



COLUMBIA VALLEY EVENTS STRATEGY 2021 - 2022

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Executive Summary

The Columbia Valley (CV) actively seeks ways to increase visitation, particularly in the off-season (October – April), enhance the visitor experience and improve the quality of life for Columbia Valley residents. Events have been identified as one of the assets that can be further developed to achieve the objectives and goals outlined in the Columbia Valley Destination Development Strategy. This Events Strategy will explore opportunities over the next two years that leverage and build upon the Columbia Valley’s current festivals and events and maximize their return on investment for the community — socially, culturally, environmentally, and economically. With an emphasis on communication, collaboration and sustainable capacity building, the two-year strategic plan is practical and achievable.

The Columbia Valley events community is robust, which means there is opportunity to build upon the successes of current events as well as identify opportunities for new events. The Columbia Valley is beginning from a position of strength with its existing event offerings, strong existing markets, and unique geographic assets. However, successful implementation of the plan will require focused effort, and collaboration among the communities and key stakeholders.

Growing Great Events - The Path Forward

A two-year action plan has been developed and is a key component of the Columbia Valley Events Strategy. The Columbia Valley Events Strategy identifies three strategic priorities:

1. Build community capacity to ensure a strong foundation of relationships and collaboration
2. Maintain current events and create additional events that motivate travel to the Columbia Valley, with a focus on off-season events
3. Develop partnerships to increase marketing effectiveness of CV festivals and events

Within each strategic priority are specific initiatives relating to festival and event enhancement and development, organizational development, knowledge sharing, marketing, capacity building and community support.

Strategic Priorities and Initiatives

Strategic Priority #1 – Build community capacity to ensure a strong foundation of relationships and collaboration

- Hire / contract a Columbia Valley Events Coordinator (EC)
- Identify funding sources to support the CV Events Coordinator position
- Establish a Columbia Valley Events Steering Committee
- Host a strategic forum to share the CV Events Strategy
- Develop a CV community calendar specific to annual festivals and events
- Establish an Events Round Table, to enhance collaboration between all groups that have a stake in event organization
- Establish a solid volunteer base for events based on abilities, expertise, preferences and availability



Events Strategy

- Liaise with Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK) and other local governments and tourism stakeholders on addressing the lack of transportation option between CV communities

Strategic Priority #2 – Maintain current events and create additional events that motivate travel to the Columbia Valley with a focus on off-season events

- Identify opportunities to revamp existing large events to smaller events in 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions
- Develop an event toolkit to support event organizers in hosting a successful event
- Host 4 – 6 signature weekend festivals and events, mostly Columbia Valley wide, that motivate travel and are coordinated and scheduled during the off-season
- Increase offerings within an existing event by combining with other events to create a more robust, larger event
- Identify opportunities to supplement an existing event with value-added experiences to create a motivating event for off-season travel, such as agri-tourism and culinary experiences; sports tourism and wellness
- Liaise with third-party produced event organizations to bring organized large-scale events to the valley
- Create a new signature event for 2022
- Identify funding sources to support & grow events and event infrastructure
- Prepare for future signature event development, beyond 2022

Strategic Priority #3 – Develop partnerships to increase marketing effectiveness of CV Festivals & Events

- Combine marketing resources of stakeholders to promote the Columbia Valley and events
- Gain support of community partners to promote key events through their channels (website, social media, employees) and ensure employee awareness of events occurring in the Columbia Valley
- Cross-promotion of events by local businesses not directly involved in the event
- Develop an integrated CV Events marketing strategy to help grow the CV event awareness and image and reaches potential tourists who may or may not have visited the Valley for its events
- Develop a dedicated web page for CV annual events on Travel Columbia Valley & Chambers' websites
- Develop processes to gather event attendee demographic data
- Amplify marketing investments by working with like-minded partners

The strategic priorities and initiatives will increase visitation, enhance the visitor experience, and improve the quality of life for Columbia Valley residents.



Events Strategy

1. Introduction / Project Overview

The Columbia Valley (CV) incorporates the region of the BC Rockies accessed by Highway 93 and 95 and spans some 102 kms from the community of Spillimacheen in the north, to the village of Canal Flats in the south. In between are a multitude of quaint towns, villages & communities which offer an array of authentic experiences including mountain, lake & river activities.

The Columbia Valley is a popular tourist destination with over 80,000 visits to the CV Visitor Information Centres annually. 40% of visitations occur in July & August resulting in significant seasonality. Due to the extreme seasonality, there is a desire to increase visitation to the area during the off-season of Fall, Winter and Spring. The CV is also the second home for a significant number of Albertans.

Seasonality poses challenges to businesses, such as reducing their ability to operate year-round and maintaining staff. Expanding the Columbia Valley's tourism offering by developing captivating festivals and events in the off-season will increase visitation throughout the balance of the year and allow the communities to benefit from tourism year-round.



The objective of this project is to develop a two-year festival and event strategy which will increase visitation, enhance the visitor experience, improve the quality of life for Columbia Valley residents and position the Columbia Valley as a year-round event tourism destination. This will entail building upon and leveraging the Columbia Valley's current festivals and events, maximizing their return on investment for the community and optimizing off-season visitations.

The Columbia Valley Destination Development Strategy also identifies the need to maintain current experiential strengths and support the introduction of additional year-round, memorable experiences. One of the objectives of the Destination Development Strategy is to host four to six signature multi-weekend festivals and events that motivate travel, are coordinated, and scheduled throughout the year which is captured in this strategic plan.

Benefits of Events

Over the past decade, there have been substantial shifts in the tourism marketplace that have resulted in the growing importance of the delivery of outstanding travel experiences. High satisfaction with travel experiences is critical to achieve increased visitor spending, longer stays, repeat visits and positive word of mouth referrals. There are many benefits to be gained by investing in tourism festivals and events,



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including delivering an outstanding travel experience, building community pride, purpose, and capacity; celebrating local arts & culture, showcasing unique offerings and delivering economic benefits.

Festivals and events can:

- Increase the attractiveness of the destination to visitors and locals
- Generate incremental awareness via media coverage and publicity
- Increase visitation from new and returning visitors
- Bring visitors to the valley in the off-season (Fall, Winter and Spring)
- Enhance the visitor experience
- Engage visitors in activities that are not necessarily recreation focused
- Showcase arts and cultural assets
- Deliver a significant economic impact
- Expose the communities to potential investors and homeowners
- Contribute to the support of and development of new infrastructure
- Increase event production expertise and resources
- Enhance community collaboration and bring host communities together
- Contribute to the well-being of a community and enhances community spirit
- Increase community pride and volunteerism.

As well, a significant advantage of events is the speed of development. An event can grow from inception to fruition in a matter of months.

The CV Destination Development Strategy highlights that destination development in the Columbia Valley will be guided by the imperatives to:

- Enhance resident and visitor sense of connection to the Columbia Valley
- Protect the environment and maintain healthy ecosystem
- Appreciate and show respect for each other
- Keep it real and authentic
- Seek to innovate
- Seek to collaborate

The benefits of Festivals and Events align with these guiding principles.

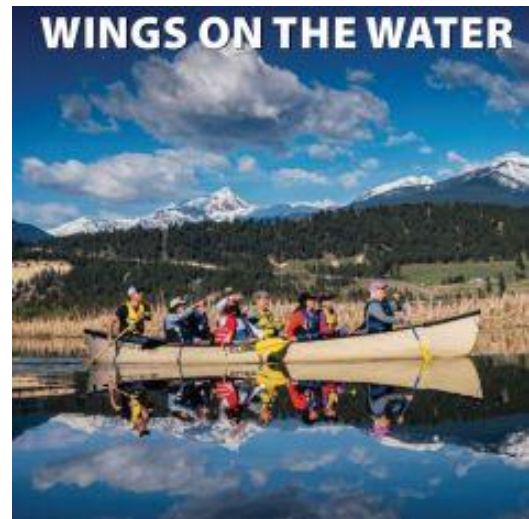


2. Internal Analysis

The Columbia Valley Event Community

The span of the Columbia Valley of over 100km, along with a collection of natural assets offering year-round experiences, has led to a vibrant and extensive festival and events calendar, with a wide variety of themes and experiences represented. Prior to COVID-19, over 35 events were held annually in the Columbia Valley with close to half occurring in July & August. The annual events are a combination of small and larger community events, which have drawn tourists to the Valley. Events include music festivals, celebrations of nature, sporting events, and unique food & beverage festivals.

