

**CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING AGENDA**

**Date:** May 31, 2021  
**Time:** 4:00 p.m.  
**Location:** City Hall Council Chambers

**AMENDED AGENDA**

*We respectfully acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the  
unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation*

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in accordance with Ministerial Order No. M192/2020 and the Class Order (mass gatherings), Council meetings will be conducted virtually and live-streamed on the City of Courtenay's YouTube channel.

**K'OMOKS FIRST NATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

**Pages**

**1. DELEGATIONS**

1.1. Truck Loggers Association

Presentation by:

- Bob Brash, Executive Director, Truck Loggers Association

**2. STAFF REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS**

2.1. Financial Services

2.1.1. Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) Re-implementation

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### 3. RESOLUTIONS OF COUNCIL

#### 3.1. Councillor McCollum - Fossil Fuel Divestment Policy

*"WHEREAS the City of Courtenay Council voted unanimously to recognize the climate crisis and to apply a climate lens to every aspect of their new Official Community Plan and to set as a strategic priority, "actions to address Climate Change mitigation and adaptation"; and*

*WHEREAS the use of fossil fuels are understood to be the world's greatest contributor to climate altering, greenhouse gas emissions; and*

*WHEREAS the MFA Fossil Fuel Free Short-Term Bond Fund has, since its inception, outperformed the FTSE Canada Short Term Overall Bond Index; and*

*WHEREAS the "Municipal Finance Authority of British Columbia (MFA) believes that investment processes that incorporate ESG [Environmental, Social, Governance] factors and other broad systemic issues can lead to better investment outcomes"; and*

*WHEREAS the MFA now requires that all but one of its pooled funds incorporate ESG through adherence to the United Nations Principles of Responsible Investment (UN PRI), and other Canadian Financial institutions offer securities and pooled investment funds that select for ESG factors;*

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council direct staff to review and report back on an investment policy that can achieve the following considerations:*

*1) Divest from fossil fuels companies, by supporting fossil fuel free investment portfolios, such as the MFA Fossil Fuel Free Short-Term Bond Fund and build on the examples of fossil fuel free investment strategies from other municipalities such as Vancouver and Victoria;*

*2) Select investments that make positive contributions to ESG factors; and*

*3) Align investment with the Sec.183 of the Community Charter, and best practices for investing public funds."*

3.1.1. Background Document - Memo: Municipal Finance Authority's (MFA) Fossil Fuel Free Investment Options

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3.1.2. Background Document - Memo: ESG [Environmental, Social, Governance] and Municipal Finance Authority (MFA) Pooled Investment Funds

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### 3.2. In Camera Meeting

THAT a Special In Camera meeting closed to the public will be held May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021 at the conclusion of the Regular Council Meeting pursuant to the following sub-sections of the *Community Charter*:

- 90 (1) (c) labour relations or other employee relations;
- 90 (1) (g) litigation or potential litigation affecting the municipality;
- 90 (1) (j) information that is prohibited, or information that if it were presented in a document would be prohibited, from disclosure under section 21 of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*;
- 90 (1) (k) negotiations and related discussions respecting the proposed provision of a municipal service that are at their preliminary stages and that, in the view of the council, could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the municipality if they were held in public;
- 90 (2) (b) the consideration of information received and held in confidence relating to negotiations between the municipality and a provincial government or the federal government or both, or between a provincial government or the federal government or both and a third party.

4. ADJOURNMENT



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY  
**STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL**

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**To:** Council **File No.:** 6900-01  
**From:** Chief Administrative Officer **Date:** May 31, 2021  
**Subject:** Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) Re-implementation

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**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the required documentation, including Five-year Strategic Business Plan to re-implement the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) on sales of accommodation in the City of Courtenay.

**POLICY ANALYSIS:**

Section 123 of the *Provincial Sales Tax Act* imposes a tax of up to three percent on the purchase price of accommodation in a specified geographic area of the province on behalf of a designated recipient.

