

District of Sooke

2026 One-Year Tactical Plan

DESIGNATED RECIPIENT: District of Sooke

DESIGNATED ACCOMMODATION AREA: District of Sooke

DATE PREPARED: March 25, 2025 MRDT REPEAL DATE:

N/A

FIVE YEAR PERIOD: 2026 to 2031

Section 1: Overview and Update to Five-Year Strategic Business Plan

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Mission: To advance responsible tourism in the Sooke region by fostering authentic Indigenous partnerships, supporting sustainable local enterprises, and creating enriching visitor experiences that protect our natural environment while strengthening community resilience and economic vitality.

Vision: To be a premier year-round destination where tourism enriches community well-being, honours Indigenous heritage, and protects our natural wonders from rainforest to sea, creating meaningful connections between visitors and locals who share a deep commitment to stewarding this special place for generations to come.

Anticipated Challenges

As we continue to promote Sooke's unique offerings, we must identify and address potential hurdles such as accommodation shortages, transportation limitations and workforce constraints that could impact our ability to attract and retain visitors.

- **Accommodation Shortages:** The Sooke region is grappling with a significant shortage of tourism accommodations, both in terms of quality and quantity, which has been exacerbated by the loss of short-term rental options due to recent provincial regulations. These short-term rentals previously played a crucial role in providing flexible and diverse lodging choices for visitors, particularly during peak and off-peak seasons. With their reduction, stakeholders feel the region's ability to accommodate the growing number of travelers has been impacted.
- **Economic Uncertainty and Consumer Behaviours:** With inflation and economic uncertainty affecting consumer spending, visitors have become more price-sensitive and have less disposable income for leisure travel. The marketing approach will need to be adaptive, potentially promoting affordability of the region while still highlighting its unique, high-quality experiences. Encouraging longer stays and higher spending per visitor will be more challenging under the current economic conditions.
- **Transportation Limitations:** Transportation limitations present a significant marketing challenge for Sooke, affecting both the ease of reaching the region and the ability to explore it once visitors arrive. The lack of public transportation options within and to the Sooke region from nearby communities can make it difficult for travelers to access different parts of the area, particularly the more secluded towns and attractions. This challenge is compounded by ongoing issues with BC Ferries, which often faces delays and limited capacity, making it difficult for visitors coming from the mainland to plan their trips with confidence. Additionally, ongoing challenges with major airlines, such as limited flight availability and high costs, further hinder accessibility for travelers from other regions or countries.
- **Workforce Housing and Staff Shortages:** The ongoing challenges of workforce housing and staff shortages continue to affect local businesses, particularly during off-peak seasons. Efforts to boost visitation during shoulder seasons may face difficulties if businesses cannot fulfill their hours or services due to staff shortages.
- **Digital Readiness Among Stakeholders:** A lack of digital readiness among some local stakeholders remains a challenge, affecting the quality and consistency of user-generated content (UGC). This could hinder Sooke's ability to compete with other destinations that are more digitally advanced and connected.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Maintaining strong relationships and collaboration between local businesses, Indigenous communities, tourism partners and local government is essential for cohesive branding and marketing strategies. Ensuring that all parties are aligned can be complex and time-consuming.

- **Lack of Awareness and Highway Appeal:** Despite the welcoming nature of the towns within Sooke, the area is not immediately inviting or easily recognizable from the highway. This can make it difficult for potential visitors to find and access the charming communities that make up the region. The towns are tucked away, and without clear, inviting signage or well-known landmarks, travelers may pass by without realizing the rich experiences that await them just off the main roads.

KEY LEARNINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

As Sooke launches its inaugural Municipal and Regional District Tax program in 2026, no historical MRDT collection data exists. Comprehensive performance metrics and key learnings will be established through systematic data collection and analysis throughout this initial implementation year.

Key learnings from current tourism research and data are as follows:

- Sooke attracts a mix of day visitors and overnight guests, with 18% of Sooke Night Market visitors being tourists or day-trippers, demonstrating a foundation for growth.
- Natural environment and outdoor recreational opportunities are Sooke's primary attractions, with visitors specifically valuing its uncrowded oceanside experience.
- The Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market segment provides crucial year-round visitation, helping to address seasonality challenges.
- Current tourism patterns show high summer demand that exceeds capacity, highlighting the need for infrastructure development and shoulder/off-season programming.
- Post-COVID visitor trends indicate increased interest in outdoor activities, authentic experiences, and community engagement, with 46% of market visitors spending significant time socializing at local events.
- The destination faces challenges including limited peak-season accommodation, underdeveloped transportation options for car-free tourists, and insufficient indoor attractions for inclement weather.
- High visitor satisfaction rates (84% perceiving good value) suggest strong potential for sustainable tourism growth through diversified offerings in sports, culinary, Indigenous, arts/culture, and MICE tourism.

OVERALL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Strengthen Organizational Capacity and Governance

Establish a robust operational framework through the District of Sooke's management of MRDT funds, ensuring effective program delivery, sustainable funding administration, and strategic oversight of tourism development initiatives. This will be achieved through professional staff development, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and structured financial management aligned with MRDT program requirements. **Objectives:**

- Develop comprehensive operational procedures and staff training programs to enhance the District's capacity to manage MRDT funds and tourism development initiatives effectively.
- Establish an advisory committee structure that facilitates meaningful industry input while maintaining clear operational protocols between District staff, contracted support, and tourism stakeholders.

Targets

- Establish and implement MRDT management procedures and complete staff training within the first year of implementation.
- Create an advisory committee with documented terms of reference and establish quarterly meetings between District staff, contracted support, and industry representatives to ensure aligned strategic execution.

Goal 2: Develop Sooke's Brand Position and Year Round Engagement Strategy

Clearly define Sooke's unique market position as the premier gateway to rugged West Coast adventure, while elevating its profile as a leading coastal community for immersive nature and cultural experiences. This will be achieved through strategic digital storytelling, targeted marketing, and partnerships that boost awareness, drive visitation, and foster year-round traveler engagement.

Objectives

- Define and unify the Sooke brand presence across all digital channels (website, social media, e-newsletters) to communicate sustainability, Indigenous heritage and immersive experiences, ensuring alignment with ongoing destination development initiatives.
- Increase overall visitation from key markets by highlighting Sooke's unique brand positioning and responsible tourism approach, in support of region-wide improvements to visitor amenities and community well-being.
- Expand digital reach through targeted storytelling that reflects and reinforces Sooke's destination development priorities, focusing on Indigenous heritage, natural assets and year-round outdoor activities.

Targets

- Boost shoulder and off-peak season bookings by 5% annually through marketing promotions.
- Increase brand awareness within target markets by 5% per year, as measured by online sentiment.
- Grow social media engagement (likes, shares, comments) by 30% within two years and maintain 10% annual growth thereafter.

Goal 3: Visitor Services and Visitor Experience Development

Strengthen Sooke's visitor services infrastructure and develop compelling tourism experiences that showcase the destination's unique offerings, supported by Destination BC resources and industry partnerships. This integrated approach will focus on creating seamless visitor journeys, innovative experience packages, and enhanced service delivery that meets evolving traveler expectations while supporting local tourism stakeholders. **Objectives:**

- Enhance visitor services delivery through improved digital and in-person touchpoints, professional development programs, and coordinated information networks that ensure consistent, high-quality assistance throughout the visitor journey.
- Develop and promote innovative experience packages that combine Sooke's natural, cultural, and culinary assets, leveraging DBC's support to create marketable products that differentiate the destination.
- Strengthen industry capacity through targeted training, mentorship, and resource sharing that enables tourism operators to deliver exceptional experiences aligned with Sooke's brand promise.