Adding to the vibrancy of annual events are popular weekly events held throughout the Columbia Valley, predominantly in the summer months, including farmers markets, live music, outdoor movies, and art shows. While the Columbia Valley does not have a 'world-renowned recognized' event, several events & festivals such as Wings over the Rockies, CV Classics Car Show and Bonspiel on the Lake, have been running for many years and have proven to be highly successful and have attracted visitors from near and afar.



Weddings are also exceedingly popular with an estimated 100+ weddings in 2019 at various venues scattered throughout the Columbia Valley. This is important to note as these events utilize numerous venues and suppliers that may also be used for other events.

The Columbia Valley has a resourceful event community. With limited funds and relying primarily on volunteer efforts, a robust variety of events have been produced that are in various stages of development. Some are long standing favourites with waiting lists to attend while others are just starting out, working to build their audiences. As the Valley's events are produced by many different groups, businesses and individuals, the key to greater success will lie in collaboration between them, and other key community stakeholders. Working together and capitalizing on existing assets, events can establish the Columbia Valley as an event destination to drive tourism in the off-season.

Challenges & Opportunities

Many stakeholders, associations and event organizers are involved in bringing these events to life. To fully understand the challenges facing the events and to identify key opportunities for existing and new events, one-on-one interviews were conducted with 25+ individuals in the Columbia Valley who have been involved in organizing events. The key challenges and opportunities cited by the event organizers are highlighted below. For additional challenges and opportunities identified during the interviews please see [Appendix A](#). The key stakeholders and event organizers interviewed are listed in [Appendix B](#).



Events Strategy

Key Challenges

Volunteer Support

The Columbia Valley events organizers are predominantly volunteer with a small number of paid individuals. Organizers are tasked with the challenge of producing high-quality events while juggling other full-time responsibilities. In addition to volunteer organizers, a team of volunteers are required, prior-to and day-of the events, to ensure seamless event execution. While community passion, commitment and experience have created and delivered good events, the primarily volunteer resource model has also created challenges. Insufficient volunteer base, lack of specific experience / credentials for roles such as Security, bartending / food service, and volunteer burnout have been identified as concerns.

Collaboration and Communication / Organizational Structure

Currently there is no one organization or individual responsible for overseeing key events for the Columbia Valley. Individual municipalities, associations, and resorts may have an events coordinator (volunteer or paid) who is responsible for their specific events however this has unfortunately resulted in a siloed approach to event organization. All interviewees agree that more collaboration amongst event organizers across the Columbia Valley is required to achieve the goals of the strategy and to maximize the return on investment of the events for the community – socially, culturally, environmentally, and economically. If the Columbia Valley genuinely wants to increase tourism and enhance the visitor experience, there will need to be a change in this approach to increase collaboration and capitalize on synergistic opportunities. Communication and collaboration is a key hurdle that needs to be overcome.

Market Awareness

Market awareness challenges are two-fold:

A). Radium, Invermere, Panorama and Fairmont are specific locations that travellers are familiar with however they do not refer to the area collectively as the Columbia Valley. As a whole, the Columbia Valley offers a myriad of unique experiences and events which many travellers are seeking however awareness of the overall Columbia Valley is lacking.

B). The Columbia Valley is a well-known summer destination, particularly in Alberta, with peak visitation occurring in July & August; the exception being Panorama which is a known winter destination. In the peak season, the local infrastructure can be at capacity. Drawing more visitors to the valley in July & August through hosting large events can add a significant burden to the local infrastructure. Implementing a CV Event Strategy to drive off-season visitation will create awareness of the Columbia Valley as a year-round destination and alleviate additional strains on infrastructure capacity.

Transportation and Access

The origin of visitors to the Columbia Valley is Alberta, with Calgary & other AB Area accounting for over 50% of valley visitors. Limited options are available for this drive market to access the Columbia Valley. Highway 93 S through Kootenay National Park is the main highway, which in the peak season can be extremely busy. In the October – March time frame poor driving conditions may deter potential visitors from travelling to the Valley. Regular shuttle / bus services from Calgary are currently not available.



Events Strategy

Once in the Columbia Valley, limited transportation options exist for movement around the area. One taxi service exists and can be costly if travelling between communities. Although shuttle services may be available to rent for events, this can add a significant cost to the event.

Key Opportunities

Opportunities for existing and new tourism events exist in the Columbia Valley. Below are the main strengths the Columbia Valley can leverage to maximize the Events Strategy.

Geographic Assets

Leveraging the natural assets in the Columbia Valley offer endless tourism event opportunities. Mountains, lakes, rivers, wetlands, natural hot springs, parks, and beaches make the Columbia Valley unique and should be leveraged to offer unique visitor experiences that will motivate the traveller to visit in non-peak months. The Columbia Valley also offers a wide variety of quality tourism infrastructures including golf courses, ski resorts, cultural products, and outdoor recreation opportunities such as walking, hiking and biking trails.

Community Collaboration

Although collaboration is identified as a challenge it can also be viewed as an opportunity. A number of tourism partners and key stakeholders have expressed their desire to work collaboratively as an entire Columbia Valley region on event organization, cross promotions and on marketing the valley as a whole. A willingness amongst stakeholders to work together definitely exists therefore now is the time to engage in Valley-wide collaboration.

Seasonality

Like many tourism destinations, the Columbia Valley experiences significant shifts in visitations throughout the year. In July & August the Valley is generally at or near capacity therefore additional events would put a strain on the infrastructure and businesses. Fall is a beautiful time to visit the Columbia Valley as is spring. The weather can be warm and sunny with golf courses typically open from end of March until mid-October. Hiking, biking and wellness activities are also appealing during the fall months as it is a quieter time in the Valley. November and the winter months can also be relatively mild which has contributed to the Columbia Valley to be known as 'the warm side of the Rockies'. Opportunity exists for hosting new events during these periods and for realigning existing summer events into the off-season. Lake Windermere, Panorama and Nipika Mountain Resorts currently host numerous events in the off-season. Building upon existing off-season events is also a key opportunity.



Events Strategy

Strategic Alignment

Tourism is understood and valued in the Columbia Valley. The local business climate supports growth and expansion that is in keeping with the community values. Significant investment has been made by tourism stakeholders to develop and enhance offerings that motivate travel to the Columbia Valley. It is important that tourism development strategies among communities are aligned and collaborative. The Columbia Valley Events Strategy was found to be aligned with the strategies and plans of the communities.

The key goals of the various tourism development plans that align with those of the CV Events Strategy are summarized below:

Community / Stakeholder Plan	Tourism Plan Goals	Alignment with CV Events Strategy
Columbia Valley Destination Development Strategy 2020 (in partnership with Destination BC)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the number of shoulder season visitors, increasing hotel revenues in October to April 2. Maintain current experiential strengths and support the introduction of additional memorable experiences 3. Work together collaboratively and effectively for mutual gain across communities 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
District of Invermere Resort Development Strategy (RDS) 2019 - 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance tourism activities and amenities year-round 2. Ensure the visitor experience is authentic and unique 3. Enhance partnership and collaboration among tourism stakeholders 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Invermere on the Lake and Panorama Mountain Resort Strategic Plan – Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) Program 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with the community and the CV stakeholders to leverage funds and market the Columbia Valley as a whole 2. Collaborate with stakeholders to organize and market innovative initiatives that drive visitation and revenues for the community 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Village of Radium Hot Springs Resort Development Strategy 2019 - 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extend the shoulder season visitation 2. Increase annual room revenue 3. Enhance visitor experience / satisfaction through offering off-season tourism festivals / events 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Village of Radium Hot Springs - Municipal and	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with regional stakeholders through Travel Columbia Valley Co-op 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



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<p>Regional District Tax Program 2020</p>	<p>to strengthen awareness of the Columbia Valley</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Continue to participate in the Valley-wide marketing initiatives with Valley stakeholders 3. Collaborate with stakeholders to organize and market innovative initiatives that drive visitation and revenues 	<p style="text-align: center;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> </p>
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Event Policy Analysis

Currently throughout the Columbia Valley most communities do not have a formal special events policy with the exception of Parks Canada or if the event is on District of Invermere property (parking lot, beach, park, street, facility rental).