The *Designated Accommodation Area Tax Regulation, B.C. Reg. 93/2013* sets out the authorized purposes for funds collected under the MRDT program.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Due to the pending contract termination and wind up of the Comox Valley Economic Society (CVEDS) the existing MRDT regulation in place for the City of Courtenay will be repealed by the Ministry of Finance effective August 31, 2021. In order to re-establish the tax a new application and bylaw must be submitted to the Ministry by June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to become effective September 1 and avoid a gap in the collection. The Ministry is making an exception for a quick turnaround on this application which would normally take nine months.

**CAO RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That based on the May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021 staff report “Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) Re-implementation” that Council approve proceeding with the application to the Ministry of Finance to implement the Municipal and Regional District Tax within the City of Courtenay; and

That Council endorse the City of Courtenay Municipal and Regional District Tax Levy Bylaw No. 3041, 2021, and;

That Tourism Vancouver Island be authorized as the designate organization for tourism program implementation, and;

That Council direct staff to proceed with drafting a contract with Tourism Vancouver Island to administer the tourism and destination marketing programs and MRDT for Council approval.

Respectfully submitted,



Geoff Garbutt, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP  
Chief Administrative Officer

**BACKGROUND:**

In 2012, the additional hotel room tax was implemented at 2% on sales of accommodation in the City of Courtenay. The *Hotel Room Tax Act* was the Provincial legislation enabling this at the time. Under this Act, the Province would levy and collect the additional tax on behalf of the applicable Municipalities where it was in place and remit the funds to them for use towards tourism marketing, programs, and projects. At the time, CVEDS took the lead on completing the application and engaging with the hoteliers on behalf of the City. The City entered into an agreement with CVEDS to administer the program and complete all reporting requirements. The City received the funds from the Province and then remitted them to CVEDS.

In 2013 the Hotel Room Tax Act was repealed by the *Provincial Sales Tax Act* and rebranded to the Municipal & Regional District Tax (MRDT). In order to maintain the tax an application is required every five years. In 2017 when the previous regulation was due to repeal, an application was made by CVEDS to re-establish the 2% MRDT, however the designated recipient was changed from the City of Courtenay to CVEDS and supported by the Council of the day. This allowed the funds to be submitted directly to CVEDS and administered by them.

In December, 2020 CVEDS entered into a contract with Tourism Vancouver Island (TVI) to provide Destination Marketing and Visitor Services for the Comox Valley. This agreement also includes providing the administrative work to complete, submit, implement and report on the MRDT tactical plans and five year renewal submission related to the City of Courtenay accommodation area.

On February 25, 2021 the CVRD board provided CVEDS notice of early termination of their contract on August 26, 2021 in accordance with Section 22 of the CVRD-CVEDS Service agreement, dated July 27, 2020. CVEDS has now informed City staff that the Society intends to wrap up and dissolve shortly after August 26, 2021, which will result in the existing MRDT regulation currently in place for the City of Courtenay being repealed and cancelling the tax effective August 31, 2021.

**DISCUSSION:**

Under normal circumstances the Ministry of Finance requires applications to implement the MRDT nine months in advance for consideration. However, given these extenuating circumstances and the current state of the economy during the pandemic, the Ministry has expressed that they are willing to expedite the process for the City if an application is submitted by June 7, 2021. This will avoid a gap in the tax collection and re-implement the 2% tax effective September 1, 2021 if approved by the Minister. If there is a desire to increase to 3% a separate application can be made at a later date with hotelier support.

Tourism Vancouver Island (TVI) has now prepared the application package with the City of Courtenay as the designated recipient under their existing contract with CVEDS. The following items are required and have been completed as part of the application package:

- Five-Year Strategic Business Plan
- One Year Tactical Plan
- Letter of support from the CVRD
- Evidence of consultation with tourism industry stakeholders
- Evidence of support of at least 51% of the number of establishments that would collect the tax within the City representing at least 51% of the total number of rooms
- City of Courtenay Bylaw to impose the tax

As the City of Courtenay will ultimately be the formal applicant to the Ministry of Finance, it is necessary to obtain Council's approval by bylaw in order to proceed with the application.

In addition, a contract between the City of Courtenay and TVI will need to be established for administration and reporting of the MRDT funds.