Targets

- Achieve 90% visitor satisfaction rating for information services by 2031, and measure through standardized quarterly visitor surveys and online review platforms.
- Launch and maintain successful operation of 5 new tourism experience packages/ itineraries by 2028, with at least 2 packages/ itineraries focused on Indigenous tourism, 2 on shoulder season activities and 1 focused on agritourism or culinary tourism, achieving minimum 65% occupancy rates.

- Train and certify 75% of front-line tourism staff in visitor service excellence by 2031, and track through standardized certification databases.

Goal 4: Strengthen Regional Partnerships and Collaboration

Foster strategic partnerships and meaningful community engagement to create a unified, resilient tourism ecosystem that enhances Sooke's destination value proposition. This collaborative approach will focus on aligning regional tourism initiatives, sharing resources, and ensuring tourism development benefits the broader community while preserving local values and assets.

Objectives

- Establish and maintain active partnerships with key regional tourism stakeholders, Indigenous communities, and industry organizations to create integrated visitor experiences and marketing initiatives that amplify Sooke's tourism offerings and extend visitor reach.
- Implementing a comprehensive community engagement approach that ensures local residents, businesses, arts and cultural groups have meaningful input in tourism development decisions, leading to better-aligned tourism initiatives and stronger community support.

Targets

- Establish 3 new strategic partnership agreements by 2031, with at least 1 focused on Indigenous tourism development, maintaining an 80% partnership satisfaction rate and measure through annual stakeholder surveys.
- Achieve 75% community support for tourism initiatives by 2031, as measured through biannual resident surveys and structured community feedback sessions, with a minimum response rate of 25% of local population.

Goal 5: Advance Sustainable Tourism Initiatives

Implement comprehensive environmental stewardship and emergency preparedness measures that ensure Sooke's tourism sector operates sustainably while protecting its natural assets and community safety. This proactive approach will integrate climate action strategies and robust emergency response protocols to create a resilient destination that sets industry standards for responsible tourism management.

Objectives

- Implement the integrated Climate Action Plan for tourism operations that reduces the sector's environmental impact through measurable carbon reduction initiatives, waste management programs, and sustainable business practices, while engaging visitors in conservation efforts.
- Establish a comprehensive Emergency Preparedness and Response Framework specific to tourism activities that ensures visitor safety, protects natural assets, and maintains business continuity during environmental, weather-related, or other emergency events.

Targets

- Reduce tourism-related carbon emissions by 25% by 2031 by establishing 2025 baseline levels, through implementation of measurable sustainability initiatives including waste reduction, green, active and accessible transportation programs and destination certification.
- Achieve 75% compliance rate with emergency preparedness protocols among tourism businesses by 2031, including completion of annual emergency response training and maintenance of updated emergency plans.

STRATEGIES

- **Develop and Maintain a Unified Brand Identity:** A unified brand identity helps solidify Sooke's positioning in the minds of visitors and stakeholders, tying all promotional and destination development efforts together. Key activities might include the development of a comprehensive brand style guide and messaging framework.
- **Foster Strategic Partnerships for Enhanced Storytelling:** Partnerships broaden the reach and authenticity of Sooke's marketing, reinforce development initiatives and support cultural preservation and community well-being. Key activities might include collaboration with Indigenous communities, local artisans, tour operators and regional tourism partners to capture and create compelling stories.
- **Strengthen Digital Infrastructure and Outreach:** Robust digital infrastructure underpins modern travel planning and booking behaviors, ensuring that marketing aligns with and supports new visitor services, experience packaging, and destination enhancements. Key activities might include prioritizing ongoing improvements to Sooke's digital platforms (website, social media, email marketing, destination apps) to deliver engaging, user-friendly content.
- **Enhance Mobile and In-Person Visitor Services:** Strategically positioned mobile visitor kiosks and well-trained seasonal staff ensure consistent, high-quality visitor information delivery during peak periods while maintaining cost efficiency. Key activities might include procuring mobile kiosk units, developing deployment schedules based on visitor flow patterns, and establishing standard operating procedures for kiosk management.
- **Develop Collaborative Visitor Information Tools and Content:** Create a partnership between Sooke Regional Tourism Association and Sooke Mirror News to develop comprehensive visitor guides and information materials that align with Sooke's brand identity and deliver consistent messaging to enhance the visitor experience. Key activities include establishing a formal collaboration agreement defining shared ownership and responsibilities, jointly modernizing guide design and content to reflect current offerings, incorporating QR codes for digital integration, ensuring materials highlight sustainable tourism practices, and creating value-added opportunities that benefit both organizations through shared resources and cross-promotion.
- **Implement Comprehensive Visitor Intelligence Systems:** Data-driven decision making requires robust tracking and feedback mechanisms to understand visitor patterns, community sentiment, and service effectiveness. Key activities might include deploying visitor counting systems at key attractions, conducting regular resident sentiment surveys, establishing standardized feedback collection methods, and creating automated reporting dashboards for stakeholder insights.
- **Strengthen Tourism Development and Stewardship Framework:** Establish a robust operational structure through the District of Sooke's management of MRDT funds, ensuring effective program delivery and strategic oversight. Key activities might include engaging professionals to conduct governance training sessions for staff and advisory committee members, implementing standardized financial review procedures aligned with MRDT requirements, and developing comprehensive operational manuals defining roles and responsibilities.
- **Establish Collaborative Tourism Advisory Structure:** Create a balanced system that facilitates meaningful industry input while maintaining clear protocols between District staff, contracted support, and tourism stakeholders. Key activities might include forming a tourism advisory committee with diverse industry

representation, providing detailed recruitment packages highlighting advisory roles and commitment expectations, and implementing regular performance assessment procedures for continuous improvement.

- **Establish Strategic Regional Collaboration Framework:** A structured approach to partnership development strengthens Sooke's position within the regional tourism ecosystem while maximizing resource efficiency and visitor reach through initiatives like the Juan de Fuca Tourism Corridor Strategy. Key activities might include creating partnership evaluation criteria, developing formal collaboration agreements with local Indigenous Communities, establishing regular regional stakeholder meetings, and aligning local initiatives with Destination British Columbia & Destination Canada priorities.
- **Foster Active Industry Network Development:** Regular engagement opportunities strengthen relationships between local residents and regional tourism stakeholders, leading to enhanced cooperation, knowledge sharing, and collaborative project development. Key activities might include organizing bi-annual industry networking events, facilitating themed workshops focused on regional tourism initiatives, and establishing mentorship programs between experienced and emerging indigenous and non-indigenous tourism operators.
- **Advance Climate Action and Destination Certification:** Implement climate action initiatives and pursue formal sustainability certifications to establish District of Sooke as a leader in responsible tourism. Key activities might include moving forward the Climate Action Plan, exploring Biosphere Certification, establishing a carbon offset program, and creating measurement tools for tourism operators.
- **Strengthen Emergency Preparedness and Communication:** Under the leadership of the District of Sooke, collaborate in the development of coordinated emergency protocols and crisis management systems to ensure visitor safety and business resilience. Key activities might include implementing emergency response training, creating a crisis communication plan, establishing notification systems, and maintaining stakeholder emergency contacts.

TARGET MARKETS

The primary focus is on mature, affluent travelers (30+), seeking cultural immersion and eco-conscious experiences, while the secondary audience includes younger, adventurous Free Spirits and those drawn to high-energy outdoor activities. Both groups appreciate Sooke's dual identity as a gateway to the Juan de Fuca wilderness and the cultural vibrancy of Victoria.

