Improve Accessibility, Sustainability, and/or Indigenous Tourism

Performance Measurement – Inclusion of Indigenous Mural Component

Progress: The mural includes indigenous representation on the Columbia River.

Program Outcome #3: Increase New and/or Return Visitation

Performance Measurement – Reports by Adjacent Businesses and Locals

Progress: Social media posts by local businesses have been positive and report upon visitor impacts by the mural.



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4. Fvents

Program Outcome #1: Enhance Visitor Experience

Performance Measurement – Community & Visitor Feedback – *Collected anecdotally and through Tourism Golden's digital feedback*

Progress: Visitor experience data was not specifically collected; the Freeride World Tour is a recurring and unique to North America commercial competitive event. Inherent experience is evident in its participation, attendance, media views, and reach which are worldwide. The actual event takes place at Kicking Horse Mountain Resort, with well attended social events in town during such time. Accommodators are fully booked and food and beverage establishments at capacity during the event.

5. Online Tourism Services Learning

Program Outcome #1: Increase New Visitation and/or Return Visitation

Performance Measurement – Assess Visitor Sentiments – *Collected through interactions with trained individuals to gauge program success and positive experiences.*

Progress: A number of visitors expressed satisfaction with the knowledge and helpfulness of many of the 283 graduates from the program in 2023, stating they would return based on an expanded information base of activities revealed to them.

Program Outcome #2: Enhance Visitor Experience

Performance Measurement – Visitor Surveys – Surveys to be completed by Ambassadors

Progress: Anecdotal feedback confirmed the level of education and awareness brought to visitors benefitted their experience while in the community.

6. Regional Trail Renewal & Restoration

Program Outcome #1: Increase New Visitation and/or Return Visitation

Performance Measurement – Visitor Surveys

Progress: A change in administration of key delivery partners delayed survey implementation in 3023. Trail count data will be available in 2024.

Program Outcome #2: Enhance Visitor Experience

Performance Measurement – Visitor Surveys & Anecdotal Evidence – *Surveys to be completed by Ambassadors*

Progress: Anecdotal and social media accounts of the trail systems are consistently positive apart from those trails undergoing necessary restorations.

Program Outcome #3: Improve Sustainability

Performance Measurement – Time Between Trail Restorations

Progress: Several trails addressed in 2023 had not been worked on for several years, a testament to building standards and the use of machinery to create better alignments and water management structures..

7. Community Shuttle

Program Outcome #1: Extend and/or Diversify Community Tourism Season

Performance Measurement – Ridership

Progress: Local community shuttle Golden-Kicking Horse Connector had 10,884 riders; an increase of 74% against the prior season. With ETSI-BC Regional Transportation grant funds, we added a second vehicle 4-days a week. (we planned and received funding for 7 days but couldn't recruit enough drivers). The Champagne Powder Shuttle had 240 riders; an 83% increase against the prior season.



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Program Outcome #2: Improve Accessibility & Sustainability

Performance Measurement – Assurance of Accessibility

Progress: The shuttles are fully accessible.

Program Outcome #3: Enhance Visitor Experience

Performance Measurement – Provide Alternative Transit to Visitors

Progress: Given the ridership statistics, an alternative logistics option getting to Golden and then within it is becoming increasingly popular. .

Project Progress

4. Previous RDS Carryover Funding

Project Name: Phase 3	TCH Beautification		
Current Status:	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Funding Spent in 2023
Complete	January 2023	December 2023	\$567,758

Project Works

Boulevard beautification complete including areas with new curbing, hard and soft landscaping, planting and turf.









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Project Name: Downto	wn Plaza Revitalization		
Current Status:	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Funding Spent in 2023
In Progress	January 2023	March 2024	\$63,450

Project Works

The majority of funds expended on this project in 2023 were sourced from the Tourism Dependant Communities Fund program. RMI funding targeted specific elements of the project and would carry over into 2024 for final completion components. The project was 90% complete by the end of 2023.









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5. Current RDS Projects

Project Name: Visitor C	entre Washroom Expan	sion	
Current Status: In Progress	Project Start Date June 2023	Project End Date June 2024	Funding Spent in 2023 \$8,637
Project Works			
Expenditures represent pla begin early 2024.	nning and design costs, tech	nical assistance, and procure	ment. Actual works would
RMI Initiatives			
Accomplishment of initiatives will	be reported upon project comple	tion for the 2024 reporting year.	



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Project Name: Phase 4	TCH Beautification		
Current Status:	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Funding Spent in 2023
In Progress	January 2023	June 2024	\$749,746

Project Works

Within the project area various landscaping, hardscaping, curbing, plantings and paving took place. Irrigation systems will be installed in 2024.