If, in the future there is support to expand the MRDT to include other Municipalities and electoral areas with the Comox Valley a new application could be submitted by the CVRD at any time and this bylaw could be repealed.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The MRDT generates approximately \$350,000 annually to provide tourism marketing, programs and projects for the Comox Valley. With the support of TVI, there are no budget implications to the City of Courtenay for implementing this tax in 2021. For 2022 and beyond, staff will review the resource implications related to contract administration and to address outcomes of the ongoing service review process for the future of CVRD Economic Development Function 550. Staff anticipate that this would be related to destination marketing as well as the potential for a wider geographic area for the MRDT which may have the potential for increased demands on this area.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:**

Once Council has endorsed the bylaw and proceeding with the application, City staff will work with TVI to submit all the required documents to the Ministry of Finance by June 7th. In addition City staff will work with TVI to draft a service agreement to administer the tourism and destination marketing programs. Once the new MRDT regulation is in place the funds would flow from the Province to the City of Courtenay as the designated recipient. The City would then provide the funds to TVI under contract to administer the tourism and destination marketing programs as approved. TVI would take care of all the required reporting with oversight by the City. Updates would be provided to Council as necessary.

#### **ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS:**

Not Applicable

#### **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:**

##### **We actively pursue vibrant economic development**

▲ Continue to explore innovative and effective economic development opportunities

##### **We continually invest in our key relationships**

▲ ■ Advocate and cooperate with local and senior governments on regional issues affecting our community

- **AREA OF CONTROL:** The policy, works and programming matters that fall within Council's jurisdictional authority to act
- ▲ **AREA OF INFLUENCE:** Matters that fall within shared or agreed jurisdiction between Council and another government or party
- **AREA OF CONCERN:** Matters of interest that are outside Council's jurisdictional authority to act

**OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN REFERENCE:**

N/A

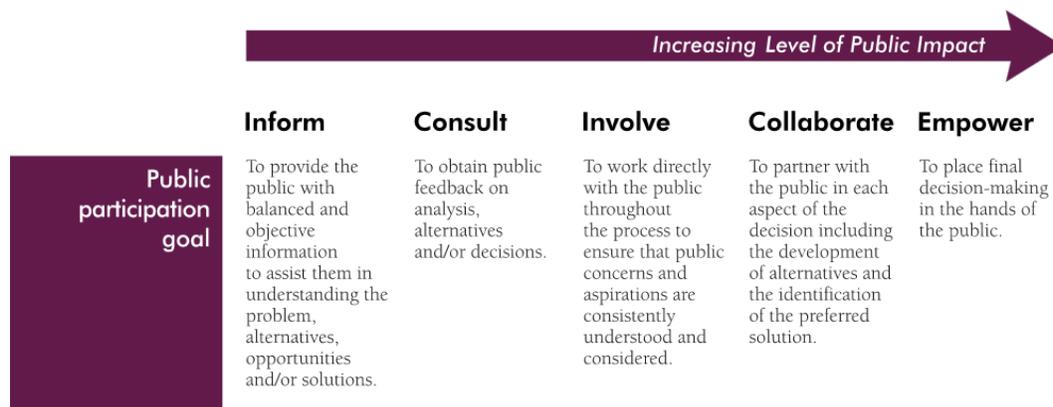
**REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY REFERENCE:**

N/A

**CITIZEN/PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

Staff will **inform** based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation:

[http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/IAP2%20Spectrum\\_vertical.pdf](http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/IAP2%20Spectrum_vertical.pdf)



**OPTIONS:**

**OPTION 1:** That Council approve proceeding with the application to the Ministry of Finance to implement the Municipal and Regional District Tax within the City of Courtenay; and

That Council endorse the City of Courtenay Municipal and Regional District Tax Levy Bylaw No. 3041, 2021, and;

That Tourism Vancouver Island be authorized as the designate organization for tourism program implementation, and;

That Council direct staff to proceed with drafting a contract with Tourism Vancouver Island to administer the tourism and destination marketing programs and MRDT for Council approval.

**OPTION 2:** That Council defer the endorsement of the application and bylaw for further discussion at a later Council meeting.

It should be noted that deferring endorsement may affect staff's ability to meet the June 7 submission deadline and create a gap in collection the MRDT.

OPTION 3: That Council not support proceeding with the application to the Ministry of Finance to implement the Municipal and Regional District Tax within the City of Courtenay.

