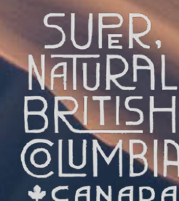




# Enhancing Winter/Shoulder Season Tourism on the Sunshine Coast: 3-year Strategy March 2021



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# Disclaimer

The recommendations reported herein are provided on a confidential basis. Recommendations can be used in whatever necessary, including releasing them to travel and tourism industry stakeholders and partners and/or media.

The information and data found in this report are current as of the date of submission and subject to change given market forces and external variables.

March 2021.

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Development of the Sunshine Coast 3-Year Winter/Shoulder Tourism Strategy is informed by significant engagement with key Sunshine Coast tourism stakeholders to identify and prioritize the unique opportunities that Sunshine Coast has to offer visitors in the Winter/Shoulder seasons.

The Sunshine Coast 3-Year Winter/Shoulder Tourism Strategy is made possible through the commitment and dedication of these stakeholders.

STAKEHOLDER	ORGANIZATION	ROLE
Sylvie Bruce	Shades of Jade Inn and Spa	Co-Owner & Operator
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Brandon Frey	Townsite Brewing	Sales & Marketing Manager
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Pender Harbour aerial Regan Hatley

# Winter/Shoulder season strategic framework overview

SUNSHINE COAST CAN DIVERSIFY ITS TOURISM PRODUCTS AND EXPERIENCES THROUGH Winter/Shoulder TOURISM.

# Context & Purpose

On May 21, 2019, the Government of Canada launched a new national tourism development strategy ('Creating Middle Class Jobs: A Federal Tourism Growth Strategy') aim at empowering communities across Canada to grow their tourism economies.

As part of that strategy, the Government of Canada committed to stimulate and diversify Canada's tourism products and experiences to overcome one of five of Canada's perennial tourism challenges: seasonality. With most tourism taking place during the summer months, it identified an opportunity to develop and enhance products and experiences, to create demand for travel beyond the peak summer season.

Additionally, it launched the Canadian Experiences Fund (CEF) to support expansion of distinctive products and experiences in rural communities. And, it selected the Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) to manage the CEF via a new program called "Elevating Canadian Experiences".

The program, co-led by tourism management consultancy, Twenty31 Consulting, included a series of workshops across Canada to highlight the importance of building winter and shoulder season tourism capacity, the launch of a market-readiness toolkit and the creation of a series of regional winter and shoulder season tourism development strategies for selected regions – including Sunshine Coast in British Columbia.

This document outlines the strategy for Sunshine Coast to develop its winter and shoulder tourism season. Specifically, it includes:

- Definition of key elements underpinning a destination's Winter/Shoulder strategy like guiding principles, a vision and strategic objectives
- Identification and prioritization of competitive opportunities and their supporting initiatives
- Development of a roadmap for implementation

Taken together, this document provides Sunshine Coast, along with its travel and tourism industry partners, a 24 to 36 month plan to develop and enhance its winter and shoulder season tourism potential.

THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT APPROACH  
CONSISTED OF THREE PHASES.

# Approach

01

## GATHER

- 1/ Situational analysis
- 2/ Winter/Shoulder workshop
- 3/ Stakeholder engagement

02

## ACCESS

- 4/ Initial assessment
- 5/ Stakeholder engagement 2
- 6/ Initiative prioritization
- 7/ Draft Sunshine Coast strategy

03

## RECOMMEND

- 8/ Sunshine coast strategy review
- 9/ Final Sunshine Coast strategy





A PROVEN STRUCTURE GUIDED DEVELOPMENT OF SUNSHINE COAST WINTER/SHOULDER TOURISM STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK.

# Sunshine Coast Winter/Shoulder destination development structure

## Guiding Principles

Values that guide Sunshine Coast tourism stakeholders in the development of Winter/Shoulder tourism products and experiences.

## Challenges & Opportunities

Considers barriers identified in the Winter/Shoulder workshops and engagement sessions as well as opportunities to address those barriers.

## Vision

Ensures alignment of the direction for Winter/Shoulder tourism on the Sunshine Coast that reflects industry demands, potential visitors, operators, and the communities that tourism serves.

## Objectives

Accomplishments that Sunshine Coast wishes to achieve as it develops Winter/Shoulder tourism – the ultimate outcome.

## Pillars

Themes that become high-level speaking points to describe the focus of the strategy.

## Lead Opportunities

“Big idea” or “big opportunity” where there is a competitive advantage

Can be supply driven reflecting a certain currently underleveraged competitive opportunity

Can be demand driven like an under targeted group of prospective customers prioritized in order of ease of implementation and impact on tourism objectives

## Supporting Initiatives

Complements the lead opportunity

Ensures conditions for success are met and there are sufficient resources to develop the lead opportunity

Can include ensuring there is sufficient tourism infrastructure to support the product

Can include developing a profile, size of market and characteristics of those who might be willing to travel to the region



# Winter/Shoulder season strategy details



WINTER/SHOULDER TOURISM GUIDING PRINCIPLES ARE VALUES THAT GUIDE SUNSHINE COAST TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS.