Primary Audience

Rejuvenators, Authentic Experiencers, and Cultural Explorers

- Profile: Affluent, frequent travelers aged 30+, often couples or small groups, seeking to immerse themselves in local culture and nature.
- Geographic Locations:
 - Lower Mainland, BC
 - Central and Southern Vancouver island
- Activity Interests:
 - Outdoor adventures (hiking, kayaking, wildlife viewing, fishing, surfing)

- Cultural activities (Indigenous experiences, art galleries, museums) ○ Culinary tourism (spirit, brewery, and farm tours)

Cultural Explorers and Nature Enthusiasts

- Profile: Well-educated, middle-to-high income travelers aged 35–65, often families or couples focused on cultural enrichment and eco-tourism.
- Geographic Locations:
 - British Columbia
 - Alberta ○ Washington State ●

Activity Interests:

- Indigenous heritage experiences
- Guided cultural tours and interpretive programs
- Sustainable and eco-friendly travel activities

Secondary Audience

Free Spirits

- Profile: Younger travelers in their 20s and early 30s, seeking high-energy, spontaneous travel experiences. Often traveling solo, as couples, or in small groups.
- Geographic Locations:
 - Lower Mainland, BC
 - Central and Southern Vancouver island ●
- Activity Interests:
 - High-adventure outdoor activities (hiking, kayaking, camping, fishing, surfing) ○ Vibrant culinary and cultural scenes

Adventure Seekers

- Profile: Adults aged 25–45 with a preference for rugged, remote landscapes and adventure-based travel. Typically value-driven travelers seeking flexible itineraries.
- Geographic Locations:
 - British Columbia
 - Alberta ○ Washington State ●

Activity Interests:

- Backcountry hikes, kayaking trips, and wildlife encounters
- Remote camping and “bucket list” outdoor experiences

Section 2: One-Year Tactical Plan with Performance Measures

MARKETING | CONSUMER ASSET DEVELOPMENT

Sooke's authentic identity and appeal will be amplified in 2026 through strategic partnerships with community members who embody the destination's spirit and values. By fostering relationships with locals, Indigenous

communities, artisans, and regional partners, we will create compelling content assets that showcase genuine experiences and stories unique to Sooke. These partnerships will not only broaden our marketing reach but also support cultural preservation and community well-being.

Our storytelling approach will focus on capturing the human connections that make Sooke special, highlighting local expertise, traditional knowledge, and the intimate relationship between the community and its natural surroundings. These narratives will create emotional connections with potential visitors while reinforcing our destination development initiatives.

Tactics

Photography Content	Establish respectful and meaningful relationships with T'Sou-ke First Nation and other Indigenous communities to capture authentic imagery that represents their culture, history, and connection to the land and sea. Conduct photography sessions with local artisans and producers in their workspaces to document authentic behind-the-scenes moments of their creative processes. Create seasonal photo collections featuring local guides and experience providers showcasing Sooke's diverse landscapes, wildlife, and outdoor adventures. Produce high-quality food and culinary photography featuring local ingredients, dishes, and the people who create them.
Video Content	Develop a series of video profiles featuring Indigenous knowledge keepers sharing stories about traditional territories, sustainable harvesting practices, and cultural significance of key locations around Sooke. Create atmospheric b-roll footage capturing Sooke's natural beauty across different seasons, times of day, and weather conditions. Film firsthand experience videos with local guides showcasing hiking trails, marine adventures, wildlife viewing, and culinary experiences from an expert perspective. Develop 30-60 second social media video clips highlighting unique aspects of Sooke's character and experiences.

Written Content	Create in-depth profiles of local Indigenous cultural leaders and their connections to traditional territories around Sooke. Develop a series of artisan and producer stories detailing the craftsmanship, inspiration, and local connections behind Sooke's makers. Write engaging features on local tour operators and experience providers that humanize the tourism experience and highlight their dedication to sustainable practices. Produce seasonal itineraries and experience guides informed by local knowledge and insider perspectives. Create a "Local Recommendations" series where community members share their favorite spots, hidden gems, and must-try experiences in their own words.
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Implementation Plan

Develop a comprehensive collection of authentic, locally-sourced content assets that showcase the true character of Sooke through the eyes and voices of those who know it best.

Quantifiable Objective	Create new high-quality, authentic content assets including video pieces (profiles, documentary shorts, and experience videos), professional photo collections, and written storytelling pieces featuring local voices. Increase engagement with content, and achieve a level of content being shared or repurposed by partners and stakeholders.
Rationale	Authentic storytelling through local partnerships creates more compelling and trustworthy destination marketing while simultaneously supporting community pride, cultural preservation, and sustainable tourism development.
Action Steps	Identify and reach out to potential storytelling partners from Indigenous communities, local businesses, and community groups. Develop clear collaboration frameworks including appropriate compensation, content usage rights, and cultural protocols. Schedule a series of content creation sessions throughout the year to capture seasonal variety and different aspects of Sooke's character. Create a content calendar coordinating storytelling themes with broader marketing initiatives and seasonal campaigns. Hire professional photographers and videographers with experience in documentary-style storytelling to ensure high-quality asset production. Establish a digital asset management system to organize, tag, and make accessible all created content for marketing use. Implement a recognition program that acknowledges community contributions to Sooke's destination storytelling.
Potential Partnerships	T'Sou-ke First Nation; Sooke Region Museum for historical context and community connections; Local artists, craftspeople, and food producers; Tour operators and experience providers; tourism partners, including Destination Greater Victoria, 4TVI, Destination BC

Resources	Content Creators, T'Sou-ke First Nation Community Members, tourism businesses and operators, digital asset management tools, content creators, etc.
Sources of Funding	MRDT, Destination BC Co-op Dollars, Indigenous Tourism BC partnership funds
Timeframe	Ongoing throughout 2026
Budget	\$40,000
Performance Measures	Number and quality of content assets created featuring local voices and perspectives Engagement metrics for locally-sourced content compared to generic destination content Number of local partners and community members actively participating in storytelling initiatives Increases in website traffic and social media engagement when featuring local storytelling content Feedback from featured community members regarding accuracy and authenticity of representation Adoption and sharing of content by stakeholders and regional tourism partners Growth in visitor awareness and interest in authentic local experiences and Indigenous tourism offerings

MARKETING | WEBSITE

Sooke’s website will continue to undergo enhancements in 2025 to align with our broader objectives of increasing visitation, promoting off-season travel, and enhancing stakeholder collaboration. These updates will focus on optimizing user experience and functionality, ensuring the website serves as a comprehensive and engaging portal for both potential visitors and local stakeholders.

Key updates will include content enhancement and optimization, cross promotion of stakeholder content, enhanced stakeholder resources and user experience improvements. To further align with our objectives, the website will emphasize responsible travel and sustainability through dedicated content and resources. We will also prioritize the inclusion of market-ready products, promoting them prominently across the site to attract both domestic and international visitors. These enhancements will not only improve content depth but also support our broader goals of strengthening stakeholder collaboration and promoting the unique offerings of the Sooke region in a cohesive, impactful manner.

Tactics

Content Enhancement and Optimization	Conduct quarterly content audits to ensure that all information on the site is up-to-date, relevant, and aligned with current marketing objectives. This includes updating seasonal content, ensuring accurate event listings, and refreshing visuals as needed. Increase the depth of content on lesser-known areas and attractions within the Sooke region. Develop articles, guides, and multimedia content that highlight unique local experiences, including seasonal activities and off-peak travel opportunities. Create dedicated sections of the website focused on sustainable tourism practices, including responsible travel tips, eco-friendly accommodations, and activities that support local conservation efforts. Feature stories on local businesses that prioritize sustainability and how visitors can contribute to preserving the region's natural beauty.
Cross- Promotion of Stakeholder Content	Collaborate with local businesses to feature their content on the website, such as blog posts, special offers, and guest articles. This enhances the site's content while strengthening ties with stakeholders and promotes a wider range of regional offerings.
	Implement a regular stakeholder spotlight program to highlight local businesses and experiences on the website and through social media channels.