For a special event to be held in Kootenay National Park, Parks Canada requires a Special Event Concept Evaluation Guidelines & Form application which is the first step in the special event application process. Parks Canada requests applications be submitted 1 full year before the event date.

To host an event on the District of Invermere streets, parks, and other municipally owned facilities and property, a special event permit application form must be completed at least 30 days in advance of the event. All persons who wish to initiate a special event requiring District of Invermere resources must utilize the Districts Special Event Application. Applicants must provide evidence of compliance with any required permits from outside agencies (e.g., Interior Health, liquor licence from Gov't of BC, etc.) and any other documents identified in the application procedure. First time events will be handled on a first come, first served basis depending on venue availability.

In Radium Hot Springs a Facility Rental Form needs to be submitted to rent one of the village's facilities.

If planning on holding an event in any community it is best to contact the local council to understand the process to obtain permission to hold the event.



Events Strategy

Calendar of Core Festivals & Events

An Events Policy for the Columbia Valley has not been established. Therefore, for the purpose of the Columbia Valley Events Strategy, the following event categories have been developed:

1. *Local Events (LE)* are annual events focused on a specific community, typically not a large event, are provided free or by donation, attract mainly locals / second homeowners. Examples: Canada Day, Santa Claus Parade, Canal Days, Movies in the Mountains
2. *Community Events (CE)* are annual events focused on the broader community, typically a medium to large event, admission is free or admission fee is charged, attracts mainly locals, second homeowners and draws up to 30% out of town visitors. Examples: Valley Appreciation Days, FlatsFest, Steamboat Mountain Music Festival.
3. *Signature Events (SE)* are annual events focused on local communities and tourism target markets, typically large-scale events held over multiple days, admission or participation fees are charged, attracts locals, second homeowners, over 30% of attendees are out of town visitors. Examples: Wings over the Rockies Festival, Bonspiel on the Lake, Invermere Music Fest, TransRockies bike races, CV Classic Car Show, East Kootenay Wine Festival.



Events Strategy

Columbia Valley Roster of Events 2019

April – June	July – August	September – November	December - March
Canal Days & Antique Car Show (LE)	Market & Music on Main (LE)	CV Classics Car Show (SE)	Nor-AM Ski Races (SE)
Rocky Mountain Rally (CE)	Invermere Farmers Market (CE)	Tamarac Ridge Walk (CE)	High-Alpine Cross Country Ski Race (CE)
National Aboriginal Day (CE)	Wednesday Evening Farmers Market (CE)	Valley Pride Festival (CE)	Torchlight Parades (LE)
Wings Over the Rockies Festival (SE)	Fairmont Hot Springs Farmers Market (CE)	Salmon Festival & Dinner (CE)	NYE Fireworks (multiple locations) (LE)
Clash of the Titans Soccer Tournament (SE)	Canada Day Celebrations (CE)	Love it Live Music Series (LE)	Radium’s Birthday Celebration (CE)
Crazy Soles Nipika Trail Run (CE)	Mountain Mosaic Music Festival (CE)	Headbanger Festival (LE)	Snow Golf Tournament (CE)
Kootenay Krusher Mountain Bike Race (CE)	Steamboat Mountain Music Festival (CE)	Oktoberfest (LE)	Snowflake Festival (CE)
Coffee Fest (CE)	Horsethief Hideout Memorial Rally (SE)	East Kootenay Wine Festival (SE)	Bonspiel on the Lake (SE)
Canal Flats Lawnmower Races & Chili Cookoff (LE)	Mountain al Fresco (CE)	Light Up Invermere & Santa Claus Parade (CE)	Taste of the Valley (CE)
East Kootenay Beer Festival (SE)	Movies in the Mountains (LE)	Pre-season Ski Racing Teams (SE)	Loppet Cross Country Ski Race (SE)
	Heart of the Rockies Triathlon (CE)		Pond Hockey Tournament (CE)
	Bull Riding in the Rockies (CE)		Cross River Ripper Fat Bike Race (CE)
	Valley Appreciation Day (CE)		High Notes Music Festival (CE)
	Art in the Park (LE)		Whiteway Challenge (CE)
	Canadian National Downhill Mountain Bike Race (SE)		Canal Flats Curling Bonspiel (LE)
	TransRockies Classic Mountain Bike Race (SE)		Banff Film Festival (CE)
	Ballfest Slo Pitch Tournament (CE)		
	Loop the Lake Race (CE)		
	Lakeside Event - Hang glider & Paraglider Competition (LE)		
	Invermere Music Fest (SE)		
	FlatsFest Music Festival (CE)		



Events Strategy

Columbia Valley Event Venue Inventory

The Columbia Valley has a solid infrastructure of event venues. While most of the Columbia Valley's events take advantage of its spectacular outdoor environment, an array of indoor venues is available to events, along with 2 new community centres in Invermere and Radium Hot Springs.

An inventory of Indoor and Outdoor venues was compiled along with event categories suited to the venue, location, capacity and audio/visual availability. See [Appendix C](#) for a full list of inventoried venues.

Indoor Venues

There are over 40 indoor public and privately operated venues available to rent in the Columbia Valley. Capacities range from 12 – 600 and are well-suited to hosting small meetings to large stage events, celebrations, conferences and weddings. Most venues offer audio/visual systems however in some locations WiFi may be limited.

Outdoor Venues

Twenty outdoor locations exist in the Columbia Valley and are ideal for events and festivals including parks, green space, lakes, ski areas, trails and ceremony sites. As most outdoor events rely on Mother Nature entirely, the risk of having to cancel the event or relocate the event exists. Technical amenities (eg power, lighting) and site logistics (parking, fencing, washroom facilities) need to be considered when selecting an outdoor venue.



3. External Analysis

Best Practices in Hosting Events

The term “event” is used to describe a broad range of activities planned to mark special occasions or to achieve specific social, cultural, recreational, entertainment or economic objectives.

Attributes typically present in successful events include:

- Being out of the ordinary or unique
- Attracts tourists or tourism development
- Being of limited duration
- Being a one-off or infrequent occurrence such as annual events
- Raises the awareness, image or profile of a region
- Has a significant economic impact
- Being authentic and reflective of the community’s “personality
- Showcases unique community characteristics
- Collaboration and communication between stakeholders
- Reliable group of volunteers
- Funding options such as grant opportunities, sponsorship and other event supports
- Local support and participation
- A website dedicated to event hosting (see Whistle Event Toolkit at <https://events.whistler.com/>)

As outlined in the Columbia Valley Destination Development Strategy, destination development through events in the Columbia Valley will also be guided by the imperatives to: • Enhance resident and visitor sense of connection to the Columbia Valley • Protect the environment and maintain healthy ecosystem • Appreciate and show respect for each other • Keep it real and authentic • Seek to innovate • Seek to collaborate.

Target Markets

The Columbia Valley welcomes thousands of visitors each year with over 80,000 visiting the Visitor Information Centres located throughout the Valley. More than 40% of those visits were in July & August highlighting the extreme seasonality the Columbia Valley experiences. Kootenay National Park also experiences a similar level of seasonality.

The Columbia Valley is largely dependent on the Alberta market, with approximately half of annual visitors coming from Alberta, in particular Calgary due to its proximity, size and number of new Canadians residing in the city. Secondary markets being British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Due to COVID-19 issues and border closures the Pacific Northwest US traffic is paused for 2020.