# Winter/shoudler tourism guiding principles



Tolerant of a shift in mindset from a summer to a year-round destination



Inclusive, evidence-based and co-created by communities, government, industry and key stakeholders



Support for Winter/Shoulder authenticity, sustainability and diversity



Safeguards cultures, environment, peoples, places and institutions

Winter/Shoulder tourism guiding principles identified and defined by key Sunshine Coast key tourism stakeholders.



WINTER/SHOULDER TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ON THE SUNSHINE COAST INITIALLY FOCUSES ON A CHANGING MINDSET.

# Vision

Our vision is to make the Sunshine Coast a year-round British Columbia destination.

Through a variety of products and experiences, our visitors are encouraged to safeguard cultures, environment, peoples, places and institutions and see more during the winter and shoulder season, while being stewards of the Sunshine Coast before, during and after their visit.

We achieve our vision by providing tourism leadership to our stakeholders and respecting our local communities, and making informed decisions based on evidence.

Winter/Shoulder tourism vision detailed by key Sunshine Coast key tourism stakeholders.



FOUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES SUPPORT ACTUALIZATION OF THE VISION.

# Objectives

- 1/** Focus on developing 2-3 distinct sustainable Winter/Shoulder tourism opportunities per year, for the next three years
- 2/** Increase Winter/Shoulder (October through May) tourism occupancy by 5%\*
- 3/** Increase annual room revenues by 5%\*
- 4/** Continuous communication of the value of tourism and tourism leadership's commitment to sustainable Winter/Shoulder tourism development

Winter/Shoulder tourism vision detailed by key Sunshine Coast key tourism stakeholders.

\*Based on 2019 Winter/Shoulder tourism revenue



# Pillars & Initiatives



WINTER/SHOULDER PILLARS ARE ESTABLISHING A YEAR-ROUND MINDSET, ENHANCING THE SUPPLY, AND ENTICING VISITORS.

# Pillars

## 01

### ESTABLISH FOCUS ON YEAR-ROUND TOURISM

#### INITIATIVES:

- 1/** Communicate the Winter/Shoulder tourism strategy
- 2/** Provide continuous and clear stakeholder communications
- 3/** Research potential markets for winter/ shoulder
- 4/** Create opportunities for collaboration and partnerships

#### OUTCOME

Establish year-round tourism by prioritizing and communicating it with all relevant stakeholders.

## 02

### ENHANCE THE SUPPLY

#### INITIATIVES:

- 1/** Inventory existing Winter/Shoulder products and experiences related to:
  - Trail itineraries
  - Authentic BC\*
  - Small groups
- 2/** Develop products and experiences related to lead opportunities
- 3/** Develop packages and itineraries focusing on lead opportunities

Lead Opportunities

*\*Community first – we are communities that welcome visitors.*

#### OUTCOME

Enhance the supply by understanding existing opportunities and connecting them with potential source market needs.

## 03

### ENTICING VISITORS

#### INITIATIVES:

- 1/** Plan and execute 1-2 campaign(s) focused on the trail itineraries and the Authentic BC brand
- 2/** Work with tourism channels to promote products and experiences related to lead opportunities

#### OUTCOME

Promote Sunshine Coast Winter/Shoulder tourism products and experiences to the right people, at the right time.



**PILAR 1: ESTABLISH FOCUS ON YEAR-ROUND TOURISM****Initiative 01: Communicate Winter/Shoulder Tourism Strategy**

DESCRIPTION	TIMEFRAME/TRIGGER
<p><b>Rationale</b></p> <p>A destination tourism strategy is the first step a destination can take towards developing and enhancing its tourism and other related industries growth.</p> <p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>Approve Sunshine Coast' Winter/Shoulder tourism strategy</p> <p>Attain buy-in from all key stakeholders, and communicate the region's focus on specific elements, in this case Sunshine Coast' trail itineraries, the "Authentic BC" brand, and on targeting to small groups to develop its Winter/Shoulder tourism season to achieve its vision of becoming a year-round destination.</p> <p>Provide continuous and clear communication of the status of its implementation to continue to display leadership required for stakeholders to move together towards the common vision.</p>	<p>Within 3 months of strategy approval</p>
	RESPONSIBLE
	<p>Sunshine Coast Tourism (lead)</p> <p>TIABC (support)</p> <p>RTAs/DMOs (support)</p>
	OUTCOMES
	<p>Stakeholders aware of Sunshine Coast' Winter/Shoulder tourism strategy</p>

**PILAR 1: ESTABLISH FOCUS ON YEAR-ROUND TOURISM****Initiative 02: Provide Continuous and Clear Stakeholder Communications****DESCRIPTION****Rationale**

The destinations that are most successful are those that maintain continuous communication with their key stakeholders (and in some cases, all stakeholders). It reinforces the responsibility of execution of the strategy amongst those responsible for its execution and provides key stakeholders with an opportunity to understand the context and align with initiatives.

**Actions**

Communicate Sunshine Coast approved Winter/Shoulder tourism strategy, the lead opportunities it will focus on, the rationale behind that focus, as well as the initiatives and the status of the initiatives that Sunshine Coast Tourism is taking to implement the strategy on a continuous basis.