Expansion of Stakeholder Portal	Develop a dedicated section on the website with resources for local tourism businesses, including marketing materials, training resources, and collaboration opportunities. Create streamlined processes for stakeholders to submit and update their listing information, events, and special offers.
User Experience Improvements	Update the website's design and functionality to ensure a seamless, intuitive, and accessible user experience, including faster load times, responsive design, and accessibility features. Implement improved navigation and search functionality to help visitors quickly find relevant information and plan their trips.

Implementation Plan

Continue to enrich the website to better showcase the region's unique offerings and facilitate user engagement and conversion to stakeholder activities and bookings.	
Quantifiable Objective	Increase average time on site by enhancing content quality and interactivity, grow the number of referrals to stakeholder websites, implement user engagement metrics and boost conversions through strategically placed calls-to-action and referral links.
Rationale	Website enhancements integrate several strategic goals to optimize its effectiveness as a promotional tool while supporting Sooke's broader tourism objectives and stakeholder needs.
Action Steps	● Schedule quarterly content audits to review and update website information, ensuring it remains accurate, relevant, and aligned with strategies. ● Assign content creators to research and develop new articles, guides, and multimedia content focused on lesser-known areas, sustainable tourism, and seasonal activities.

	• Work with local sustainability experts to create content that aligns with Sooke's values, including responsible travel tips and eco-friendly business profiles. • Set up meetings with local businesses to discuss opportunities for cross-promotion and content contributions. Establish guidelines for content submission. • Work with marketing and design teams to ensure that high-priority products are featured prominently on the website. • Optimize website architecture for speed, responsiveness, and search engine visibility. • Leverage Google analytics tools to monitor user behavior and adjust strategies accordingly.
Potential Partnerships	Local tourism operators, cultural groups, and event organizers. Tech firms for web development and interactive tools integration.
Resources	Creative and web development agency, marketing and content creation teams, technology tools for itinerary building and interactive mapping.
Sources of Funding	MRDT, Destination BC Co-op Dollars.
Timeframe	Ongoing, with major updates by Q3 2026.
Budget	\$20,000
Performance Measures	• Track enhancements made to the website (new features, content updates) • Monitor the implementation of interactive tools like events calendar • Analyze improvements in user engagement metrics (time on site, page views) • Evaluate increases in referrals to local businesses and stakeholder websites • Review user feedback and conduct surveys to gauge satisfaction with the new features and content • Measure growth in stakeholder participation and content contributions

MARKETING | BRAND DEVELOPMENT

Sooke currently lacks a cohesive brand identity that effectively communicates its unique value proposition to visitors and stakeholders. While the region boasts stunning natural landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and diverse recreational opportunities, these assets are not being presented under a unified brand narrative. A fragmented approach to marketing and promotion has resulted in missed opportunities to differentiate Sooke from competing destinations and to create meaningful connections with target audiences. Developing a comprehensive brand identity will serve as the foundation for all future tourism initiatives, ensuring consistency across touchpoints and strengthening Sooke's position in the competitive tourism landscape.

Tactics

Brand Style Guide	Create a comprehensive Brand Style Guide that codifies visual elements, messaging frameworks, and application guidelines across all platforms and touchpoints.
Brand Asset Management System	Develop a digital Brand Asset Management system that provides stakeholders with easy access to approved brand materials, templates, and guidelines.

Implementation Plan

Quantifiable Objective	Increase brand recognition and positive perception of Sooke, among target markets of brand launch, as measured through pre- and post-implementation surveys.
Rationale	A unified brand identity is essential for creating a distinct and memorable impression in the minds of potential visitors. Destinations with cohesive branding experience higher visitor engagement and have greater likelihood of repeat visits compared to those with inconsistent branding. By developing a clear brand architecture that authentically represents Sooke's unique offerings and values, we can differentiate the destination from competitors, create emotional connections with visitors, and ensure consistency across all marketing efforts. This foundation will maximize the effectiveness of all tourism initiatives and marketing investments by creating a recognizable, trusted destination brand that resonates with target audiences.
Action Steps	• Conduct stakeholder interviews, community surveys, and visitor focus groups. Perform competitive analysis of similar destinations. Analyze existing perceptions and associations with Sooke

	• Define brand positioning, personality, values, and promise. Develop core messaging frameworks and value propositions. Create brand story and narrative guidelines • Design logo, color palette, typography, and imagery guidelines. Create branded templates for various applications. Develop brand application examples • Compile all visual and messaging elements into a comprehensive guide. Include usage rules, do's and don'ts, and implementation guidelines. Create digital and print versions for easy reference • Create space for accessing brand materials. Create user guidelines and permissions structure. Upload and organize all brand assets • Monitor brand compliance and usage. Gather feedback and make refinements as needed. Measure performance against objectives
Potential Partnerships	Local tourism businesses, cultural organizations and community event planners, influencers and content creators within the region.
Resources	Dedicated social media team or agency.
Sources of Funding	MRDT
Timeframe	12 months for development and launch, with ongoing management thereafter
Budget	\$25,000
Performance Measures	• Monitor brand recognition and perception through pre/post implementation surveys, tracking usage and consistency across all the materials. • Assess brand engagement through digital analytics including brand asset downloads, social media hashtag usage, and website traffic patterns to destination pages featuring branded content.

MARKETING | COLLATERAL PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION

In an increasingly digital world, the value of tangible, printed collateral remains undiminished, offering a unique and enduring way for visitors to engage with their surroundings. The Sooke Region Tourism Association recognizes the importance of providing printed guides, maps and itineraries that serve as reliable and accessible resources for tourists and residents alike. These materials complement digital strategies by ensuring that information is readily available without total reliance on smartphones or internet access. Through partnership with Sooke Mirror News, SRTA aims to develop comprehensive visitor materials that showcase Sooke's unique offerings while maximizing resources and expanding distribution channels.

Tactics

Sooke Visitor Guide	Review and refresh the Sooke Visitor Guide in partnership with Sooke Mirror News, featuring updated information, new imagery and content that aligns with the 2025 marketing goals. Ongoing distribution of printed collateral supports brand awareness, trip-planning and contributes to the purchase cycle.
Seasonal Experience Brochures	A series of compact pamphlets, each dedicated to a different season in Sooke, highlighting seasonal events, activities and attractions that can be produced cost-effectively.

Implementation Plan

Collaborate with Sooke Mirror News to develop essential printed collateral such as vacation guides, maps and themed itineraries to enhance visitor servicing and provide valuable information to tourists and residents, facilitating their exploration of Sooke.	
Quantifiable Objective	Increase the distribution reach of printed materials through the Sooke Mirror News partnership and track engagement through QR code scans leading to website visits.
Rationale	This partnership approach maximizes the limited budget while ensuring high-quality materials that support strategic objectives by promoting key aspects of Sooke and providing valuable resources that enhance the visitor experience, encourage longer stays and foster a deeper connection with the region.

Action Steps	● Establish formal collaboration agreement with Sooke Mirror News defining shared ownership, content development responsibilities, and distribution channels. ● Work with businesses, stakeholders and visitor centers to identify which print pieces provide the most value within budget constraints. ● Jointly modernize guide design and content to reflect current offerings and Sooke's brand identity. ● Design and produce materials collaboratively, leveraging Sooke Mirror News' existing production resources. ● Incorporate QR codes to bridge the gap between print and digital, directing users to further relevant online resources. ● Ensure all materials highlight sustainable tourism practices and responsible visitor behaviors. ● Distribute materials through visitor centers, BC Ferries, local accommodations and other stakeholders.
Potential Partnerships	Sooke Mirror News , Local community groups and cultural organizations, Tourism operators, Visitor center, T'Sou-ke First Nation
Resources	Templates and content from previous guides, digital assets from the brand update and website, stakeholder input.
Sources of Funding	MRDT, Destination BC Co-op Dollars.
Timeframe	Q1 of 2026; Ongoing distribution thereafter
Budget	\$20,000
Performance Measures	● Track the number and location of distributed print materials through partnership with Sooke Mirror News. ● Measure how visitors use the print collateral and gather their feedback on its usefulness and appeal. ● Use analytics tools to monitor scans of QR codes, tracking subsequent actions such as website visits, page views, or specific conversions like newsletter sign-ups. ● Evaluate the effectiveness of the partnership with Sooke Mirror News in terms of resource sharing, cost efficiency, and expanded distribution.