Prepared by:



Jennifer Nelson, CPA, CGA  
Director of Financial Services

Concurrence:



Geoff Garbutt, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP  
Chief Administrative Officer

- Attachments: #1 City of Courtenay Municipal and Regional District Tax Levy Bylaw No. 3041, 2021  
#2 Five-Year Strategic Business Plan and One Year Tactical  
#3 Letter of support from the CVRD

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

BYLAW NO. 3041

A Bylaw to Request the Imposition of tax on accommodation under the Provisions of the Provincial Sales Tax Act

WHEREAS the Council of the City of Courtenay wishes to raise revenues for the purpose of financing tourism marketing, programs and projects;

AND WHEREAS a municipality may request that the Lieutenant Governor in Council make a regulation, under section 240 of the Provincial Sales Tax Act, imposing, on behalf of the municipality, an additional tax not exceeding the Council is authorized under provincial legislation to request by bylaw that the Lieutenant Governor in Council make a regulation for an additional tax levy not exceeding two percent (2%) of the purchase price of accommodation sold within the municipality;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the City of Courtenay, in open meeting assembled enacts as follows:

1. This bylaw may be cited for all purposes as “**City of Courtenay Municipal and Regional District Tax Levy Bylaw No. 3041, 2021**”.
2. The Lieutenant Governor in Council is hereby requested to make a regulation under section 240 of the Provincial Sales Tax Act declaring that effective September 1, 2021, section 123(1) of the said Act applies in respect of accommodation purchased within the City of Courtenay.
3. The tax be imposed under the provisions of the regulation is requested to be not exceeding two percent (2%) of the purchase price of accommodation.
4. The funds paid to the City of Courtenay under the provisions of the regulation shall be applied to tourism marketing, programs and projects.
5. City of Courtenay Additional Hotel Room Tax Levy Bylaw No. 2718, 2012 is hereby repealed.

Read a first time this day of May, 2021

Read a second time this day of May, 2021

Read a third time this day of May, 2021

Finally passed and adopted this day of May, 2021

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Mayor

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Corporate Officer

## Appendix 1.2 Five-Year Strategic Business Plan

A municipality, regional district or eligible entity interested in applying for the Municipal and Regional District Tax or a renewal of the Municipal and Regional District Tax must submit an application as set out in the MRDT Program Requirements. A Five-Year Strategic Business Plan is required **at time of application**. This Five-Year Strategic Business Plan must include a detailed One-Year Tactical Plan for the first year of program implementation. Each year (years two through five of the program), the One-Year Tactical Plan must be updated and resubmitted (by November 30<sup>th</sup>) to reflect current marketing activities for the year as part of the annual reporting obligations. A separate template has been provided to guide the development of these year two through five plans (refer to Appendix 2.3).

The Five-Year Strategic Business Plan must encompass the five-year period covered by the application and it **must** include the following elements:

Section 1: Five-year strategic overview with identified targets and actions for the five year period  
Section 2: One-Year Tactical Plan with performance measures, and  
Section 3: Detailed Budget for Year One

Your Five-Year Strategic Business Plan must adhere to the MRDT program principles.

Please ensure there is alignment between provincial tourism strategies and community tourism efforts. The applicant and designated recipients not subject to renewal applications are required to make their Five-year Strategic Business Plan available to tourism industry stakeholders and accommodation providers as part of the industry consultation and accommodation support requirements.

Your Five-Year Strategic Business Plan must identify marketing strategies, key markets and targets that the community will focus on to build its tourism business and the steps it needs to take to achieve desired results.

Your Five-year Strategic Business Plan should answer the following key questions:

- What business objectives related to tourism does your community expect to achieve?
- What type of growth does your community want to achieve (in the short and long term)?
- How will your community achieve these objectives?
- What type of tourism products will you need?
- What type of visitor are you hoping to attract?

Please contact Destination British Columbia at [MRDT@destinationbc.ca](mailto:MRDT@destinationbc.ca) for any questions.