Conduct a survey with key tourism stakeholders to better understand their communications needs – i.e., how, what, where and how often.

Create additional simple networking opportunities for Sunshine Coast' tourism stakeholders.

**TIMEFRAME/TRIGGER**

Immediately upon strategy approval

Ongoing

**RESPONSIBLE**

Sunshine Coast Tourism (lead)

TIABC (support)

RTAs/DMOs (support)

**OUTCOMES**

A plurality of Sunshine Coast Tourism stakeholders satisfied with communications

Constant communication stream of Sunshine Coast Tourism actions



**PILAR 1: ESTABLISH FOCUS ON YEAR-ROUND TOURISM****Initiative 03: Research Potential Markets for Winter/Shoulder****DESCRIPTION****Rationale**

Travel consumer behaviour in the Winter/Shoulder season is different than in the peak summer season and add to that the shift caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is true for local, domestic, regional and international travellers.

**Actions**

Conduct thorough research to understand potential target visitor needs, including the types of places and activities they are seeking, how they intend to learn more about products and experiences, their booking behaviours and newly developed interests as a result of COVID-19, and so forth.

Conduct research using existing available tools to gain a better understanding of potential target visitors and small groups, to ensure Sunshine Coast offers experiences they are seeking and attract them through effective marketing campaigns.

Conduct in-depth digital listening can be a cost-effective way to provide actionable data quickly (data analysis).

Understand local sentiment towards tourism in general, but also in Winter/Shoulder season to address negative sentiment they may feel towards potential visitors.

Make insights accessible to all tourism and non-tourism partners to evaluate opportunities and make informed business decisions.

**TIMEFRAME/TRIGGER**

Within 3 months of strategy approval

**RESPONSIBLE**

Sunshine Coast Tourism (lead)

RTAs/DMOs (support)

**OUTCOMES**

Market intelligence on target markets and Winter/Shoulder season needs

Access to research for tourism stakeholders

**PILAR 1: ESTABLISH FOCUS ON YEAR-ROUND TOURISM****Initiative 04: Create Opportunities for Collaboration and Partnerships****DESCRIPTION****Rationale**

When launching into new territory as may be the case for many stakeholders on the Sunshine Coast, focusing on the development or enhancement of the potential Winter/Shoulder season, working in collaboration with other stakeholders and partners provides support for destinations and operators to lean on each other for guidance and advice and reduces the risk that a single destination or operator may take attempting to develop new products and experiences on their own.

**Actions**

Create networking opportunities for operators, especially those that are linked to identified lead opportunities of Sunshine Coast' Winter/Shoulder tourism strategy, to enable them to reduce potential financial and operational risk.

Encourage the development of potential partnership opportunities including banding with other stakeholders that can support Winter/Shoulder season market research, marketing and promotion, packaging and itinerary development and efforts to jumpstart the Winter/Shoulder season.

Connect stakeholders with tools such as video-conferencing and social media platforms (technological prowess most destinations and operators have developed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic), can be used to connect stakeholders.

Initiate face-to-face meetings to connect stakeholders to create opportunities (when the time comes).

**TIMEFRAME/TRIGGER**

Within 3 months of strategy approval

Ongoing

**RESPONSIBLE**

Sunshine Coast Tourism (lead)

RTAs/DMOs (support)

**OUTCOMES**

A plurality of Sunshine Coast Tourism stakeholders satisfied with ]SCT communications

Constant communication stream of Sunshine Coast tourism actions and achievements





**PILAR 2: ENHANCE THE SUPPLY****Initiative 01: Inventory Existing Winter/Shoulder Products and Experiences****DESCRIPTION****Rationale**

Through the development of this strategy, stakeholders from across the region identified and prioritized several potential lead opportunities to build momentum towards enhancing Sunshine Coast' Winter/Shoulder tourism season.

Focusing on the top 2-3 opportunities in the first 1-2 years allows for the best chance of success. If successful, the other identified and prioritized opportunities can be reviewed to determine whether Sunshine Coast ought to begin focusing on them as well.

Initial Winter/Shoulder lead opportunities for Sunshine Coast include:

- Focusing on the trail itineraries
- Leveraging the "Authentic BC" brand; and
- Initially targeting small groups

**Actions**

Understand the ecosystem of Winter/Shoulder season to identify potential gaps and develop new products and experiences and/or related packages.

Understand the inventory of experiences on the Sunshine Coast to also know where potential gaps may lie to develop new products and experiences and/or related packages.

House all this information online to inform operators on availability of products and experiences they can link to.

Provide continuous and clear communication of the status of its implementation to continue to display leadership required for stakeholders to move together towards the common vision.

**TIMEFRAME/TRIGGER**

Within 3-6 months of strategy approval

**RESPONSIBLE**

Sunshine Coast Tourism (lead)

RTAs/DMOs (support)

**OUTCOMES**

Listing of products and experiences related to lead opportunities

**PILAR 2: ENHANCE THE SUPPLY****Initiative 02: Develop Products and Experiences Related to Lead Opportunities****DESCRIPTION****Rationale**

The inventory of existing Sunshine Coast Winter/Shoulder tourism products and experiences (Pilar 2: Initiative 01 – Inventory Existing Winter/Shoulder Products and Experiences) will allow Sunshine Coast to identify the gaps that need to be filled to provide visitors with a holistic tourism experience.