MARKETING | MEDIA ADVERTISING & PRODUCTION

As Sooke launches its first Municipal and Regional District Tax program, a strategic multi-channel media approach is essential to build destination awareness and drive visitation. Our marketing strategy will focus on reaching high-value visitors through diverse advertising channels, delivering compelling content that showcases Sooke's unique offerings while adapting messaging seasonally to maximize impact. This approach ensures consistent market presence year-round while highlighting seasonal attractions and experiences. With carefully targeted media placements and performance-driven campaigns, we aim to increase destination awareness, stimulate visitor interest, and generate measurable returns on our marketing investments throughout the initial MRDT implementation year.

Tactics

Print (Newspaper/ Magazine)	Utilizing regional newspapers and magazines, this involves placing advertisements that resonate with niche audiences who value content from publications in their communities. Print will target consumers likely to respond to a call to action to plan and book travel, particularly those who appreciate detailed, in-depth articles and ads in print media.
Paid Search/Search Engine Marketing	Using targeted ads on search engines to capture the attention of potential visitors at the crucial moment they are researching or planning a vacation. Paid search will help to generate immediate bookings by optimizing ad spend based on search trends and user intent, focusing on high conversion keywords related to travel and tourism.
Paid Social Media	Leveraging platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and X to run targeted ads that promote Sooke’s attractions, events and travel packages. The ads will drive engagement and conversions through compelling calls-to-action, special offers, and interactive content that promotes immediate booking and enhances brand awareness.
Display and Third-Party Advertising Partnerships (Digital)	Utilizing display ads on various digital platforms and partnering with third-party websites to place contextual ads that align with the interests of potential visitors. They aim to maximize brand awareness through widespread visibility on popular sites and blogs, targeting right-fit consumers with dynamic, visually appealing ads designed to encourage travel and exploration of the region.

Implementation Plan

Implement a year-long, multi-channel media booking strategy for Sooke with seasonal content updates to maximize budget efficiency and campaign effectiveness.

Quantifiable Objective	To increase awareness and drive visitation by delivering targeted, compelling messages that resonate with the region's key audiences. Ultimately, the media campaign will aim to attract high-value visitors and support the long-term growth and sustainability of the local tourism industry.
Rationale	Booking media on an annual basis allows for better negotiation rates and placement opportunities, ensuring continuous visibility. Seasonal content updates keep the messaging fresh and aligned with consumer interests and behaviors that vary throughout the year. Multi-channel media advertising will ensure broad coverage and targeted reach, effectively communicating Sooke's unique offerings to potential visitors.
Action Steps	• Continue to refine the visual identity and value proposition of Sooke as a destination. • Coordinate with media outlets to secure annual contracts for various advertising channels including print, television, digital, and social media. This will be done early in the year to ensure cost-effectiveness and secure prime advertising spots. • Develop a flexible content calendar that aligns with seasonal themes and promotions. This involves creating a suite of adaptable templates and core messages that can be customized easily. • Schedule and execute content updates at the start of each season. This includes updating visuals, promotional offers, and specific calls-to-action that reflect the current seasonal appeal of the Sooke region.
Potential Partnerships	Regional print publications and online publications to showcase the area's diverse offerings. Collaborate with local businesses, cultural organizations and event promoters to ensure content is reflective of Sooke's diverse offerings and upcoming events.
Resources	Dedicated marketing staff to manage paid media, advertising and campaigns.
Sources of Funding	MRDT, Destination BC Co-op Dollars, supplemented by partnerships and possibly local business contributions.
Timeframe	Q2 2026, ongoing thereafter
Budget	\$10,000

Performance Measures	● Monitor the cost-effectiveness of annual media bookings, assessing spending against reach and engagement metrics. ● Evaluate the impact of seasonal content changes through metrics such as click-through rates, conversion rates, and social media engagement specific to seasonal promotions. ● Track year-long brand visibility across all channels, measuring fluctuations and impacts based on seasonal content adjustments. ● Gather continuous feedback from stakeholders and visitors to refine and adapt content for future seasonal updates, ensuring the messaging remains dynamic and responsive to market trends and visitor feedback.
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MARKETING | SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT (ORGANIC)

Sooke will strengthen its digital infrastructure by enhancing its social media presence, leveraging user-generated content (UGC), maintaining strong engagement across its channels, and optimizing email marketing efforts. This approach underpins modern travel planning and booking behaviors, ensuring that our marketing aligns with and supports new visitor services, experience packaging, and destination enhancements. Recognizing the importance of robust digital platforms, this strategy will ensure that our digital efforts contribute to sustainable growth and deeper community engagement. Organic content will focus on:

- Showcasing sustainable practices within the Sooke community, celebrating local conservation efforts and encouraging visitors to engage in environmentally responsible behaviors while exploring the region.
- Highlighting the region's distinctive outdoor adventures, coastal experiences, culinary delights, and cultural offerings, reinforcing the authentic character of Sooke.
- Promoting a wider geographical spread of attractions throughout Sooke, including lesser-known areas and off-the-beaten-path experiences.
- Strengthening ties with local businesses, Indigenous communities, and other stakeholders through digital platforms to create and share content that reflects the true spirit of Sooke.

Tactics

Content Strategy/Calendar Development	Creation and maintenance of a detailed content calendar that outlines all planned social media and email marketing activities for the year. The content calendar serves as a tool to ensure consistency, timely posting, and alignment with overall goals and seasonal themes. It also helps coordinate campaigns, track performance, and streamlines collaboration among team members and stakeholders.
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Social Media Management	Involves the strategic management of all social media channels associated with Sooke's tourism efforts. It encompasses planning, posting, monitoring, and interacting with users to maintain an active and engaging online presence. Regular activities include scheduling posts, responding to comments, and analyzing engagement data to optimize strategies and increase overall visibility and conversion to visitor experiences.
Amplify Stakeholder Content and Events	Focuses on using social media platforms to promote and amplify content from stakeholders, such as cultural events and community activities. By sharing and highlighting diverse offerings from partners, this aims to create a cohesive community presence on social media.
Email Marketing Optimization	Enhancement of email marketing infrastructure to better segment audiences, deliver personalized content, and drive conversion to Sooke's tourism offerings. This includes developing targeted email campaigns that complement social media efforts and provide valuable planning information to potential visitors at various stages of their travel decision-making process.

Implementation Plan

Implement a comprehensive digital infrastructure strategy for Sooke that leverages user-generated content, regular engagement practices, content strategy development, and optimization of both social media and email marketing to enhance online presence and visitor engagement.	
Quantifiable Objective	Significantly enhance overall digital engagement by increasing social media engagement, growing email open rates, improving click-through rates across all platforms, and increasing referrals to stakeholder websites and booking platforms.
Rationale	A robust digital infrastructure is essential for modern tourism marketing. Using a strategic blend of planned content, user-generated content, and targeted email marketing, this approach ensures that Sooke's digital presence effectively supports visitor planning and booking behaviors while promoting the unique aspects of the region.