These identified markets are predominantly ‘drive’ markets and are drawn to the Columbia Valley for the abundant opportunities available to tour, relax, unwind, and enjoy numerous outdoor recreation activities. These markets are also drawn to the many arts, culture, and heritage experiences in the Columbia Valley.



Events Strategy

Over the past decade, there have been substantial shifts in the tourism marketplace that have resulted in the growing importance of the delivery of outstanding, unique travel experiences. High satisfaction with travel experiences is critical to achieve increased visitor spending, longer stays, repeat visits and positive word of mouth referrals.

Competitor Analysis

Although the Columbia Valley is a unique entity there are neighboring communities that compete for similar target markets, are also seeking to establish their community as an event destination and to grow visitation in winter and shoulder seasons. In addition to competing for visitors, the events held in these communities also compete for vendors and suppliers.

Our main competitors, Banff/Lake Louise and Canmore all have strong brand recognition, a broad range of activities in close proximity to Highway 1, well established festivals and events and Travel Alberta’s support focused on the consolidated geographic area. However their high cost and tourist congestion can be used to the advantage of the Columbia Valley.

Competitor	Off-Season Tourism Festivals and Events
Banff/Lake Louise	Ice Magic/Snow Days; Craft Beer Festival; Whiskey Festival; Yoga Festival; Banff Pride; Taste for Adventure; Banff Marathon; Banff Centre Mountain Film and Book Festival; also significant focus on Meeting, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions (MICE) & weddings
Canmore	Canmore Uncorked; Winter Carnival; Plaid Goat Mountain Bike Fest; Highland Games; Mystery Towns
Cranbrook / Kimberley	Wine Spring at St. Eugene; Sam Steele Days; Wasa Lake Triathlon; Gran Fondo race; Peak Music Festival
Calgary	Calgary International Film Festival; Block Heater; Calgary International Beerfest; Sled Island Music & Arts Festival

Competitive Advantage

The Columbia Valley currently offers an array of events & festivals. To effectively compete for the off-season visitor, the Columbia Valley must identify its competitive advantage to understand what niche festivals and events will distinguish it from its competition. As highlighted in the Columbia Valley Destination Development Strategy, unique characteristics of the Columbia Valley include natural environment assets (mountains, lakes, rivers, hot springs), recreation assets (skiing, golfing, biking, hiking), a thriving arts scene with a growing depth of arts, culture and heritage experiences, and health & wellness experiences. The large number of indoor and outdoor event venues also contributes to the competitive advantage of the Valley as does the number of community groups, associations and businesses currently organizing events throughout the Columbia Valley.



4. Growing Great Events – The Path Forward

The success of the Columbia Valley Events Strategy will rely heavily on collaboration — between event organizers, local governments, organizations, tourism operators and the Columbia Valley community. Accessing the experience, knowledge, communication channels and membership/audiences of the key community partners will enable Columbia Valley events to extend their reach, create greater market awareness, recruit more volunteers and increase community engagement.

Currently the majority of the events in the Columbia Valley are organized by associations, resorts, individuals, and event coordinators across the Columbia Valley communities. There is not a centralized group involved with organizing events & festivals. Volunteer committees and boards play a significant role in event organization.

In a small region such as the Columbia Valley, the most effective way to produce something significant is by working together. As limited resources exist among event organizers, collaborating and leveraging existing resources will be essential to growing the Columbia Valley events. A focus on collaboration and leveraging our strengths and resources will lead to achieving the goals of the Columbia Valley Events Strategy.

Columbia Valley Events Coordinator

To ensure execution of the CV Events Strategy plan, it is recommended that a dedicated Columbia Valley Events Coordinator is hired or contracted, by the CV Community Economic Development Officer, to begin implementation of the plan and to avoid the plan being shelved. An individual with experience in event development, strategic planning, organizational development, leadership skills, knowledge of the valley and tourism knowledge will provide the expertise required to build the foundation that will ensure success. The CV Events Coordinator will also establish and lead the Events Steering Committee.

Role:

- To build organizational capacity, execute key initiatives and ensure the plan is implemented in a timely manner
- To facilitate the attraction of new events, liaise with event organizers, and assist businesses in setting up activities that would complement signature events
- To oversee the “big picture” to ensure the strategy’s initiatives are moving forward in the most effective and cohesive manner
- Apply for grants and identify other funding resources to support CV events.

Events Steering Committee

To achieve the level of collaboration required it is recommended that an Events Steering Committee is established which will work closely with the CV Events Coordinator and provide community leadership, assist in guiding the initiatives identified in the strategy and serve as ambassadors for the plan in the community.

Across the Columbia Valley, knowledge, experience, skills, and key learnings tend not be shared amongst event organizers. This has led to the perception of silos and protectionism of individual events.



Events Strategy

Communication, collaboration, and sharing ideas and resources will lead to greater efficiencies in organizing events and help eliminate the silo mentality. Creating an Events Steering Committee will provide a forum in which organizers can share ideas, resources, key learnings, expertise, and lead to collaboration on the promotion and development of tourism event development initiatives in conjunction with the CV Events Coordinator.

Role:

- Foster collaboration among event organizers in areas such as best practices, cross-promotion between events, and partnership between two events
- Assist the CV Events Coordinator in implementation of the strategy's initiatives.

Composition:

- Eight to ten representatives from communities across the Columbia Valley with representation from the business community, tourism operators, key stakeholder groups, non-profit associations, the Chambers, and Destination Marketing Organizations.

Task Forces (For Future Consideration)

Task Forces could be formed to assist in implementing key action items based on the areas of focus for events in the Valley such as Sport, Culinary, Arts & Culture, Wellness, and Music. Representatives from the specific areas of focus will share ideas, report on initiatives, and communicate with other organizations in the same area of focus. This will further enhance collaboration amongst the Events community. Ideally, at least one member of the Events Steering Committee will sit on each of the Task Forces.

Community Engagement

Upon formation of the Events Steering Committee, a festival and event forum should be hosted to engage all partners, businesses, and event organizers, to share the CV Events Strategy, to encourage collaborative planning and to identify training needs. This forum would also provide opportunity to generate discussion and ideas on hosting events in Phase 3 & Phase 4 of the COVID-19 provincial plan.



Events Strategy

The Action Plan

A two-year action plan has been developed and is a key component of the CV Events Strategy. Specific initiatives relating to festival and event enhancement and development, organizational development, knowledge sharing, marketing, capacity building and community support are included in the action plan. The initiatives in the action plan will achieve the objectives of the Event Strategy and assist in evaluating the success of the strategy moving forward.

The priority of each initiative is identified as Quick Wins (QW) - are actions that can be implemented within a year, have a high probability of success and have a relatively low cost; High – are essential to achieving the objectives in the short term; Medium (Med) – should be considered for the future but may not be implemented until after 2022.

Timing of the initiative refers to the time in which the initiative should be initiated.

Lead refers to the individuals and organizations responsible for leading or co-leading the initiatives. See below for a list of Lead abbreviations used in the action plan.

Outcomes are the expected results from the initiative.