**Actions**

Work with key destinations and operators related to the identified lead opportunities to brainstorm opportunities to fill the identified gaps leveraging learnings from market research to ensure developed products and experiences are aligned with potential target market needs (Pilar 1: Initiative 03 – Research Potential Markets for Winter/Shoulder).

Research what other destinations in Canada and beyond are doing as they relate to the identified lead opportunities.

Develop a short business case on each lead opportunity including a description of the idea itself, the market potential, those who would be responsible for its implementation, potential funding sources, steps for implementation, and so forth.

Present the business case to various stakeholder that may be able to support in its implementation such as economic development department, small business hubs or other operators who may be willing to expand their offerings.

**TIMEFRAME/TRIGGER**

Within 3-6 months of strategy approval

**RESPONSIBLE**

Sunshine Coast Tourism (lead)

RTAs/DMOs (support)

Economic Development/Small Business Development Authorities (support)

**OUTCOMES**

Development of new products and experiences related to lead opportunities



**PILAR 2: ENHANCE THE SUPPLY****Initiative 03: Develop Packages and Itineraries Focusing on Lead Opportunities**

DESCRIPTION	TIMEFRAME/TRIGGER
<p><b>Rationale</b></p> <p>In many instances, development of products/experiences alone (Pillar 2: Initiative 02: Develop Products and Experiences Related to Lead Opportunities) may be sufficient to entice travellers to visit and ensure quality of experience to encourage return visitation and sharing of the experience to family and friends.</p> <p>However, the research (Pillar 1: Initiative 03 – Research Potential Markets for Winter/Shoulder) may determine that some visitors prefer to have decisions made for them when it comes lodging, food and beverage, activities, attractions and so forth.</p> <p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>Work with identified key stakeholders (destinations and operators) involved with the development of lead opportunity product and experiences to identify and develop an inventory of possible inspirational itineraries according to specific product themes and small group travel needs.</p> <p>Work with destinations within the region to launch the packages/inspirational itineraries, as well as the agency on record to publicise the inspirational itineraries starting with earned media.</p>	<p>Within 3-6 months of strategy approval</p> <p><b>RESPONSIBLE</b></p> <p>Sunshine Coast Tourism (lead)</p> <p>RTAs/DMOs (support)</p> <p><b>OUTCOMES</b></p> <p>Development of new products and experiences related to lead opportunities</p>

**PILAR 3: ENTICE VISITORS****Initiative 01: Plan and Execute 1-2 Campaign(s)**

DESCRIPTION	TIMEFRAME/TRIGGER
<p><b>Rationale</b></p> <p>Stakeholders that informed Sunshine Coast' Winter/Shoulder tourism strategy identified small groups as a lead opportunity, especially those that may be looking to escape major urban areas in pursuit of less crowds/quiet time.</p> <p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>Inform target markets of the attractions that Sunshine Coast offers with a focus on the trail itineraries and its "Authentic BC" brand.</p> <p>Focus marketing campaigns on target markets (as defined in Pillar 1: Initiative 03 – Research Potential Markets for Winter/Shoulder season product with a focus on the identified market-ready or near market-ready opportunities (i.e., trail itineraries and "Authentic BC"). This will help to entice small groups to stay longer, spend more and travel with more family and friends.</p> <p>Develop integrated campaigns, armed with the research conducted in Pillar 1: Initiative 03 – Research Potential Markets for Winter/Shoulder, aimed at small groups in target markets, leveraging appropriate messaging, channels and influencers where necessary.</p>	<p>Within 6-12 months of strategy approval</p>
	RESPONSIBLE
	<p>Sunshine Coast Tourism (lead)</p> <p>Agency of Record (support)</p>
	OUTCOMES
	<p>1-2 regional campaigns</p>

**PILAR 3: ENTICE VISITORS****Initiative 02: Work with Tourism Channels**

DESCRIPTION	TIMEFRAME/TRIGGER
<p><b>Rationale</b></p> <p>To further simplify the way that target markets learn about, develop interest in and book travel, Sunshine Coast should identify and connect with tour operators focused on small groups that could be a good conduit to promote these products, experiences and packages.</p> <p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>Identify tour operators focused on small groups</p> <p>Explore online travel agencies that influence the local/regional markets to further promote Winter/Shoulder season products, experiences and packages to different demo/psychographics.</p>	<p>Within 6-12 months of strategy approval</p> <p><b>RESPONSIBLE</b></p> <p>Sunshine Coast Tourism (lead)</p> <p><b>OUTCOMES</b></p> <p>Promotion of Winter/Shoulder tourism packages through tourism channels</p>





Donkersley Beach



EACH INITIATIVE IS SET AGAINST A TIMELINE BASED ON NEED, IMPACT AND EASE OF IMPLEMENTATION.