Action Steps	● Conduct a comprehensive audit of current digital assets and platforms to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. ● Create an integrated content calendar that strategically plans social media posts and email campaigns around key themes such as sustainability, outdoor adventures, and seasonal experiences. Ensure a balanced mix of UGC, stakeholder content, and original content. ● Refine email marketing segmentation to deliver more relevant content to subscribers based on their interests and stage in the travel planning process. ● Work closely with stakeholders to co-create content that highlights their offerings while reflecting Sooke's brand strategy. Provide guidelines and support to ensure that content is visually appealing and brand-aligned. ● Regularly collaborate with local businesses and cultural events to promote and share their content, enhancing community engagement and support.
Potential Partnerships	Local tourism businesses, outdoor adventure providers, cultural organizations, Indigenous tourism operators, regional tourism partners, and content creators within the region.
Resources	Social media management tools, dedicated social media team or agency.
Sources of Funding	MRDT, Destination BC Co-op Dollars.
Timeframe	Ongoing, with specific content updates and strategy reviews scheduled quarterly.
Budget	Content Development & Strategy: \$5,000 Organic Social Media: \$5,000 Email Marketing Platform & Campaigns: \$5,000 Total: \$15,000

Performance Measures	• Monitor the utilization, frequency, and quality of user-generated content. • Track social media engagement metrics, including likes, comments, shares, and follower growth • Measure email marketing performance through open rates, click-through rates, and conversion actions • Analyze website traffic from social media and email campaigns to understand the effectiveness of digital efforts • Evaluate increases in referrals to local businesses and stakeholder websites from digital platforms • Conduct periodic user surveys to assess the effectiveness of digital content in travel planning and booking decisions
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MARKETING | CONSUMER EVENTS AND SHOWS

Attend consumer events and shows that align with Sooke's 2025 goals of promoting sustainable tourism, broadening geographical dispersion and highlighting unique regional offerings. Focus on events that attract audiences with specific interests in outdoor adventures, culinary experiences, and cultural tourism. Shows that allow for collaboration with local businesses and Indigenous communities will be prioritized.

Tactics

Event Selection	Research and select consumer events and shows that align with Sooke's key themes, such as outdoor adventure and culinary tourism.
Establish Partnerships	Sponsor exhibit space for eligible tourism stakeholders at the Vancouver Outdoor Show. Showcase products and experiences from local stakeholders at the events, such as artisan crafts, local foods, or cultural artifacts, to give visitors a tangible taste of what Sooke has to offer.
Pre and Post Event Communication	Leverage social media, email newsletters and partner networks to promote Sooke's presence at the event ahead of time. Collect contact information from booth visitors and follow up with personalized emails or special offers.

Implementation Plan

Attend strategically selected consumer shows to directly engage with target audiences, showcase Sooke's unique offerings, and drive interest and bookings through interactive and collaborative presentations.	
Quantifiable Objective	Increase brand awareness and amplify consumer messaging to put Sooke top of mind, reaching new consumers to generate sales leads and driving conversions for specific activities and passion areas.

Rationale	Connect with highly engaged and relevant audiences who are actively seeking travel inspiration and experiences. Additionally, these events provide an opportunity to collaborate with local businesses and Indigenous communities.
Action Steps	● Research and select consumer shows that align with Sooke's target audiences. ● Secure exhibit space at selected shows. ● Develop marketing materials that highlight Sooke's unique offerings.

	● Collaborate with local businesses, Indigenous communities and cultural organizations to determine interest.
Potential Partnerships	Stakeholders.
Resources	Dedicated booth team, printers, designers, event coordinator/planner.
Sources of Funding	MRDT, Destination BC Co-op Dollars.
Timeframe	Ongoing
Budget	\$7,000
Performance Measures	● Attendance at brand aligned consumer shows. ● Number of consumer interactions. ● Newsletter sign-ups added.

MARKETING | PARTNERSHIP MARKETING

Sooke will engage in strategic partnership marketing to enhance its visibility and appeal as a destination. This approach involves collaborating with Destination BC consortiums and regional partners to promote the area's unique coastal experiences, outdoor adventures, and cultural offerings to niche markets.

Tactics

Destination BC Consortiums	Collaborate with Destination BC consortiums that align with Sooke's core experiences and strategic priorities. Focus will be placed on consortiums that showcase Sooke's coastal location, marine experiences, wildlife viewing, and outdoor recreation opportunities.
Regional Collaboration	Continued targeted partnerships like Pacific Marine Circle Route & South Island Spirit Loop to position Sooke as a key destination within the broader regional context. This approach will highlight Sooke's accessibility from Victoria while emphasizing its distinct character and experiences.

Implementation Plan

This strategic partnership marketing plan is designed to leverage existing networks and explore new opportunities that align with Sooke's unique positioning, driving both awareness and visitation through focused, collaborative marketing efforts with a limited but strategic budget.	
Quantifiable Objective	Expand partnership networks and increase collaborative promotional efforts.
Rationale	Increase reach for consumer messaging. These well-established consortiums have engaged audiences and expertise to market specific activities within a destination.
Action Steps	● Evaluate available sector investment opportunities including tactics, reach, and therefore value for investment. ● Work closely with consortium organizations to amplify priority activity-based messaging. ● Actively participate in planning conversations with tourism sectors in order to maximize exposure for the Sooke region.
Potential Partnerships	Destination BC, consortium organizations, tourism sectors and operators, local content creators.
Resources	Marketing team, partnership managers, budget for co-branded marketing initiatives.

Sources of Funding	MRDT
Timeframe	Ongoing
Budget	\$10,000
Performance Measures	• Track the number of promotional initiatives executed with each consortium. • Track established partnerships and the initiatives that result from each consortium.

DESTINATION & PRODUCTION EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT | INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING

Sooke will foster an active industry network through regular engagement opportunities that strengthen relationships between local residents and regional tourism stakeholders. This approach will enhance cooperation, knowledge sharing, and collaborative project development across the region. Ongoing engagement with stakeholders, First Nations, and community partners will ensure destination stewardship and marketing is industry-driven and aligned with community values. Stakeholder feedback will continuously improve the effectiveness of regional efforts.

Tactics

Industry Networking Events	Coordinate bi-annual tourism networking opportunities to strengthen cross-sector collaboration and provide opportunities for shared learnings on challenges and best practices. Each event will focus on specific themes relevant to seasonal tourism activities in Sooke. Hold an annual tourism industry workshop to provide an overview of the upcoming tourism season including trends, research and marketing opportunities.
Collaborative Workshops	Facilitate themed workshops focused on regional tourism initiatives, sustainable practices, and emerging market trends. These workshops will bring together diverse stakeholders to address common challenges and develop innovative solutions specific to the Sooke region's unique tourism ecosystem.
Stakeholder Engagement	Conduct quarterly stakeholder meetings and engagement sessions to ensure marketing and destination development efforts remain relevant. An annual stakeholder survey will gather feedback on marketing programs, measure satisfaction, and identify key challenges facing businesses in the Sooke area.

Stakeholder E-Newsletter	Deploy quarterly stakeholder newsletters to share updates, marketing opportunities, and industry resources. Develop a space on the website where stakeholders can access training materials, regional statistics, and collaborative opportunities.
Industry Conferences	Attend industry conferences as needed on behalf of Sooke to learn about sustainable tourism initiatives and industry updates that can be shared with our stakeholders, and to use as a networking opportunity.