- Lead abbreviations – all pertaining to the Columbia Valley:
- CED: Columbia Valley Community Economic Development
- EC: Columbia Valley Events Coordinator
- ESC: Columbia Valley Events Steering Committee
- TMS: Columbia Valley Tourism Marketing Society
- TS: Tourism Stakeholders
- CCs: Chambers of Commerce
- E0: Event Organizers

Strategic Priority #1 – Build community capacity to ensure a strong foundation of relationships and collaboration				
Initiatives	Priority	Timing	Lead	Outcomes
Hire / contract a Columbia Valley Events Coordinator (EC)	High	Q1 / 2021	CED	A dedicated Columbia Valley EC reporting into the CED will ensure execution of the Events Strategic Plan and manage large events that are Columbia Valley led versus community specific events
Identify funding sources to support the CV Events Coordinator position	High	Q1 / 2021	EDO	Funding a CV Event Coordinator ensures implementation of the CV Events Strategy
Establish a Columbia Valley Events Steering Committee	QW	Q1 – 2 / 2021	CED, EC	Identify opportunities to enhance existing festivals & events to kickstart events post-COVID-19; identify opportunities for smaller events to transition into a larger event; foster collaboration among the CV events community; review the nature and timing of existing events to identify opportunities for enhancement; review



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				the timing and format for peak-season events to assess a possible shift to the off-season
Host a strategic forum to share the CV Events Strategy	QW	Q2 / 2021	CED, EC	Engage stakeholders and obtain support of the CV Events Strategy, and to enhance collaboration between all groups that have a stake in event development
Develop a CV community calendar specific to <i>annual</i> festivals and events	QW	Q2 / 2021	EC, CC	An events & festival calendar that focusses only on annual festivals & events providing easy access for potential visitors and locals to identify upcoming & future events; highlights gaps in the off-season; minimizes overlap of events; reinforces the Columbia Valley as a tourism event destination
Establish an Events Round Table to enhance collaboration between all groups that have a stake in event organization	QW	Q3 / 2021	CED, EC, ESC	Event Round Table to meet monthly or quarterly to share plans, information, opportunities, challenges, successes, and key learnings on events
Establish a solid volunteer base for events based on abilities, expertise, preferences and availability	High	Q2 / 2021	EC, ESC	Database of volunteers to help execute events; identifies qualification gaps and highlights training requirements
Liaise with RDEK and other local governments and tourism stakeholders on addressing the lack of transportation options between CV communities	Med	2022	EDO	Increases participation in events from various communities throughout the Valley



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Strategic Priority #2 – Maintain current events and create additional events that motivate travel to the Columbia Valley with a focus on off-season events				
Initiatives	Priority	Timing	Lead	Outcomes
Identify opportunities to revamp existing large events to smaller events in 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions	QW	Q2 / 2021	EC, ESC, EO	Host smaller versions of larger events to maintain awareness of the events for return in the future (eg a series of small live music events hosted throughout the valley that leads up to a large Valley-wide music festival)
Develop an event toolkit to support event organizers in hosting a successful event. The event toolkit should provide information on how to host an event, protocols, venues, suppliers, marketing recommendations, how to obtain licenses and permits, funding sources, etc.	QW	Q2 / 2021	EC	Event organizers toolkit enhances the ability of community groups & event organizers to successfully deliver viable events
Host 4 – 6 signature weekend festivals and events, mostly Columbia Valley wide, that motivate travel and are coordinated and scheduled during the off-season	High	2022	EC, ESC, TS, EO	Establishes the Columbia Valley as the preferred events destination; increases off-season visitations and extends length of stay
Increase offerings within an existing event by combining with other events to create a more robust, larger event	High	2022	EC, ESC, TS	Bundle events into a more expansive event (eg. Highland Games in Canmore includes piping, drumming & dance competitions, British Car & Motorcycle Show, Beer & Whiskey Tasting); Enhances visitor experience by offering wider variety of programs
Identify opportunities to supplement an existing event with value-added experiences to create a motivating event for off-season travel, such as agri-tourism and culinary experiences; sports tourism and wellness	High	2022	EC, ESC, TS	Enhances visitor experience by offering wider variety of programs; increase off-season visitations (eg incorporate local producers and restaurants with Taste of the Valley to add additional experiences such as offering a chocolate, coffee, beer tour)
Liaise with third-party produced event organizations to bring organized large-scale events to the valley	High	2022	CED, EC, ESC	Large events brought to the CV as a complete package (eg TransRockies, Gran Fondo, Spartan Races) therefore less organization required of local organizers; increases visitation
Create a new signature event for 2022	High	2022	EC, ESC, TS, EO	A new Valley-wide event in the off-season that reflects the unique attributes of the Columbia Valley and increases off-season visitation



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Identify funding sources to support & grow events and event infrastructure (eg Canfor, Pepsi, Shaw, etc), MRDT funds, RMI Funds (event infrastructure)	Med	2022	EDO, EC, ESC	Ensures & supports future of existing and new events
Prepare for future signature event development, beyond 2022	Med	2022	CED, EC, ESC	Plan for future signature events that identifies future trends, infrastructure needs, new assets, community support and financial requirements



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Strategic Priority #3 – Develop partnerships to increase marketing effectiveness of CV Festivals & Events				
Initiatives	Priority	Timing	Lead	Outcomes
Combine marketing resources of stakeholders to promote the Columbia Valley and events	High	2021	EC, ESC, TMS, TS	Increased share of voice in the competitive tourism marketplace to put the Columbia Valley ‘on the map’.
Gain support of community partners to help promote key events through their channels (website, social media, employees) and ensure employee awareness of events occurring in the Columbia Valley	High	Q2 – 4 / 2021	EC, TMS, CCs, TS, ESC, EO	Access to new audiences and grow current audiences; engage more of the local and visitor community; builds community excitement, increased share of voice, encourages volunteers, promotes community cohesiveness
Cross-promotion of events by local businesses not directly involved in the event	High	Q2 – 4 / 2021	ESC, TS, CCs	Additional local businesses benefit from the event as event participants eat, stay, and shop around the valley (eg restaurants in Radium promote the Loppet weekend at Nipika)
Develop an integrated CV Events marketing strategy to help grow the CV event awareness and image and reaches potential tourists who may or may not have visited the Valley for its events.	High	Q2 / 2021	EC, TMS, CC	Increased share of voice in the target markets; increased awareness of the Columbia Valley; establish the CV as the preferred event destination
Develop a dedicated web page for CV annual events on Travel Columbia Valley & Chambers’ websites, highlighting signature events and descriptions, the CV annual events calendar and the Events toolkit.	High	Q2 / 2021	EC	Increased awareness of CV events
Develop processes to gather event attendee demographic data	High	2022	EC, EO	Increased knowledge of number of unique attendees, origin of attendees, repeat attendees, demographics of attendees to develop target market profiles
Amplify marketing investments by working with like-minded partners (eg provincial associations)	Med	2022	TMS, CCs, TS, ESC	Maximization of marketing spend with complimentary promotion of events from community, provincial and national associations (eg. Promotion of Loppet by other X-country ski associations)



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Columbia Valley Events & Festivals Marketing

Marketing the Columbia Valley as a whole, pooling marketing resources to increase share of voice and cross-promotion of events were points raised during most of the stakeholder interviews. The mindset of “together we are stronger” is healthy amongst stakeholders when it comes to promoting Columbia Valley branding and in promoting events & festivals. Collaborative marketing will be essential in building the Columbia Valley’s reputation as the preferred destination for events & festivals.

Collaborative marketing

Over the past 4 years, the Columbia Valley Tourism Marketing Society has partnered with Destination BC to market the Columbia Valley region on a whole, elevating the profile of the Columbia Valley. Stakeholders have contributed funds to be matched by Destination BC to establish the Columbia Valley brand in target markets and to augment the individual marketing initiatives within the region. Currently the Invermere/Panorama Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), the Radium Hot Springs DMO and Fairmont Hot Springs Resort contribute funds to the society. It is anticipated that, in the near future, a 3rd legally recognized catchment area in Area F will be established and will contribute additional funds.

With this marketing society fully established and funded, potential exists to collaborate on the promotion of Columbia Valley signature events & festivals and to increase brand awareness of the Columbia Valley.

Cross-Promotion

As limited dedicated marketing resources exist, the success of marketing the CV key events will depend on the collaborative efforts of the CV Tourism Marketing Society, the DMO’s, tourism operators, the Chambers of Commerce, organizations, individual valley communities, event organizers as well as connecting with Kootenay Rockies Tourism and Destination BC. Encouraging cross-promotion of events will increase the share of voice of the events and increase awareness of the Columbia Valley offerings.