# Tactical Roadmap

	NEXT 0-3 MONTHS	NEXT 3-6 MONTHS	NEXT 6-12 MONTHS
<b>01</b> <b>STRENGTHEN TOURISM BASICS</b>	<p>Communicate Winter/Shoulder tourism strategy</p> <p>Provide continuous and clear stakeholder communications</p>	<p>Research potential markets for Winter/Shoulder (small groups at first)</p> <p>Create opportunities for collaboration and partnerships</p> <p>Provide continuous and clear stakeholder communications</p>	<p>Create opportunities for collaboration and partnerships</p> <p>Provide continuous and clear stakeholder communications</p>
<b>02</b> <b>OPTIMIZE WINTER 2021/2022 RETURNS</b>		<p>Inventory existing Winter/Shoulder products and experiences related to lead opportunities</p> <p>Develop products and experiences related to lead opportunities</p>	
<b>03</b> <b>PREPARE FOR NEXT 'NORMAL'</b>			<p>Plan and execute 1-2 campaign(s) targeting small groups and focused on the trail itineraries and the "Authentic BC" brand</p> <p>Work with tourism channels to promote products and experiences related to lead opportunities</p>

# Appendix





THERE ARE KEY BARRIERS THAT IMPACT DEVELOPMENT OF WINTER/SHOULDER TOURISM ON THE SUNSHINE COAST.

# Challenges



## Access

BC Ferries access

People who live in the city don't necessarily have access to a vehicle- accessibility within the destination

Signage and wayfinding - Difficult to provide clear directions to visitors within destination.

Not clear how to use some of the roads/trails



## Changing Perceptions

Entrepreneurial support and shift in mindset to be a year-round destination

Risk for business owners to build the market

Impact of COVID-19 on traditional tourism products and experiences



## Staffing & Labour

Building capacity for business owners - believe in idea for staffing business - the idea that they can be open

Long-term accommodation issues/affordability for tourism staff



## Product development

Focus on developing winter and shoulder clusters in the next 1-2 years

Diversification of products and experiences beyond events

Need for self-sustaining products/experiences (look at ways to monetize visitors away from events)



## Marketing & Promotion

Current messaging does not align to younger demographics values, needs and expectations of a destination

Over reliance on events (beer, jazz, etc.) to attract visitation - seems to be what we can hang our hat on in terms of marketing



## Collaboration

Increased coordination and collaboration amongst tourism stakeholders within and across counties is needed.

Winter/Shoulder tourism challenges identified by key Sunshine Coast key tourism stakeholders.

OPPORTUNITIES THAT CAN ENHANCE  
WINTER/ SHOULDER TOURISM.

# Opportunities



## Mountain Biking

A year-round mountain biking destination

Sea-level trails

Cycling and e-bikes



## Health & wellness

"Work, play, getaways"

Slow down, connect with nature

Wellness, spa retreats for non-ideal weather



## Authentic BC\*

What locals would do - hyper backyard BC.

Embrace people, community and culture

Champions for the Coast features

\*Community first - we are communities that welcome visitors.



## Trail Itineraries

Series of trail itineraries and packages: food; art - purple banner; ale; "hiking for enthusiast hipsters"; older generation.

Year-round activity



## Sustainable tourism

Sustainability

Thoughtful travel - carbon neutral airline, etc



## Older market

Focus on older market as they have more time, more money



## Water Experiences

Birding

Sea lions, orcas

Guided tours



## Local Media

Local media to share tourism information and experiences with local communities and visitors



## Signage

Better signage to direct (especially on highway).

Clean and update actual signage.



## Indigenous Heritage

Competitive advantage e.g. stories, history, culture, traditions, mystic forests

Immersive Indigenous experiences that are built around wellness and conscious travellers



## Small groups

Focus on groups of friends

Special interest groups (bird nerds, foragers, winter-driving)



## Quiet time

Focus on quiet of shoulder season, especially during the week

Perfect destination to escape to







SUNSHINE COAST PRIORITIZED SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE WINTER/SHOULDER TOURISM.

# Winter/Shoulder tourism lead opportunities

## HOW TO READ THIS TABLE

Prioritization of opportunities based on qualitative assessment (typically defined in workshop setting) of impact on objectives and ease of implementation

All identified opportunities require additional assessment and research

Identified opportunities are not static to one quadrant – they are dynamic with the hope that most opportunities will shift to quadrant 1

### HIGH POTENTIAL TO IMPACT OBJECTIVES

#### 3. Medium-term opportunities for next 2-4 years



MARINE ACTIVITIES



HERITAGE TOURISM



MOUNTAIN BIKING/  
E-BIKING



INDIGENOUS  
TOURISM



OPEN BUSINESSES



SUSTAINABLE  
TOURISM

#### 1. Near market-ready



TRAIL ITINERARIES



AUTHENTIC BC\*

\*Community first – we are communities that welcome visitors.



SMALL GROUPS

#### 4. For later consideration/re-evaluation



TRAVELLERS  
WITH PETS



CAR RENTAL/  
SHARING



SHOPPING



OWNERS OF  
SECOND HOME



WINTER DIVING

#### 2. Quick wins for next 1-2 year



QUIET TIME/ESCAPE



SENIOR MARKET



HEALTH &  
WELLNESS



SIGNAGE



LOCAL PRESS

CHALLENGING TO IMPLEMENT

EASY TO IMPLEMENT

### LOW POTENTIAL TO IMPACT OBJECTIVES

WHILE SOME OPPORTUNITIES ARE LONGER-TERM, OTHERS CAN BE IMPLEMENTED SOONER.