RMI Initiatives

The project supports SUSTAINABILITY in focusing improvements to be mostly hardscaping, plantings are native and drought tolerant species, and irrigation will be limited and targeted.









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Project Name: Commu	nity Mural		
Current Status:	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Funding Spent in 2023
Complete	January 2023	September 2023	\$48,590

Project Works

The mural artist was commissioned, and the di-bond panels installed in June. Artwork began in late September and was complete before mid-October.

RMI Initiatives

The final construct includes elements of INDIGENOUS recognition in the form of paddling on the Columbia River. The various themes portrayed in the mural represent the DIVERSITY and INCLUSION of people's, places, and historical elements in Golden's past other than simply Swiss Guides.











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Project Name: Online T	ourism Services Learnin	g	
Current Status:	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Funding Spent in 2023
In Progress	September 2022	March 2025	\$10,000

Project Works

The Golden Guide www.goldenguide.ca online destination education for residents and front-line workers launched in April 2023 and has had 298 graduates since then. The curriculum includes modules introducing Tourism Golden and the value of tourism in Golden, Indigenous Peoples (in partnership with Shuswap Band, Ktunaxa Nation and Columbia Valley Metis Nation Society) things to do seasonally, events and other key information and resources. Year 2 of the curriculum was recently added and includes modules supported by Wildsight, Parks Canada and Ktunaxa Nation on responsible recreation, Aquatic Invasive Species and the importance of the land and water.

It is supported by the Golden Pass rewards program which offers Golden Guide graduates discounts and offers from local businesses.

RMI Initiatives

The project continues to support INDIGENOUS TOURISM by showcasing Indigenous presence and history in the Golden area, intended to create interest in offerings in the area or otherwise. DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION are addressed in the modules are all based on video with audio and closed captioning. The project promotes SUSTAINABILITY in that it will be a useful tool in perpetuity within the local tourism worker industry, providing consistency in knowledge transfer and messaging to visitors.

- ✓ The Golden Guide Online destination education for residents & front-line workers
- √ 283 graduates
- ✓ Golden Pass Rewards program



Course Summary

Welcome to the Golden Guide, a 10-module course that looks at Golden as a destination and what it has to offer visitors during their stay. This program is for community champions, like yourself, who regularly interact with visitors. The intention is to provide you with information and resources that you need to help visitors have exceptional experiences.

Tourism is a big economic driver in Golden, and you're an important part of this whole process. You can help protect our community and environmental values while also encouraging a prosperous tourism industry.





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Project Name: Downto	wn Plaza Revitalization		
Current Status:	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Funding Spent in 2023
In Progress	January 2023	March 2024	\$173,826

Project Works

The majority of remaining structures, utilities, hardscaping, landscaping, and paving were completed during the year. The pergola and decorative light fixture would be installed in early 2024.

RMI Initiatives

The project supports DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION in being fully accessible including elements for the blind. The amenity is designed to be sociopetal in its seating locations encouraging interaction and gathering. It embodies SUSTAINABILITY by design with limited unirrigated plantings, hard surfacing, and utilization otherwise of durable materials and a drinking water fountain for various heights including pets.











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Project Name: Events			
Current Status:	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Funding Spent in 2023
In Progress	January 2023	March 2025	\$50,000

Project Works



The Freeride World Tour Kicking Horse-Golden takes place each year in February. It was broadcast live on YouTube, Facebook and FWT website. The TV broadcast of the 26-minute highlights reel in 20+ countries including USA, and Europe shows a marketing reach far beyond our own DMO's.

116,000 event views occurred.

- 80,000 views of KH-Golden webpage on event day.
- 40 million total social media video views and 2 million social interactions on Instagram, Facebook and TikTok.
- 105,000 opens of FWT newsletters featuring Kicking Horse or Golden in the title.
- 10 media from Canada & US were hosted for the event resulting in 112 articles.



An annual 2-day mountain bike endurance race with 397 racers and approximately 320 spectators and crew. An estimated 63% travelled from Alberta and 9% from BC (excluding Golden). Estimated direct economic impact \$370,000. Events hosting program contribution was \$9,065 into the local economy.



A 3-day trail running weekend for all ages. 531 racers and approximately 280 spectators and crew. An estimated 40% travelled from Alberta, 33% from BC (excluding Golden), 16% from other Canada, 12% USA and 3% International.

Events hosting program contribution was \$10,000 into the local economy. The Golden 24 and the Golden Ultra also benefit local athletes and are well supported by the community.

RMI Initiatives

While the events are specifically targeted to the abilities of participants, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION are practiced in that the digital accessibility of the event is defined as being available without cost and having audio and closed captioning on the live streams and replay video.