Website

A Columbia Valley Events & Festivals website does not currently exist however most stakeholders and community partners’ websites include an Events tab on the navigation menu. This includes Travel Columbia Valley, the Chambers of Commerce, DMO’s, individual communities and tourism operators. Collaborating with these groups to ensure the Columbia Valley events are highlighted and potentially adding a webpage to these sites for a CV Events Toolkit and the CV Annual Events Calendar will increase awareness of the Columbia Valley events.



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Social Media

With limited marketing resource, social media platforms are ideal for spreading the word about Columbia Valley events, increasing traffic to pertinent webpages, and leveraging testimonials from event participants. Leveraging social media channels to build connections with event influencers and to reach target markets is essential. Facebook, Instagram and Twitter accounts should be created to promote and celebrate Columbia Valley events. To maximize social media postings, cross-promotion of postings should be encouraged:

- Create social media posts that stakeholders and community partners can share, retweet, etc.
- Encourage community groups to post event social media messages on their feed
- Create a # for Columbia Valley events for social media posts that include messages about all events.

Event Videos

A video of an event is an effective way to attract and engage customers and can create an emotional connection. Videos can be created easily and at minimal cost. Videos of events should be included in the marketing activities as they are a cost-effective and efficient medium to engage your audience.

E-newsletters

Most businesses, associations and organizations have a database of members, customers and individuals with a specific area of interest. Working with these groups to encourage including CV events in their newsletters will result in an increased reach to key target audiences.

Columbia Valley Events Brochure

A CV events brochure should be considered, if funding exists, for a promotional item of this nature. Distribution of the brochure into businesses and Visitor Centres in the Columbia Valley and in Banff / Canmore would increase reach to key target audiences and increase awareness of CV events. An example of an events brochure is the Fernie & Elk Valley Cultural Guide which highlights the communities in the Elk Valley and promotes the events hosted throughout the Elk Valley.

Influencer Marketing

Leveraging influencers to promote an event can be beneficial:

- they build authentic content that fuels awareness and growth of the event
- they will increase social media coverage of the event therefore increasing reach
- they share their content live or shortly after the event therefore impact is almost immediate (eg <https://mikescraftbeer.com/2015/06/26/east-kootenay-beer-festival-4th-annual-2015-fairmont-hot-springs-resort/>)
- the costs are reasonable with an event ticket, accommodation and meals being sufficient compensation.



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Community Engagement

One of the most effective marketing tools is 'word of mouth'. Ensuring that the local community is aware of upcoming events so that they can spread the word is important. Front-line employees, suppliers, members of the community, volunteers and tourism operators should be encouraged to tell visitors about events in the Columbia Valley.

Local Print Media

Advertising events in the Columbia Valley Pioneer and the Valley Peak, along with editorials about the events, will increase awareness of events within the local community and foster community engagement.

Funding the Strategy

Investment in capacity building for the event community and in enhancing the Columbia Valleys event roster will be essential to the achieving the goals of the Columbia Valley Events Strategy. This section provides an overview of potential revenue streams that are available to aid in implementation of the strategy.

Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) / MRDT Funds

The Invermere / Panorama DMO and Radium Hot Springs DMO currently allocate funds to support events & festivals in their respective communities and contribute to the CV Tourism Marketing Society to create awareness of the Columbia Valley. In the situation that a signature event is held in one of these communities, a formal submission should be submitted to the DMO requesting funding support for the event.

Resort Municipality Initiative (RMI) Funds

District of Invermere

The District of Invermere's Resort Development Strategy 2019 – 2021 plan identifies the following as two of its goals for 2019 - 2021:

- Enhance tourism activities and amenities year round
- Enhance partnership and collaboration among tourism stakeholders, including regional and First Nations partners

Linked to these goals are two projects which are tied directly to festivals & events:

- a) The *Event Infrastructure* project is described as: a new project intended to increase the ability to host events throughout the year and throughout the community. Event infrastructure includes multi-purpose indoor and outdoor equipment such as lighting, AV, a movable or outdoor all-seasons stage and backdrops, and equipment for conferences.
- b) A second project is *Animate the Community*. Animate the community is about supporting the Event Program initiated by the District of Invermere in 2013. This project includes continuing to support core events such as Coffee Fest, Snowflake Festival, Octoberfest, Movie in the Park, and



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Music in the Park. For this RDS term, this project will also expand to develop and support new events, for example, water/lake focused ones, and additional shoulder season events.

Village of Radium Hot Springs

The Village of Radium's Resort Development Strategy included the following goals for 2019:

- Extend our shoulder tourism season (October – November and January – February) visitation by 1% annually, as defined by the number of nights of accommodation stay.
- Increase annual room revenue by 1% annually, as defined by our municipal regional district tax revenue.
- Increase visitor satisfaction annually, to be determined by a reasonable assessment method, and as defined by feedback received through a visitor survey program.

One of the projects associated with these goals is:

- a) Support one festival and one event, sustainable on a yearly basis (sustainable tourism goals apply), that will enhance the visitor experience and develop ongoing visitor loyalty and 'word of mouth' promotion.

As both plans include goals that relate directly to the strategies and initiatives in the CV Events Strategy, potential opportunities exist for funding support. Formal requests should be submitted to these organizations for support.

Grants

Currently there are several funding sources that tourism industry stakeholders (businesses, regions, communities, and sectors) may consider when developing and marketing their tourism products. These sources include Columbia Basin Trust, RDEK (Discretionary Grants in Aid), Destination BC and the Provincial government with a focus on Sport, Arts & Culture and Tourism Events. The grants available through these funding sources should be researched to determine applicability to the Events Strategy. Additional grants may become available as part of BC's Restart Program in both Phase 3 & Phase 4 of the COVID-19 phases and availability of grants should be closely monitored.

Stakeholder Contributions

Several stakeholder groups may be drivers of the CV Events Strategy as it moves forward into the implementation stage. These organizations may choose to fund various initiatives based on the mandate of their organization. It is expected that some organizations will participate to a greater degree (financially) than others. It should be noted however, that gifts in kind and other forms of collaborative support are also valuable contributions.

Corporate Sponsorships

Tourism organizations often seek sponsorships and partnerships as a key to building revenue. Building new partnerships is about creating value by connecting destination and partner brands, customers and networks. Once the strategy begins to take shape it will be important to identify companies and organizations that identify with or have branded themselves along similar lines to the Columbia Valley's tourism event offerings. Corporations such as Telus, Pepsi, Shaw, Fisher Ski Company are examples of



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potential sponsorships. An example of such a sponsorship is the Pepsi Main Stage at the Panorama High Notes Music Festival.

Event Revenue

Revenue should be generated by individual events through admission, participation fees, event merchandise, food & beverage sales, and donations. Earned revenue should be designated to supporting the event in the following year.

Funding for CV Events Coordinator

The Events Strategy recommends hiring a Columbia Valley Events Coordinator to ensure implementation and execution of the Events Strategy. This is a new position which will require funding. Options for funding include DMO's, Tourism Operators, CV Tourism Marketing Society, Local Governments, RDEK and grants from organizations such as Columbia Basin Trust and Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust as well as from the BC Restart Program. Depending on the level of funding, a full-time position may not be feasible. An additional option is to investigate the possibility of job sharing with an existing Events Coordinator in the Columbia Valley.

RDEK - Increase in Tax Base

The overall purpose of the CV Event Strategy is to develop tourism events that will (in the medium to long term) result in increased economic activity from spending by tourists who come from outside the community. If businesses and local governments see a return on investment it may be viable to have the CV Events Coordinator position funded through taxation.



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Measuring Success

As the strategy is implemented it will be important to measure success. The first step is to identify who is responsible for each initiative in the strategy. The RASCI matrix helps achieve this while also listing the varying roles and level of activity for each individual or group. Completion of the initiatives by the end of 2022 will be a measure of success.