# Focus: near market-ready opportunities



## Trail Itineraries

The Sunshine Coast currently offers a few trails for all types of adventures. From the very popular Sunshine Coast Ale Trail to the Purple Banner Tour that invite visitors to discover art studios and galleries since the region has one of the largest populations per capita of artists in Canada. More adventurous visitors will enjoy the many biking and walking trails.

Discovering one of the several year-round trails the Coast has to offer will entice visitors to come back during the less busy months and potentially extend their stay.



## Authentic BC\*

This is the place to experience the Authentic BC brand, to embrace the people, the community and the culture.

Do like the locals they say! The Sunshine Coast offers true authentic Indigenous, outdoor tourism and unique hands-on learning experiences. In the Winter/Shoulder season, this can make for even better local connections as businesses are less busy and front-line staff have more time to recommend local not-to-be missed experiences.



## Small Groups

Post-pandemic, groups of friends will be seeking opportunities to getaway together for a few days. The Sunshine Coast offers a good mix of outdoor activities, food and drink establishments, hands-on experiences from exciting beer-making classes to relaxing yoga retreats and a variety of accommodations.

Preliminary evidence suggests visitors are seeking fun experiences and wanting to make memories that last a lifetime.

\*Community first – we are communities that welcome visitors.

<sup>4</sup> Plan stratégique de Tourisme Cantons-de-l'Est, 2018-2022

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES CAN BE DEVELOPED IN THE NEXT 1-2 YEARS.

# Other opportunities: quick wins for next 1-2 years

Quick wins for next 1-2 years



## Senior Market

With its peaceful and quiet environment, the Sunshine Coast could do more to target the senior travel market. There is potential to capture more of this market in the Winter/Shoulder season.

The tourism products and experiences along the Coast are mostly soft adventure and include culinary, shopping and cultural experiences.



## Signage

By developing and enhancing its existing signage, the Sunshine Coast could entice more visitors to discover villages and tourism products in the small towns along the Coast.

Some investment is required to clean up, enhance and add new signage especially along the highway.



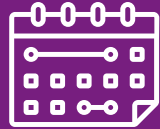
## Quick wins for next 1-2 years



### Health & Wellness

The Sunshine Coast is the perfect destination to slow down, to connect with nature, to participate in cultural/arts events, etc. – all relevant to well-being.

Positioning itself as a hub for health and wellness can support development of more Winter/Shoulder season body, mind and spirit experiences.



### Quiet Time / Escape

As urbanites are seeking escapes from the city and some quiet time, the Sunshine Coast is the perfect destination to escape the crowds. While visiting the Coast, visitors can disconnect and reconnect with nature or just take the time to read a book and go for a stroll along a beautiful beach.

More work needs to be done to promote this aspect of the Sunshine Coast.



### Local Media

In addition to all the travel media communications, the Sunshine Coast tourism industry could benefit from more local media coverage to promote winter and shoulder season tourism products and experiences both for the locals/communities and for the visitors.







OTHER OPPORTUNITIES: MEDIUM-TERM OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEXT 2-4 YEARS.

# More opportunities can be developed in the next 2-4 years.

## Medium-Term Opportunities for Next 2-4 Years



### Marine Activities

Marine activities on the Sunshine Coast can also be offered in Shoulder/Winter tourism season. From guided tours to fishing outings and bird viewing, the Coast has many tourism marine activities.

The Sunshine Coast would need to develop an inventory of marine businesses offering or interested in offering their product in Shoulder/Winter season.



### Mountain Biking / E-biking

Described as one of the most enchanting places to go mountain biking, the Sunshine Coast offers over 700 kilometers of bike trails. The diverse trails are available year-round. Bikers can enjoy nature's beauty such as the rocky shoreline or the coastal rainforest. The passionate community of friendly riders makes it even more enjoyable.

With recent studies and surge in mountain bike sales, there is evidence to support a growing interest in this sport and interest in travelling to destinations that offer these unique settings for all skill levels.





### Sustainable Tourism

Like many other destinations, the Sunshine Coast region offers thoughtful travel experiences.

More needs to be done to sustainably commercialize tourism products and experiences. Research also needs to be conducted to identify all sustainable tourism products and experiences.



### Heritage Tourism

The Sunshine Coast has a rich history. Fishing and logging were the main occupations of the settlers, along with small scale farming mostly for their own subsistence. The establishment of logging camps in the Powell River area in the 1880's was a precursor to greater economic developments.

These types of experiences tend to be indoors which would complement trips to the Sunshine Coast with a focus on the different trails.



### Indigenous Tourism

Sunshine Coast plays host to the traditional territories of the Squamish, Sechelt, and Tla'amin and Klahoose nations. Indigenous tourism products and experiences include artist demonstrations, education about the ecosystems, cultural tours and museums.

While it would be easy to create products and experiences around Indigenous culture and heritage, ensuring these would significantly impact Sunshine Coast Winter/Shoulder tourism season needs to be further studied.