The on-mountain location of the event, which is dictated primarily by weather and snow conditions in the 24 hours before the event, did not have accessible washrooms, however, they are available at the base in the day lodge and other businesses. The on-mountain spectator area included live commentary for the visually impaired.

For spectators unable to access the on-mountain location the live event was shown with sound in the Day Lodge and wheelchairs are accommodated. The digital live stream and video had closed captioning throughout.

Although the FWT does not include different abilities, the forerunner (in 2024) was a sit skier. Here's the video of that.









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Project Name: Regiona	l Trail Renewal and Rest	oration	
Current Status:	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Funding Spent in 2023
In Progress	January 2023	November 2024	\$70,000

Project Works

Once again, significant renewal efforts of regional cycling trails were undertaken by the Golden Cycling Club utilizing a 4-person crew over a 7-month period. Works include both earthworks and reconstruction of boardwalks, bridges, and jumps to ensure integrity and safety standards. The paid crew galvanized a significant volunteer contingent contributing over 500 hours of assistance.

The Golden Snowmobile Club continued to provide renewals to backcountry routes, restoring waterways, and addressing safety concerns in danger tree removals, slope stabilizations and grooming work. Due to administrative changes within the club, annual statistics are unavailable at the time of writing.

RMI Initiatives

Trail renewal work is a SUSTAINABILITY endeavour to ensure the continued presence and enjoyment of critical tourism infrastructure for the long term. Renewal and restoration initiatives maintain and enhance visitor experiences and ensure the environmental integrity of these systems.













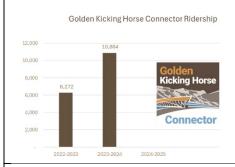


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Project Name: Commu	nity Shuttle		
Current Status:	Project Start Date	Project End Date	Funding Spent in 2023
In Progress	January 2023	March 2024	\$50,000

Project Works

The Local community shuttle Golden-Kicking Horse Connector had 10,884 riders: an increase of 74% against the prior season. With ETSI-BC Regional Transportation grant funds, we added a second vehicle 4-days a week. (we planned and received funding for 7 days but couldn't recruit enough drivers). The Champagne Powder Shuttle had 240 riders: an 83% increase against the prior season.





RMI Initiatives

The project supports DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION in shuttles being fully accessible. The initiative represents SUSTAINABILITY in its target to reduce GHG emissions by in turn reducing the number of vehicles on the road despite being inherently meant to incur convenience for visitors.





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Project Name: Adminis	tration		
Current Status: Complete	Project Start Date September 2022	Project End Date March 2025	Funding Spent in 2023 \$11,000
Project Works			
Cost recovery for travel to the administrative leaders of the RMI	annual Resort Collaborative Comm program.	ittee meetings, a learning and shari	ng opportunity provided for
community. This data collection	tivities include data collection of co is undertaken annually by Tourism ommunity and reported in annual re	Golden through surveys and digital	
3. Application of administrative co	osts to implementing the RDS.		
RMI Initiatives			
This project inherently supports a projects within the Resort Develo	all RMI initiatives as it forms the adr pment Strategy.	ministrative infrastructure and info	rmational rationale for all

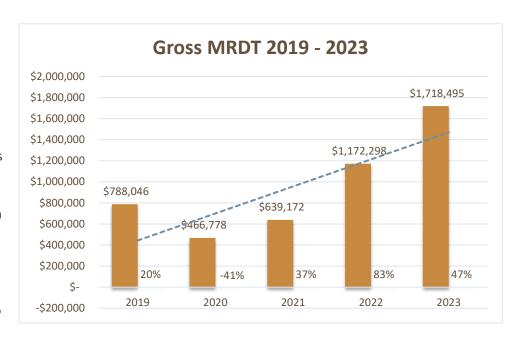


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Conclusion & Outlook

The various projects included in the Resort Development Strategy are now in the process of completion. Without exception, the results have been dramatic and successful on all fronts. Golden is increasingly maturing as a destination and improving in its products offerings and quality of tourism infrastructure required to meet the expectations of a growing industry.

The RMI program would be difficult to implement without the solid partnership of the local DMO, which holds valuable information tracking capacity and can showcase great successes in promotional and increasingly marketing of responsible tourism. As a resort region, the fundamental test of industry success is in the measurement of MRDT collected which shows no sign of slowing.



Current challenges to resort communities in British Columbia currently are less associated with the delivery of RMI infrastructure and programs but the effects of the national crises in housing, wage growth, and inflation. Further, a new spectre has raised its head, ironically a result of the great successes amongst the RMI communities – impacts upon core infrastructure. Increasingly, the measured toll of the rising demand for water and wastewater services are now revealing infrastructure capacity concerns amongst many of the 14 resort communities.