### *Quick Reference Guide*

*(from the MRDT Program Requirements):*

- *The intention of the tax is to assist designated recipients to fund tourism marketing, programs and projects. Affordable housing was added as a permissible use of funds in Budget 2018.*
- *Funds from the MRDT program are intended to augment current funding and cannot be used to replace existing sources of tourism funding in a community.*
- *The MRDT program is intended to contribute to the increase of local tourism revenue, visitation, and economic benefits and should be supported by local government and tourism stakeholders.*

*The MRDT program principles are:*

- *Effective tourism marketing, programs and projects*
- *Effective local-level stakeholders support, and inter-community collaboration*
- *Marketing efforts that are coordinated and complementary to provincial marketing strategies and tactics*
- *Fiscal prudence and accountability.*

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For more information on tourism business planning, please visit Destination British Columbia's website (refer to [www.destinationbc.ca/Resources/Developing-a-Tourism-Plan.aspx](http://www.destinationbc.ca/Resources/Developing-a-Tourism-Plan.aspx)).

**Five-Year Strategic Business Plan Template**

**Designated Recipient:** City of Courtenay  
**Community Name:** Courtenay  
**Date Prepared:** May 26, 2021  
**MRDT Term Expiry Date:** February 28, 2022  
**Five Year Period:** January 1, 2021 to January 1, 2025

A description/instructions pertaining to each section is provided in grey text as a guide only. **The format of your Five-Year Strategic Business Plan may be developed specific to your community needs and resources, but must include all required sections of the Five-Year Strategic Business Plan listed below.** If using this template, please delete the grey text and provide your response accordingly.

**Section 1: Five-Year Strategic Overview**

<b>Vision and Mission</b>	<p><b>Vision</b> The Comox Valley is recognized as the premier, year-round Vancouver Island destination for outdoor, culinary, and cultural activities.</p> <p><b>Mission</b> Implement fiscally prudent destination marketing initiatives that are informed and tested through stakeholder engagement that are objectively focused on increasing overnight stays in the Comox Valley that drive economic benefit to business owners and residents.</p>
<b>Strategic Context</b>	<p><b>PANDEMIC-RELATED STRATEGY ADJUSTMENTS</b></p> <p>The Five-Year Strategic Business Plan has been updated to reflect two key pandemic-related implications:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Reduced hotel occupancy rates translate to reduced MRDT, with a long recovery period to come. This reduces marketing dollars available to bring visitors back to Comox Valley. It is therefore increasingly important that marketing strategies look to short-term results to first re-establish stability in the industry. Longer-term results from initiatives like event development take a secondary focus in this Five-Year Plan, and for the reason that large gatherings will be the last to come back from COVID-19.</li> <li>2) The Five-Year Strategic Business Plan has been updated to incorporate selected pandemic recovery tactics, align brand messaging with societal psychological shift, reflect closer-in geographic targeting, and implement modest product repositioning and marketing packaging to sharpen value proposition.</li> </ol>

**CURRENT CHALLENGES**

Labour Force: Existing lack of supply for both skilled and unskilled labour that is required for the Tourism sector to meet current demand related to growth projections. Corresponding cost of living for tourism and hospitality labour (i.e. affordable rental options and vacancy issues) is also a barrier.

Location: Increased transportation cost and time continue to present its challenges to convert visitors from off-Island. Further, the Comox Valley is not on a traveller route to busier Island destinations including Tofino or Victoria, thereby being considered ‘out of the way’. Once visitors are in the Comox Valley, shuttle and taxi services can be challenging for key areas such as the airport and Mount Washington, especially early mornings and evenings.

Marine Infrastructure: Significant lack of supply for both increasing transient and permanent moorage at existing harbour facilities means marine traffic is being turned away, or doesn’t even attempt to come. As well, related supply chain businesses such as adventure tourism and marine services are non-existent or limited relative to other Vancouver Island destination harbours.

Venue Capacity: The overall venue capacity in the Comox Valley presents challenges for both existing conferences and events as well as in the attraction of events that are more regional, provincial, and national scale. The Sid Williams Theatre is smaller than those in comparably sized regions. There are no significant permanent or mobile outdoor performing or event space. Sport facilities are often at capacity with local use, making it challenging to attract tournaments/sporting events.

Direct International Air Service: Existing infrastructure exists at the Comox Valley Airport to support direct route development to key international markets however, this has yet to occur.