Roles & Responsibilities Matrix

Lead abbreviations – all pertaining to the Columbia Valley:
 CED: Columbia Valley Community Economic Development
 EC: Columbia Valley Events Coordinator
 ESC: Columbia Valley Events Steering Committee
 TMS: Columbia Valley Tourism Marketing Society
 TS: Tourism Stakeholders
 CCs: Chambers of Commerce
 EO: Event Organizers

R = Responsible A = Accountable S = Supportive C = Consulted I = Informed

Strategic Priority #1 – Build community capacity to ensure a strong foundation of relationships and collaboration							
Initiatives	CED	EC	ESC	TS	TMS	CCs	EO
Hire / contract a Columbia Valley Events Coordinator	R,A		-	-	-	-	-
Identify funding sources to support the CV Events Coordinator position	R,A						
Establish a Columbia Valley Events Steering Committee	A	R	-	-	-	-	-
Host a strategic forum to share the CV Events Strategy	A	R	S	C	C	C	C
Develop a CV community calendar specific to annual festivals and events	A	R	S	C	C	C	C
Establish an Events Round Table	A	R	S	I	I	I	I
Establish a solid volunteer base for events based on abilities, expertise, preferences and availability	A	R, S	S	S	-	-	S
Liaise with RDEK and other local governments on addressing the lack of transportation options between CV communities	R,A						



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Roles & Responsibilities Matrix cont'd.

Lead abbreviations – all pertaining to the Columbia Valley:

CED: Columbia Valley Community Economic Development

EC: Columbia Valley Events Coordinator

ESC: Columbia Valley Events Steering Committee

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TS: Tourism Stakeholders

CCs: Chambers of Commerce

EO: Event Organizers

R = Responsible A = Accountable S = Supportive C = Consulted I = Informed

Strategic Priority #2 – Maintain current events and create additional events that motivate travel to the Columbia Valley with a focus on off-season events							
Initiatives	CED	EC	ESC	TS	TMS	CCs	EO
Identify opportunities to revamp existing large events to smaller events in 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions	A	R	S	C	-	-	C
Develop an event toolkit to support event organizers in hosting a successful event. The event toolkit should provide information on how to host an event, protocols, venues, suppliers, marketing recommendations, how to obtain licenses and permits, funding sources, etc.	A	R, S	S	C	I	C	C
Host 4 – 6 signature weekend festivals and events, mostly Columbia Valley wide, that motivate travel and are coordinated and scheduled during the off-season	A	R, S	C	C	-	-	C
Increase offerings within events by collaborating with other events to create a more robust, larger event	A	R	S	S	I	I	S
Identify opportunities to supplement an existing event with value-added experiences to create a motivating event for off-season travel, such as agri-tourism and culinary experiences; sports tourism and wellness	A	R	S	S	I	I	S
Liaise with third-party produced event organizations to bring organized large-scale events to the valley	A	R, S	S	C	-	-	C
Create a new signature event for 2022.	A	R,S	S	S	-	-	S
Identify funding sources to support & grow events and event infrastructure (eg Canfor, Pepsi, Shaw, etc), MRDT funds, RMI Funds (event infrastructure)	A	R, S	S	S	-	C	S
Prepare for future signature event development, beyond 2022	A	R,S	S	C	-	-	C



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Roles & Responsibilities Matrix cont'd.

Lead abbreviations – all pertaining to the Columbia Valley:

CED: Columbia Valley Community Economic Development

EC: Columbia Valley Events Coordinator

ESC: Columbia Valley Events Steering Committee

TMS: Columbia Valley Tourism Marketing Society

TS: Tourism Stakeholders

CCs: Chambers of Commerce

EO: Event Organizers

R = Responsible A = Accountable S = Supportive C = Consulted I = Informed

Strategic Priority #3 – Develop partnerships to increase marketing effectiveness of CV Festivals & Events							
Initiatives	CED	EC	ESC	TS	TMS	CCs	EO
Combine marketing resources to promote the Columbia Valley and events	A	R, S	S	S	S	-	S
Gain support of community partners to help promote key events through their channels (website, social media, employees) and ensure employee awareness of events occurring in the Columbia Valley	A	R, S	S	S	I	S	S
Cross-promotion of events by local businesses not directly involved in the event	A	R, S	S	S	-	S	S
Develop an integrated CV Events marketing strategy to help grow the CV event awareness and image and reaches potential tourists who may or may not have visited the Valley for its events	A	R, S	S	I	I	I	I
Develop a dedicated web page for CV annual events on Travel Columbia Valley & Chambers' websites, highlighting signature events and descriptions, the CV annual events calendar and the Events toolkit	A	R, S	S	I	S	S	I
Develop processes to gather event attendee demographic data	A	R, S	S	S	-	-	S
Amplify marketing investments by working with like-minded partners (eg provincial associations)	A	R, S	C	C	-	-	C



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Additional Measures of Success

In addition to measuring the completion status of the strategic initiatives, other metrics should be evaluated to determine the success of the Events Strategy. Additional metrics include:

- Room nights – was there an increase in room nights as a result of the event?
- Off-season visitation – was there an increase in visitations during the off-season?
- Event attendance – was there an increase in attendance at annual events?
- Return on Investment – did the profitability of the event increase vs prior year?
- Non-local participation – was there an increase in % of non-locals attending signature events?
- Social media traffic – was there an increase in social media engagement?
- Website traffic – was there an increase in clicks and visits to the Events pages on Travel Columbia Valley and Chamber of Commerce websites?
- Cross-promotion activity – did cross-promotion of events increase?

Note: It may be a challenge to track some of these metrics and to obtain required data. It may also be difficult to attribute the increases in some of these metrics directly to the CV Events Strategy. However, any available data will be of value to track and analyze.



5. CONCLUSION

The Columbia Valley Events Strategy offers a strategic plan that will advance the Columbia Valley toward its goal to become a year-round tourist destination which is known for delivering outstanding festivals and events and increasing the sense of inclusion for local residents. The plan also aligns with the goals of the Columbia Valley Destination Development Strategy including a) maintaining current experiential strengths and supports the introduction of additional year-round, memorable experiences and b) working together effectively for mutual gain.

The events community is robust, which means there is opportunity to build upon the successes of current events as well as identify opportunities for new events. The Columbia Valley is beginning from a position of strength with its existing event offerings, strong existing markets, and unique geographic assets. However, successful implementation of the plan will require focused effort, some hard work and collaboration among the communities and key stakeholders. With that, the Columbia Valley will achieve its goals for tourism festivals and events.



Appendices

Appendix A: Opportunities & Challenges

Opportunities	Challenges
- Marketing collaboration	- Lack of volunteers and volunteer burnout
- Collaboration between events and among event organizers	- Existing silos - lack of collaboration between communities and event organizers
- Increased willingness for cross-community collaboration	- Minimal public transportation options within the valley
- A CV Destination Development Strategy which includes Events as one of the pillars	- Business owners close their business to take vacations in November / early December; many restaurants closed Mondays & Tuesdays
- A number of tourism partners have already articulated their desire to work cooperatively, as a unified Columbia Valley, on destination development & event initiatives.	- Lack of collaboration and communication across the planning area; there is not a 'big picture' mentality
- Increase local engagement through involving more locals in events	- Lack of local support for tourism and second homeowners
- Foster collaboration, education and communication among event stakeholders across the planning area	- The challenges associated with a seasonal tourism workforce
- Grow the off-season tourism business through the launch of additional events	- Insufficient capacity to grow some events
- Drive off-season room nights with events	- Low brand awareness of the Columbia Valley
- Eliminate silos with opportunities to increase collaboration	- Marketing resources are not competitive with key competitors
- Increase cross-promotion of events	- Extreme seasonality of visitations
- Enhance existing events	- Enticing travellers to travel past Banff
- Host smaller events that are a subset of a larger event	- Travelling to the Columbia Valley in the off-season (poor driving conditions a deterrent)
- Create an event for the entire valley	- Competing events
- Increase collaboration with other tourism operators and event organizers	- Limited suppliers & vendors



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Appendix B: Columbia Valley Key Stakeholders / Event Organizers