Implementation Plan

The industry development tactics support the overall strategy of improving awareness for Tourism Sooke programs, increasing stakeholder involvement in cooperative marketing initiatives, and strengthening community support for tourism in the Sooke region through active network development.	
Quantifiable Objective	Foster an active industry network through bi-annual networking events, quarterly workshops, and a mentorship program while providing professional development, training and ongoing engagement sessions with stakeholders, rightsholders, and residents.
Rationale	The visitor experience is strengthened when businesses have digital literacy, regional knowledge, and best business practices. Regular networking opportunities allow for idea-sharing and collaboration across sectors. The mentorship program specifically addresses knowledge gaps between established and emerging operators while promoting cultural understanding. Ongoing engagement efforts keep stakeholders informed and ensure marketing and development initiatives remain relevant to industry needs.
Action Steps	● Partner with organizations like Destination BC, 4TVI, ITBC and similar industry partners to support professional development opportunities for Indigenous tourism operators. ● Schedule industry workshops and networking events to support stakeholder engagement efforts and industry collaboration. ● Engage with First Nations communities, local councils and committees, and municipal staff to understand and support tourism development priorities. ● Develop a communication strategy for keeping stakeholders engaged and informed. ● Organize bi-annual industry networking events with specific seasonal themes
Potential Partnerships	4TVI, Destination BC, industry partners (Indigenous Tourism BC, go2HR, Rainbow Registered), tourism committees, stakeholders, rightsholders.

Resources	DOS staff, board of directors, 4TVI, industry partners, stakeholder relations.
Sources of Funding	MRDT
Timeframe	Ongoing
Budget	\$15,000
Performance Measures	• Stakeholder attendance at workshops and networking events. • Stakeholder newsletter open rate and clicks. • Track the number of 1-on-1 stakeholder meetings.

DESTINATION & PRODUCT EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT | PRODUCT EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT

Sooke will enable community members and tourism businesses to access an Events & Festivals Fund, by application, to support the creation and enhancement of events and festivals that attract visitors to the Sooke region and improve the region's competitive appeal as a preferred multi-night destination on Vancouver Island.

Tactics

Events & Festivals Fund	The Events & Festivals Fund will be available on an annual basis to: • Increase visitation and overnight stays. • Increase economic and social benefits that flow from tourism to residents of the Sooke region. • Drive seasonal dispersion through the off-peak seasons. • Position Sooke as a preferred multi-night tourism destination. • Ensure that tourism makes meaningful contributions to the social, cultural, and environmental well-being of the region.
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Implementation Plan

Continue to refine and strengthen the existing Events & Festivals Fund program to achieve desired goals and objectives.	
Quantifiable Objective	To support at least 5 events and festivals in 2025 by providing grant funding for out-of-region marketing initiatives.

Rationale	An increase in event product improves the competitiveness of Sooke as a destination. Expanding marketing for new or enhanced events, particularly in the shoulder season, will drive hotel occupancy during off-peak travel times.
Action Steps	• Evaluate key learnings and effectiveness of the program towards achieving desired goals and outcomes. • Further refine the program guidelines, application form and reporting process. • Promote the opportunity to apply to all stakeholders, First Nations, and community groups. • Establish a predetermined matrix and funding committee to review, evaluate and approve events to support financially.
Potential Partnerships	District of Sooke, community groups and organizations, stakeholders, rightsholders.
Resources	Funding committee, District of Sooke staff, community partners, stakeholder relations.
Sources of Funding	MRDT, District Of Sooke
Timeframe	Ongoing
Budget	\$40,000
Performance Measures	• Increased visitor attendance at regional events from outside markets (BC, Alberta, and Washington). • Increased number and length of overnight stays generated by events supported through the program. • Number of new and/or expanded events in Sooke in the off-peak seasons (Fall, Winter, Spring). • Monitor stakeholder satisfaction towards funding program. • Ensure events align with sustainable practices (e.g. one or more of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals).

DESTINATION & PRODUCTION EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT | MARKET RESEARCH & VISITOR PERSONAS

Develop visitor personas using a strategic combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies to gather a clear understanding of potential and current visitors to a destination. This process will leverage existing research and data and may require additional, more current research. These data points can be sourced from various channels such as direct surveys, social media analytics, web usage patterns and transactional data.

Implementation Plan

Developing clear visitor personas is a crucial step in tailoring marketing strategies and enhancing the overall visitor experience.	
Quantifiable Objective	Utilize insights to understand visitor behavior, travel patterns, overall satisfaction and local sentiment towards tourism in the region.
Rationale	The focused collection and analysis of visitor and resident data support strategic objectives to precisely target the most relevant consumer segments.
Action Steps	● Review and analyze the data already collected from various sources such as previous surveys, website analytics, social media interactions and customer feedback. Sort through this data to identify patterns and trends related to visitors. ● Based on the insights gained from the initial data analysis, determine what additional information is needed to develop a comprehensive picture of potential and existing visitors. Additional research might include segmentation research, focus groups or exit surveys. ● Execute the additional research needed to gather comprehensive visitor information. ● Grouping similar types of data to form coherent profiles that represent different segments of your audience. Each persona should include demographic details, behavioral traits, motivations for visiting, preferences and any particular needs or expectations. ● Develop detailed customer journey maps that outline all the touchpoints visitors have with your destination, from initial awareness and consideration through to the travel experience and post-visit engagement.
Potential Partnerships	Research and survey contractors specialized in tourism and community engagement, local community groups and stakeholders including tourism businesses.
Resources	Professional services for data analysis and survey distribution, established relationships with local stakeholders to facilitate data gathering.
Sources of Funding	MRDT, District of Sooke

Timeframe	Ongoing, with preliminary results reviewed annually and strategies adjusted accordingly.
Budget	\$20,000
Performance Measures	• Amount and quality of data collected on visitor demographics, motivations, and satisfaction. • Development of comprehensive visitor and resident profiles that inform marketing strategies and product development. • Identification of key target markets based on collected data, leading to more focused and effective marketing efforts.

DESTINATION & PRODUCTION EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT | ADVANCE CLIMATE ACTION & DESTINATION CERTIFICATION

The District of Sooke (DOS) is experiencing increased tourism that brings economic benefits but also environmental challenges. As highlighted in the report, DOS needs to address concerns including tourists' excessive energy and water consumption, waste generation, and environmental impacts. The district has already established a Climate Action Plan and is committed to becoming a sustainable tourism destination. Advancing climate action initiatives and pursuing formal sustainability certifications will position DOS as a leader in responsible tourism.

Tactics

Energy Efficiency Program for Tourism Businesses	Implement a targeted energy efficiency program for Sooke tourism businesses to reduce energy consumption, operational costs, and environmental impact.
Sustainable Tourism Certification Initiative	Pursue Biosphere Destination certification for Sooke to validate sustainability efforts, provide a framework for improvement, and leverage certification as a marketing advantage.

Implementation Plan

Quantifiable Objective	Reduce energy consumption among 5 pilot tourism businesses by 15% within 12 months and complete pre-certification assessment for Biosphere Destination certification by end of year 2025.
Rationale	Energy efficiency aligns with the Climate Action Plan while certification provides a structured framework for sustainable tourism development. Both initiatives will reduce environmental impact, provide financial benefits to businesses, and position Sooke as a leader in responsible tourism.

Action Steps	• Conduct background research and review external best practices and tourism trends, to develop a background report. • Conduct energy assessments for 5 pilot tourism businesses • Establish simple monitoring systems to track energy consumption • Develop a roadmap for certification and identify priority areas • Complete pre-certification gap analysis
Potential Partnerships	BC Hydro, Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce, Destination Greater Victoria, 4TVI, Synergy Foundation
Resources	DOS staff, board of directors
Sources of Funding	MRDT
Timeframe	Spring & Fall of 2026
Budget	Biosphere Destination Certification: \$8,000 Pre-certification Gap Analysis Report: \$5,000 Background & Assessment Report: \$12,000 \$25,000
Performance Measures	• Number of businesses implementing at least 3 energy-saving measures • Completion of pre-certification gap analysis • Development of sustainability roadmap

DESTINATION & PRODUCT EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT | PRODUCT EXPERIENCE
ENHANCEMENT

Sooke will collaborate with the Sooke Fine Arts Society to enhance community engagement and create awareness around the local arts culture and indigenous history through the Sooke Fine Arts Show, positioning the region as a cultural destination that attracts visitors seeking authentic experiences and multi-night stays on Vancouver Island.