Hotel Room Revenue / Occupancy: Accommodation properties are currently at or are near capacity during the peak summer period (June-Sept).

Vibrancy and Activities ‘After Hours’: Existing lack of vibrancy and visitor/consumer activities in the evenings during December – March. Majority of businesses in the downtown cores close by 5 pm, and are also closed during provincial and federal holidays, and often on Sundays.

Export Ready Product and Tours: Lack of supply of packaged tour group opportunities specific to culinary/agri-tourism and outdoor adventure

markets in the shoulder season to support the interest and conversion of receptive tour operators (RTO) and tour operators/travel operators.

Operators are still largely dependent on the Summer Season and further product and market development is required to build capacity and demand in the shoulder and winter season (with the exception of alpine activities in winter).

#### KEY LEARNINGS

Since the implementation of the hotel tax in 2013, development of signature events, building stakeholder involvement in those events, and focusing on developing additional visits through off-peak periods have been a primary objective of the destination marketing plan. Courtenay has seen significant increases in key indicators related to these efforts:

- 12-month, year over year comparisons; MRDT revenues are +46% from 2014 to 2019;
- Q1 MRDT revenues (January to March) are +29% from 2013 to 2019, showing a significant increase in off-peak period visits;
- January revenue increases +97% from 2014 to 2019 (WinterFest/Après Ski event month);
- June revenue increases are +90% from 2013 to 2019 (BC Seafood Festival signature event month).

Partnerships are also very critical to the success of destination marketing efforts. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreements with the Downtown Courtenay BIA (DCBIA), the Comox BIA, and Mount Washington Resort Assn., and Comox Valley Arts enable enhanced event delivery and a depth of collaboration from hundreds of businesses from throughout the area.

Relative to social media tactics, Discover Comox Valley has taken major strides in its activation, integration and engagement of multi-channel organic and online social media advertising tactics over 5 years to maximize digital budget and reach, targeting audience groups in Vancouver Island, Alberta, and Washington State. A Live Chat feature and Discover Comox Valley online retail store were added to the Discover Comox Valley website in 2020 to support enhanced virtual visitor services.

With the support of DBC via the Co-operative Marketing Partnerships Program and paid online marketing agencies, the region has been able to engage in a far more sophisticated approach to online marketing, integrating the latest in retargeting, track post-click and post-view conversions methods, providing powerful learnings & enabling adjustments in real-time tactics to support the best return on investment.