Organization / Event	Name	Interviewed
Radium Hot Springs & Area		
Tourism Radium	Jessica Fairhart	Yes
Village of Radium	Mark Read	Yes
Radium Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce	Erin Palashniuk	Yes
Swansea Communications	Andrea Tubbs	Yes
Steamboat Mountain Music Festival	John Soby	No
Radius Retreat	Loren Braat	No
Nipika Mountain Resort	Lyle Wilson	Yes
True Key Hotels & Resorts	Katie Wallace	No
CV Classics Car Show	Vicki	No
Parks Canada	Julie Champagne	Yes
Invermere, Panorama & Area		
Akisknuk First Nation	Lisa Kraig	Yes
Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce	Pete Bourke	Yes
Columbia Valley Cycling Society	Tbd	No
Columbia Valley Food and Farm	Alison Bell	Yes
CV Hang Gliding & Paragliding Society	Max Fanderl	No
Columbia Valley Rockies	Al Miller	Yes
Copper Point Resort	Laura Sandham	Yes
District of Invermere	Cortney Pitts	Yes
Greenways Trail Alliance	Lianne Lang	Yes
Invermere Curling Club	Judy Dow	Yes
Invermere Music Festival	Cajsa Fredin	Yes
Invermere / Panorama DMO	Ken Wilder	Yes
Kinsmen Club of the Windermere Valley	Tbd	No
Lake Windermere Lion's Club	Tbd	No
Panorama Mountain Resort	Maryse Daze	Yes
Rotary Club of Invermere	Tbd	No
Shuswap Indian Band	Suzie Thomas	Yes
Toby Creek Nordic Ski Club	Jed Cochrane	Yes
Windermere Valley Snowmobile Society	Tbd	No
Windermere District Royal Canadian Legion	Ken Carlow	Yes
Wings Over the Rockies	Barbara Thrasher	Yes
Fairmont Hot Springs & Canal Flats		
Canal Flats – Flats Fest	Amber Byklum	Yes
Fairmont Hot Springs Resort	Larry Gale	Yes
Village of Canal Flats	Adrian Bergles & Denise Trepanier	Yes
Other		
Columbia Basin Trust	Lynda LaFleur	Yes
Festival Seekers	Jim Barr	Yes
Calgary-based Sales Consultant (previously with Copper Point Resort)	Lisa Seib	Yes



Appendix C: Columbia Valley Event Venues – Indoor & Outdoor

Event Classification	STG: Stage events
	TS: Tradeshow and Markets
	M: Meetings / Conferences
	SR: Sport & Recreation
	FF: Festivals & Fairs
	C: Celebrations (reunions, etc)
	W: Weddings

Indoor Venues	Capacity (seated)	Event Classification	Audio/Visual
Canal Flats			
<i>Canal Flats Civic Centre</i>	250	STG, C, W	Yes
<i>Canal Flats Seniors Hall</i>	100	M	No
<i>Canal Flats Arena</i>	200	SR	No
Fairmont Hot Springs			
<i>The Barn at Coys Golf Course</i>	100	STG, SR, C, W	No
<i>Fairmont Hot Springs Resort</i>			
- Mountain Chalet	150	C, W, SR	Yes
- Cedar Banquet Room	250	M, FF, C, W	Yes
- Pine Banquet Room	120	M, FF, C, W	Yes
- Spruce Banquet Room	50	M, C, W	Yes
- Birch Banquet Room	50	M, C, W	Yes
- Boardroom	12	M	Yes
- Mountainside Clubhouse	100	M, C, W	No
<i>Fairmont Community Lion's Den</i>	44	M, C	Yes
Windermere			
<i>Windermere Community Hall</i>	150	STG, C, W, M	No
<i>The Stolen Church</i>	100	W	No
<i>Columbia Lake Recreation Center</i>	150	SR	No
Invermere / Panorama Area			
<i>Lake Windermere & District Lion's Hall</i>	130	M, C, W	No
<i>CV Chamber of Commerce Boardroom</i>	10	M	No
<i>Copper Point Resort</i>			
- Amber Room	180	M, C, W	Yes
- Quartz Grand Hall	200	STG, M, C, W	Yes
- Jade Boardroom	12	M	Yes
<i>Columbia Valley Community Centre</i>			
- Rooftop Patio	80	C, SR	No
- Main Hall	500	STG, C, W, M, FF, TS	Yes



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<i>Eagle Ranch Golf Resort</i>			
- Pioneer Room	30	W, M, C	Yes
- Clubhouse	130	W, M	No
<i>Royal Canadian Legion Hall</i>	200	STG, M, C, W, FF	Yes
<i>Invermere District Curling Centre</i>			
- Concrete Surface	600	C, W, FF, SR, M	No
- Upstairs Lounge	165	C, W, M	No
<i>Eddie Mountain Memorial Arena</i>	1500	C, W, SR	Yes
<i>CPR Lodge</i>	80	C, W, M	No
<i>Pynelogs Cultural Centre</i>	100	STG, C, W, M	Yes
<i>Panorama Mountain Resort</i>			
- Copper Crown Reception Room	250	M, C, W	Yes
- The Great Hall	350	C, M, W, FF	Yes
- Alto Kitchen Bar	90	C, W, M	No
<i>House of Friesians</i>			
- The Cabin	20	C, W	No
- The Shelter	87	C, W, M	No
- The Barn	148	C, W, M	No
<i>Horsethief Hideout</i>			
- Saloon	tbc	C, W	No
- Dance Hall	tbc	C, W	No
<i>Brady Creek Ranch</i>	150	STG, C, W	Yes
Radium Hot Springs			
<i>Nipika Mountain Resort</i>			
- Day Lodge & Conference Centre	120	C, W, M, SR	Yes
<i>Prestige Radium Hot Springs Resort</i>			
- Columbia Salon	50	C, W, M	Yes
- Vermillion Salon	50	C, W, M	Yes
- Grand Ballroom	100	C, W, M	Yes
<i>Radium Hot Springs Centre</i>	222	STG, C, W, M	Yes
<i>Radium Resort</i>	150	C, W, M	Yes
<i>Village of Radium Council Chambers</i>	30	M	Yes
Edgewater			
<i>Edgewater Community Hall</i>	200	STG, C, W, TS	No



Events Strategy

Event Classification	STG: Stage events
	TS: Tradeshow and Markets
	M: Meetings / Conferences
	SR: Sport & Recreation
	FF: Festivals & Fairs
	C: Celebrations (reunions, etc)
	W: Weddings

Outdoor Venues	Capacity	Event Classification	Audio/Visual
Canal Flats			
<i>Ball Park</i>	1000	STG, SR	No
Fairmont Hot Springs			
<i>Fairmont Ski Area</i>	1000	STG, SR, FF	No
<i>Fairmont Hot Springs Resort – Rocky Mountain Panorama Platform</i>	200	C, W, SR	Yes
Invermere & Panorama Area			
<i>Pothole Park</i>	1000	FF, C, STG	No
<i>James Chabot Park</i>	1200	SR, STG, C, FF	No
<i>Kinsmen Park</i>	1200	SR, STG, C, FF	No
<i>Horsethief Hideout Ceremony Site</i>	tbc	W, C	No
<i>Lake Windermere – on the Lake</i>			
- Spring, Summer, Fall / Water	>1000	SR	No
- Winter / Ice & Whiteway	>1000	SR	No
<i>Lakeview Parking Lot</i>	500	FF, TS	No
<i>Bullriding Arena</i>	2400	SR	No
<i>Panorama Mountain Resort</i>			
- Panorama Mountain	>1000	STG, SR, FF	No
- Riverside Ceremony Site	250	W, C	No
- Alpine Ceremony Site	30	W, C	No
<i>Lake Lillian</i>	>500	SR	No
<i>Copper Point Resort Opal Patio</i>	180	W	No
<i>Markin-McPhail Westside Legacy Trail</i>	>1000	SR	No
Radium Hot Springs			
<i>Nipika Mountain Resort</i>			
- Trails, green space	>1000	SR	No
- Ceremony Site	120	W, C	
<i>Kootenay National Park</i>	>1000	SR	No
Edgewater			
<i>Edgewater Community Park</i>	100	SR, FF, C	No