Tactics

Sooke Fine Arts Show Cultural Enhancement Program	The Sooke Fine Arts Show Cultural Enhancement Program will be available on an annual basis to: ● Increase visitation and overnight stays through cultural tourism experiences. ● Highlight and celebrate local arts culture and Indigenous history of the Sooke region. ● Enhance visitor experience through interactive and immersive cultural components. ● Position Sooke as a cultural destination that encourages multi-night stays. ● Foster community pride and strengthen relationships between tourism businesses, artists, and Indigenous communities.
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Implementation Plan

Develop a collaborative framework with the Sooke Fine Arts Society to enhance the Sooke Fine Arts Show with dedicated cultural programming that showcases local artistic talent and indigenous heritage.	
Quantifiable Objective	To expand the Sooke Fine Arts Show by incorporating at least 3 new cultural components in 2026, including Indigenous art demonstrations, artist workshops, and community engagement activities that increase attendance by 15% and extend average visitor stay.
Rationale	Enhancing the cultural aspects of the Sooke Fine Arts Show will strengthen Sooke's position as a cultural tourism destination. Expanding the event's offerings with indigenous components and interactive experiences will attract cultural tourists, increase visitor engagement, and encourage longer stays in the region.

Action Steps	● Create opportunities for Indigenous artists to showcase their work and share their traditions through demonstrations and workshops. ● Promote the show to highlight the cultural and Indigenous aspects of the Sooke Fine Arts Show. ● Implement visitor surveys to gather feedback on the cultural components and their impact on the visitor experience. ● Create packages that combine the Sooke Fine Arts Show with accommodations and other local experiences to encourage multi-night stays.
Potential Partnerships	District of Sooke, Sooke Fine Arts Society, T'Sou-ke First Nation, local artists, accommodations providers, District of Sooke, BC Arts Council, Indigenous Tourism BC.
Resources	District of Sooke staff, community partners, stakeholder relations, Sooke Fine Arts Staff
Sources of Funding	MRDT, District Of Sooke, BC Arts Council grants, Indigenous Tourism BC
Timeframe	Annual event with year-round planning and relationship building.
Budget	\$20,000
Performance Measures	● Increased attendance at the Sooke Fine Arts Show, with specific tracking of visitors from outside the region. ● Number of overnight stays generated by visitors attending the event. ● Participation rates in the cultural components and workshops. ● Visitor satisfaction scores related to cultural programming and indigenous content. ● Number of partnerships formed between local tourism businesses and the arts community. ● Economic impact on local businesses during the event period. ● Increased awareness of Sooke's artistic and Indigenous heritage as measured through post-event surveys.

ADMINISTRATION | BOARD GOVERNANCE & TRAINING

Sooke recognizes that effective governance and industry collaboration are essential foundations for sustainable tourism development. There is an opportunity to align with both provincial and regional tourism initiatives to build a robust operational structure and meaningful stakeholder engagement for the Sooke region.

Implementation Plan

Working collaboratively with tourism stakeholders, local government, and industry partners will create a foundation for sustainable tourism growth and effective MRDT fund management in the coming years.	
Quantifiable Objective	Implement a comprehensive governance structure with 80% stakeholder satisfaction rating and establish a diverse Tourism Advisory Committee with representation from at least 5 tourism sub-sectors by Summer 2025.
Rationale	A well-structured governance framework is essential for effective tourism management and development. Clear roles, responsibilities, and protocols ensure transparency in decision-making and MRDT fund allocation. Meanwhile, meaningful industry collaboration through a balanced advisory structure ensures that tourism initiatives reflect diverse stakeholder needs while advancing Sooke's sustainability goals. This approach will enhance stakeholder trust, improve operational efficiency, and create the foundation for long-term tourism success.
Action Steps	• Engage governance professionals to conduct training sessions for staff and advisory committee members on effective tourism governance • Develop comprehensive operational manuals defining roles and responsibilities for all parties involved in tourism management • Implement standardized financial review procedures aligned with MRDT requirements and best practices • Form a Tourism Advisory Committee with diverse industry representation including accommodation, food service, attractions, outdoor recreation, and retail sectors • Create detailed recruitment packages highlighting advisory roles and commitment expectations • Establish a regular meeting schedule and communication protocols between District staff and the advisory committee • Implement regular performance assessment procedures for continuous improvement of the governance structure
	• Develop a stakeholder feedback mechanism to ensure ongoing input from the broader tourism community

Potential Partnerships	Destination BC, 4TVI , District of Sooke, Capital Regional District, Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce, T'Sou-ke First Nation, local tourism businesses, and project/ governance consultants
Resources	Governance consultants, District of Sooke staff, advisory committee members, operational templates and tools
Sources of Funding	MRDT, District of Sooke tourism budget
Timeframe	Ongoing, beginning 2026.
Budget	\$14,000
Performance Measures	● Stakeholder satisfaction with governance structure and decision-making processes ● Diversity of representation on the Tourism Advisory Committee ● Attendance and participation rates at advisory meetings ● Compliance with MRDT reporting requirements ● Improved efficiency in decision-making and fund allocation ● Increased collaboration between tourism stakeholders and local government

VISITOR SERVICING | VISITOR CENTRE OPERATIONS

To strengthen the overall visitor experience and create more effective information delivery, the District of Sooke will implement strategic enhancements to visitor services and intelligence gathering systems. This initiative aims to foster a more engaging travel experience for visitors while contributing to a more sustainable year-round tourism economy.

Tactics

Mobile Visitor Kiosk Program	Deploy strategically positioned mobile visitor kiosks with well-trained seasonal staff to ensure consistent, high-quality visitor information delivery during peak periods throughout Sooke's key tourism areas.
Visitor Intelligence System	Implement comprehensive data collection and feedback mechanisms to understand visitor patterns, community sentiment, and service effectiveness for data-driven decision making.

Implementation Plan

This program is designed to support visitor centres in their efforts to enhance the visitor experience and strengthen innovation through targeted improvements.	
Quantifiable Objective	Increase visitor engagement by 20% through mobile kiosk interactions and collect data from at least 1,000 visitors annually to inform tourism planning and enhance the overall visitor experience in Sooke.
Rationale	Strategic visitor information delivery and data collection are crucial for managing Sooke's growing tourism while maintaining its environmental integrity. Mobile kiosks provide flexibility to serve visitors where they gather, while robust intelligence systems ensure that tourism development aligns with both visitor needs and resident expectations, supporting sustainable tourism management.
Action Steps	● Procure mobile visitor kiosk units designed with Sooke's branding and sustainability focus ● Develop deployment schedules based on visitor flow patterns identified in high-traffic areas ● Recruit and train seasonal staff on local attractions, sustainability practices, and crowd management ● Conduct quarterly resident sentiment surveys to monitor tourism impacts
	● Establish standardized feedback collection methods across visitor touchpoints
Potential Partnerships	District of Sooke, Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce, BC Parks, Capital Regional District, T'Sou-ke First Nation, local tourism businesses, Destination Greater Victoria, 4TVI
Resources	Seasonal visitor services staff, mobile kiosk equipment, data collection tools, training materials and survey tools.
Sources of Funding	MRDT
Timeframe	Spring 2026
Budget	\$45,000

Performance Measures	• Improved visitor satisfaction. • Number of visitor interactions at mobile kiosks • Quantity and quality of data collected through intelligence systems • Improved visitor satisfaction as measured through feedback • Increased length of stay and dispersal throughout the region • Resident sentiment toward tourism development • Integration of data insights into sustainability planning
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