	<p>Additionally, a growing percentage of budget and staff resources has been assigned to these tactics as the ability to hyper-target consumers to generate instantaneous sales engagement &amp; actions has proven to be the most effective in conversion to the destinations business objectives; this is an important trend we envision continuing over the next 5 years.</p> <p>Finally, over the last 15 years, the Comox Valley has had a minor focus on Traditional Travel Trade which has included supporting Tourism Vancouver Island / Destination BC tour operators fam tours and events, provision of materials and content for their attendance at travel trade shows, with some limited direct outreach to tour operators and supporting tour operators who use the Vancouver Island Visitor Centre, located in Courtenay, as one of their stops on the way to or from another Island destinations.</p> <p>Hoteliers in the region have received direct outreach from tour operators interested in coming to the Comox Valley, but due to the peak times periods being requested to welcome the tours, coupled with the demand for low, commissionable rates, there is little motivation by the accommodation sector to support securing those relationships when there is more revenue potential from the peak season free independent travellers, sports teams, and small meetings/groups.</p>
<b>Overall Goals, Objectives and Targets</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-establish 2019 levels of overnight volume and visitor expenditures from key markets; and objectively grow expenditure when stability returns to travel.       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Invest in cost-effective marketing strategies that are determined and tested through market research;</li> <li>b. Measure growth and change for critical learning;</li> <li>c. Consult tourism businesses to understand product and market needs.</li> <li>d. Align with regional and provincial efforts to support indigenous tourism development.</li> </ol> <p>Key markets: Lower Mainland, Alberta and when the border re-opens, Washington State</p> <p>Measures: Hotel occupancy rate, average visitor expenditure, length of stay</p> </li> <li>2. Support tourism businesses in maintaining, starting, and improving businesses that deliver a unique and superior experience to best fit consumers.       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Offer industry development workshops and expert services;</li> <li>b. Create partnered marketing opportunities for business participation;</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p>c. Provide businesses with research insights for the improvement of their own investment and marketing efforts.</p> <p>Measures: # of new, maintained, and enhanced tourism businesses</p> <p>3. Operate Comox Valley Tourism with transparent and fiscally responsible principles, and through consultative and accountable engagement with stakeholders throughout the marketing cycle.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Advisory committee review of financial and marketing decisions;</li> <li>b. Stakeholder newsletters for information and feedback opportunities;</li> <li>c. Stakeholder consultation events.</li> </ol> <p>Measures: # engagement sessions</p> <p>4. Increase the awareness of Comox Valley Tourism amongst stakeholders, and ensure a reputation of collaboration, and care.</p> <p>Measures: Stakeholder satisfaction ratings</p>
<b>Strategies - Key Actions</b>	<p><b>Promotional strategies include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online and Social Media advertising</li> <li>• Develop an email marketing sales funnel</li> <li>• Engage Stakeholders in Comox Valley marketing initiatives and begin to measure success by number of conversions to stakeholder websites</li> <li>• Traditional campaigns via TV, print and radio ads</li> </ul> <p><b>Online and Social Media</b></p> <p>Online and Social Media strategies are key areas of focus. Increased social media engagement through hashtag use in advertising and promotion with #exploreBC, and #exploreComoxValley will ensure alignment and gain more followers, potential customers and visitors. Tagging through website to track customers and retargeting track post-click and post-view conversions will be utilized for all targeted campaigns. Software to search and request rights to share user generated content will continue to support organic social media strategies.</p> <p><b>Email Marketing</b></p> <p>Email marketing continues to be an essential tactic for reaching “owned” leads. The Comox Valley consumer marketing email list will be built through incentivized email sign up campaigns, and then push direct call to action message that may include events, seasonal hotel packages specials and itinerary ideas.</p> <p><b>Traditional Tactics with TV, Radio and Print Ads</b></p>

Traditional media will still play a role in the development of greater brand awareness for the Comox Valley.

Print ads will be placed in publications that reach key source markets.

TV campaigns will be generated, building on the success of TV campaigns in recent years. TV campaigns will be supported by targeted online marketing tactics and contesting in Alberta, Lower Mainland and/or Vancouver Island that drive to website landing pages with accommodation partners highlighted.

Radio will be relied on less than in previous years. Targeting consumers through shorter daily messages with higher frequencies will be employed and contesting will best utilize this medium to reach consumers.

### **Asset Development**

To achieve Tier One brand alignment with the BC-Brand, Comox Valley will invest in image and video assets that showcase the unique selling propositions of the Comox Valley, and contain models of diversity.

Significant development of a Comox Valley destination marketing website will enable the improvement of marketing sales funnels and the primary objective will be to drive business / bookings to stakeholder websites.

### **Media Relations strategies include:**

- Online communications
- Media outreach and hosting activities including collaboration with DBC and TVI media activities
- Production of communications tools including online backgrounders, fact sheets and updates to websites

### **Destination Development: Market Development and Product Experiences**

Comox Valley tourism will support tourism businesses in product and experience development through industry engagement and skills learning workshops.

Event support will continue to focus on key destination drivers (culinary, art, and outdoor). Experience design professionals in the tourism industry will support the continued coordination of signature events, and incentivize visitation through the promotion of these events.

**Section 1: Five-Year Strategic Overview**
**Brand Positioning**

The Comox Valley is a premier, year-round event destination recognized as having unique outdoor, culinary, arts and cultural experiences. Progressive branded ads utilizing professional imagery, captivating cinematography, strong messaging and calls to action via each campaign will be structured to allow for partner buy-in, where appropriate, and motivate visitors to engage further online and via social media.