The 2024 year will see completion of the TCH Phase 4 works as well as the highly anticipated Downtown Plaza and new washroom capacity in our visitor centre. The community will witness the largest scale construction project in its history as the Province entirely repositions and replaces the 1950's era highway bridges over the Kicking Horse River. The new bridge will be an impressive suspension style structure, that will transform the downtown area. The early months of the year will see the imagining of a new Resort Development Strategy for the community.

Without sufficient and productive partnerships between a resort municipality and its constituent nonprofit agencies with the capacity to both idealize and assist in delivering the RMI program, success levels would be limited. It is in shared vision and collective implementation that the great achievements to better our tourism economies and the creation more livable communities may happen.



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Financial Report

Activity	2023 Budgeted Amount (with carryover)	Budget Amendment For more into see	Total 2023 Expenditures	Current Project Status	Current Project Status Notes	Project Works Completed Formore into zee note
2019-2021 Carry Over Projects: (Must be completed by March 31, 2024)	ted by March 31, 20	note) 24)				
Phase 3 TCH Beautification	\$ 567,758		\$ 567,758	Complete	Underbudget - Can we budget as Admin fees	Q1 - Q2: Boulevard beautification complete including areas with new curbing, hard and soft landscaping, plantings, and turf.
Downtown Plaza Revitalization	\$ 63,450		\$ 63,450	Complete	Updated Budget to \$263,450 (\$200,000 from VIC Washroom Budget)	01-02: All utilities replacement, hardscapes and landscaping complete, awaiting perpola and light foxture installation.
Subtotal			\$ 631,208			
2022-2024 Projects Tourism Infrastructure, Amenities, or Capital Purchases:	urchases:					
Visitor Centre Washroom Expansion	\$ 20,000	Yes	\$ 8,637	Design Phase		01-02: Design and drafting of construction drawings, machine work to determine site readiness.
Phase 4 TCH Beautification	\$ 951,470		\$ 749,796	In Progress		Q1 - Q2: Landscaping, curbing, hardscaping, Final plantings currently underway Q3 - Q4: All plantings complete, late replacement intersection, curbing, final paving.
Community Mural	\$ 50,000		\$ 48,590	Complete		Q3 - Q4: Di-bond panels purchased and installed, artist commissioned, mural completed, framed.
Online Tourism Services Learning	\$ 10,000		\$ 10,000	In Progress		Q3 - Q4: Annual software fees and maintenance, new curricula added, ongoing curricula updated.
Downtown Plaza Revitalization	\$ 200,000	Yes	\$ 173,826	In Progress		Q1 - Q2: All utilities replacement, hardscapes and landscaping complete, awaiting pergola and light fixture installation. Q3 - Q4: Soft costs for project management, final construction drawings for pergola.
Subtotal			\$ 990,849			
Tourism Services, Programs or Events:						
Event Funding	000′05 \$		\$ 50,000	In Progress	Project ongoing, final costs for Golden24 reconciled, remainder will be used for sponsorships and event prep for Freeride World Tour.	Q3 - Q4: Events funded include: Freeride World Tour, Golden 24, & Golden Ultra. Lump sum payment covers cost over a year.
Regional Trail Renewal and Restoration	\$ 70,000		\$ 70,000	Complete		01 - 02: Restoration contracts issued to Golden Cycling Club and Golden Snowmobile Club. Awaiting seasonal reports of works completed.
Community Shuttle	\$ 50,000		\$ 50,000	50,000 In Progress	Funds allocated precede season start for the service. Proceeds are combined in tripartie sponsorship to cover operating and promotional costs of the service.	03 - 04: Funds allocated precede season start for the service. Proceeds are combined in tripartie sponsorship to cover operating and promotional costs of the service.
Subtotal			\$ 170,000			
Administration:						
Performance Measurement	\$ 11,000		\$ 11,000	In Progress		03 - Q4: Performance measurements include statistics associated with MRDT, net promoter scores, visitor experience survey results, occupancy and vistation rates, travel media reports, and sector data reports through third party parnter research.
Program Administration						
Subtotal	\$ 2,043,678		\$ 1,803,057			
Financial Snapshot Reserve as of Jan 1, 2023 2022 RMI Funding Amount Provided 2023 RMI Funding Amount Provided - 90% of Total Funding Amount Provided - 90% Interest armed on reserve in 2023*	\$ 469,618 \$ 795,700 \$ 613,257	Interest	on he entered mid were or at and of the were	or the ond rather		
Total Funding for 2023/24	1,88	, ,_				
Total 2023 Expenditures Ourrent 2024 Carryover						