### Open Businesses

Sunshine Coast has many businesses that are open or that would love to be open in the shoulder season and winter months.

An inventory of open businesses would need to be completed to ensure there are sufficient open businesses to welcome visitors during the Winter/Shoulder tourism season.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES: OPPORTUNITIES FOR LATER CONSIDERATION/RE-EVALUATION.

# Finally, some opportunities can be developed in the future or after re-evaluation.

## Opportunities for Later Consideration/Re-Evaluation



### Shopping

The Sunshine Coast offers great shopping experiences in quaint villages. Also, the Sunshine Coast is host to farmer's markets with fresh, organic, and locally grown food, home baked breads and goodies, and uniquely crafted wares.

More research needs to be done to attract more shoppers on the Coast and to ensure shops and boutiques are open in the winter and shoulder season.



### Car Rental / Sharing

As access can be an issue, the Sunshine Coast could get started developing and promoting car rentals and car sharing to facilitate trips within cities and tourism attractions.

More research needs to be conducted to understand the need and behaviors of those who may be interested in car rentals and car sharing.



### Water Diving

The Sunshine Coast is home to perfect winter diving opportunities. Deep fjords and inlets along the Sunshine Coast offer pristine cold-water diving. The waters of Skookumchuck Narrows at the entrance of Sechelt Inlet are highly rated by diving magazines and the Cousteau Society.

More research needs to be conducted to understand the need and behaviours of winter divers.



### Owners of Second Home

The Sunshine Coast has been welcoming more and more owners of second homes. These owners could discover what the Coast has to offer in terms of tourism products and experiences – day trips, culinary, etc.

More research needs to be done on the medium- to long-term potential of this travel segment. Additionally, it would require significant time, effort and funding to attract this segment to Sunshine Coast.



### Travellers with Pets

Traveling with pets is becoming more and more popular, especially post-Covid as many welcomed a new pet since March 2020.

More research needs to be conducted to identify all pet-friendly accommodations, trails, etc. on the Sunshine Coast.



# Supporting Initiatives



Andrew Strain for Sunshine Coast Tourism

FOCUS IS ON SUPPORTING INITIATIVES TO FACILITATE IDENTIFIED PRIORITY LEAD OPPORTUNITIES.

# Trail Itineraries

PRODUCT & EXPERIENCES	ENABLING ENVIRONMENT	INFRASTRUCTURE	TARGET MARKETS	CHANNELS	MARKETING & PR
<p>Inventory market-ready products and experiences that are part of trail itineraries or that could potentially be included to existing or new itineraries</p> <p>Support creation of thematic trails Develop packages and itineraries</p>	Communicate prioritization of trail itineraries to key stakeholders and community	None	Conduct market research to identify and define target markets that trail itineraries would appeal to the most	Work with tour operators and travel agencies (including Online Travel Agencies) to promote Sunshine Coast' trail itineraries	Create 1-2 campaigns to promote to identified target markets

OPPORTUNITY CATEGORY	SUPPORTING INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION
Products & Experiences	Inventory market-ready products and experiences that are part of trail itineraries or that could potentially be included to existing or new itineraries	Develop an inventory of existing products and experiences that are part of trail itineraries or that could potentially be included in existing or new itineraries, and that are open for the Winter/Shoulder season
	Support creation of thematic trails	Based on inventory of existing products and experiences that are part of trail itineraries, identify possible opportunities to expand and add more thematic trails  Work with economic development and small business development authorities to support focus on development of new trail itineraries
	Develop packages and itineraries	Once a comprehensive understanding of products and experience part of trail itineraries is complete, develop packages that cater to identified target market needs (see “Target Markets” initiative)
Enabling Environment	Communicate prioritization of trail itineraries to key stakeholders and community	Communicate the Sunshine Coast’ Winter/Shoulder tourism strategy with all key stakeholders  Communicate the Winter/Shoulder trail itineraries offering with relevant stakeholders to ensure alignment with their products and experiences
Target Markets	Conduct market research to identify and define target markets that trail itineraries would appeal to the most	Conduct research to identify potential target markets, to determine interest and needs in trail itineraries in Winter/Shoulder season
Channels	Work with tour operators and travel agencies (including Online Travel Agencies) to promote Sunshine Coast’ trail itineraries	Identify tour operators who may be a good conduit to promote the different trail itineraries experiences, packages to target markets  Connect with tour operators to promote trail itineraries open during Winter/Shoulder season
Marketing & PR	Create 1-2 campaigns to promote to identified target markets	Leveraging insight from the “Target Markets” initiatives, develop 1-2 campaigns focusing on trail itineraries in the Winter/Shoulder season



FOCUS IS ON SUPPORTING INITIATIVES TO FACILITATE IDENTIFIED PRIORITY LEAD OPPORTUNITIES.

# Authentic BC\*

PRODUCT & EXPERIENCES	ENABLING ENVIRONMENT	INFRASTRUCTURE	TARGET MARKETS	CHANNELS	MARKETING & PR
<p>Inventory related products and experiences and identify possible gaps</p> <p>Support creation of additional attractions to address gaps</p> <p>Develop packages and itineraries</p>	<p>Communicate prioritization of the “Authentic BC” brand to key stakeholders and community</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Conduct market research to identify and define target markets</p>	<p>Work with select tour operators and travel agencies (including Online Travel Agencies) to sell products and experiences related to the “Authentic BC” brand</p>	<p>Create 1-2 campaigns to promote to identified target markets</p>

\*Community first – we are communities that welcome visitors

OPPORTUNITY CATEGORY	SUPPORTING INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION
Products & Experiences	Inventory related products and experiences and identify possible gaps	<p>Develop an inventory of existing “Authentic BC” brand-related products and experiences, especially for the Winter/Shoulder season</p> <p>Includes identification of complementary assets like lodging, culinary and other attractions</p>
	Support creation of additional attractions to address gaps	<p>Based on the inventory of existing “Authentic BC” brand-related products and experiences that can be leveraged for the Winter/Shoulder season, identify possible gaps for a holistic experience</p> <p>Work with economic development and small business development authorities to support focus on development of the “Authentic BC” brand-related products and experiences</p>
	Develop packages and itineraries	<p>Once a comprehensive understanding of the “Authentic BC” brand-related products and experience that can be leveraged for the Winter/Shoulder season is completed, develop packages and itineraries that cater to identified target market needs (see “Target Markets” initiative)</p>
Enabling Environment	Communicate prioritization of the “Authentic BC” brand to key stakeholders and community	<p>Communicate the Sunshine Coast’ Winter/Shoulder tourism strategy with all key stakeholders</p> <p>Communicate the Winter/Shoulder “Authentic BC” brand-related offering with relevant stakeholders to ensure alignment with their products and experiences</p>
Target Markets	Conduct market research to identify and define target markets	<p>Conduct research to identify potential target markets, to determine interest and needs with the “Authentic BC” brand in the Winter/Shoulder season</p>
Channels	Work with select tour operators and travel agencies (including Online Travel Agencies) to sell products and experiences related to the Authentic BC brand	<p>Identify tour operators who may be a good conduit to promote the “Authentic BC” Winter/Shoulder packages to target markets</p> <p>Connect with tour operators to promote Winter/Shoulder the “Authentic BC” brand-related products and experiences</p>
Marketing & PR	Create 1-2 campaigns to promote to identified target markets	<p>Leveraging insight from the “Target Markets” initiatives, develop 1-2 campaigns focusing on the “Authentic BC” brand in the Winter/Shoulder season</p>





FOCUS IS ON SUPPORTING INITIATIVES TO FACILITATE IDENTIFIED PRIORITY LEAD OPPORTUNITIES.

# Small Group

PRODUCT & EXPERIENCES	ENABLING ENVIRONMENT	INFRASTRUCTURE	TARGET MARKETS	CHANNELS	MARKETING & PR
<p>Inventory products and experiences that appeal to the small group market</p> <p>Support creation of additional attractions to address gaps</p> <p>Develop packages and itineraries</p>	<p>Communicate prioritization of the small group market to key stakeholders and community</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Conduct market research to identify and define target markets</p>	<p>Work with select tour operators and travel agencies (including Online Travel Agencies) to sell products and experiences</p>	<p>Create 1-2 campaigns to promote to identified target markets</p>

OPPORTUNITY CATEGORY	SUPPORTING INITIATIVE	DESCRIPTION
Products & Experiences	Inventory products and experiences that appeal to the small group market	<p>Conduct an inventory of existing products and experiences that may appeal to the small group market based on target market needs (see “Target Markets” initiative), especially for the Winter/Shoulder season</p> <p>Includes identification of assets like lodging, culinary and other attractions</p>
	Support creation of additional attractions to address gaps	<p>Based on the inventory of existing products and experiences that would incite regional travel for the Winter/Shoulder season, identify possible gaps for a holistic experience</p> <p>Work with economic development and small business development authorities to support development of new products and experiences focused on the small group market</p>
	Develop packages and itineraries	Once a comprehensive understanding of products and experiences that can incite regional markets for the Winter/Shoulder season is completed, develop packages and itineraries that cater to identified target market needs (see “Target Markets” initiative)
Enabling Environment	Communicate prioritization of the small group market to key stakeholders and community	<p>Communicate the Sunshine Coast’ Winter/Shoulder tourism strategy with all key stakeholders</p> <p>Communicate the focus on the small group market for the Winter/Shoulder with relevant stakeholders to ensure alignment with the small group market products and experiences</p>
Target Markets	Conduct market research to identify and define target markets	Conduct research to identify potential target markets, to determine small group market interest and needs in the Winter/Shoulder season
Channels	Work with select tour operators and travel agencies (including Online Travel Agencies) to sell products and experiences	<p>Identify tour operators who may be a good conduit to promote developed Winter/Shoulder packages to small group markets</p> <p>Connect with tour operators to promote Winter/Shoulder products and experiences to target small group markets</p>
Marketing & PR	Create 1-2 campaigns to promote to identified target markets	Leveraging insight from the “Target Markets” initiatives, develop 1-2 campaigns focusing on the “Authentic BC” brand in the Winter/Shoulder season



# Thank You



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