Comox Valley Tourism marketing plan will continue to support Destination BC's strategies to Captivate, Advocate and Generate and work within the brand guidelines whenever possible. It will continue to align with the Province of BC's Tourism Plan, namely in focusing on inclusive travel, sustainable messaging and seasonal dispersion

**Target Markets**

Primary: Rejuvenators, Authentic Experiencers and Cultural Explorers, affluent, frequent travellers who are touring and exploring  
Secondary: Free Spirits

**Geographic target markets:**

Victoria and Vancouver Island  
Lower Mainland BC  
Alberta  
Washington State

**Demographic targets:**

Age 35 +  
Families

**Activity-based target groups:**

Outdoor and Marine Adventure enthusiasts including skiing/snowboarding, biking, hiking, kayaking, diving, wildlife viewing, golf, boating;  
Culinary Tourism enthusiasts including winery, distillery, brewery, farm tours & tastings, farmers' markets, culinary festivals/events;  
Unique experiences including: farm cycle tours, seafood festival, winter festival, Arts and Culture, Outdoor & Marine sector, and Culinary sector.

<b>Management, Governance, and Administration</b>	<p>The City of Courtenay manages and administers the MRDT funds with the support of a third party contractor that is the official Destination Management Organization (DMO) in the Comox Valley. Governance is supported by a Tourism Advisory Committee which is a committee of the Courtenay City Council. This Committee works to develop the Comox Valley as a leading tourism destination on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. The Committee is comprised of a diverse group of tourism stakeholders and reports to City Council on a regular basis.</p> <p>Other committees and task forces will be established as required to support the implementation of the 5-year strategic business plan.</p>
<b>Sources of Funding</b>	<p>In addition to the MRDT, the following are sources of funding anticipated for the next five years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Courtenay</li> <li>• Town of Comox</li> <li>• Comox Valley Regional District</li> <li>• Destination BC Co-operative Marketing Partnerships Program</li> <li>• Private Sector Businesses</li> <li>• Other Grants where applicable</li> </ul>

<b>Affordable Housing (if applicable)</b>	City of Courtenay will build an Affordable Housing plan to implement use of the OAP collections and amend this document with a forthcoming Affordable Housing plan.
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Please provide a **Project Plan** for each major activity you will undertake in the year ahead using MRDT funds. Authorized purposes of MRDT funds are tourism marketing, programs and projects and any other prescribed purposes as set out by regulation.

**Project plans should include the following information for each activity. The recipient can organize the plan in a manner that best reflects their individual approach. Please note that Destination BC may share relevant tactical information with applicable Destination BC program areas to facilitate increased collaboration and alignment.**

1. The **major category** of the activity. Examples could include marketing, destination and product experience management, visitor services, etc.

Marketing, which may include:

- Media Advertising and Production (for example: print, radio, television, out-of-home, paper direct mail, email marketing, search engine marketing, paid social media, display, and native advertising)
- Website - Hosting, Development, Maintenance
- Social Media Management Platforms and Tools (i.e. Hootsuite)
- Consumer Shows and Events
- Collateral production and distribution
- Travel Media Relations (for example: story idea creation, media and influencer FAM hosting/support, attendance at media marketplaces, etc.)
- Travel Trade (for example: trade and FAM hosting/support, etc.)
- Consumer-focused asset development (for example: curation or production of written content, photography, videography)
- Other.

Destination and Product Experience Management, which may include:

- Industry Development and Training - Enhancing Education and Knowledge (for example: market readiness, digital readiness, industry conferences, packaging and tourism-related industry workshops, etc.)
- Product Experience Enhancement and Training (for example: Itinerary Development, Content Development and Key Experience Creation)
- Research, Evaluation and Analytics
- Other.

Visitor Services, which may include:

- Visitor Services Activities (for example: staff wage and benefits, visitor services via social media, digital tools, including mobile apps, kiosks, beacons, etc, roving/mobile visitor services, ambassador programs, FAMs )
- Other.

Meetings, Conventions, Events and Sport:

- Examples could include conferences, events, sales, sport, grant programs, etc.

Affordable Housing, which may include:

- Details on affordable housing projects (project description and rationale, authorizing documents, budget and applicable funding partners)
- Please complete and attach Appendix 1.8.

Other:

- Other activities not covered by the above categories, such as capital expenditures if **pre-approved by government** (prior to application), etc.
2. Please list and describe **the tactics** your community will use to achieve the strategies outlined in Section 1 of your Five-Year Strategic Business Plan. There may be several tactics for each activity.
  3. Please provide an **implementation plan** that includes a short description, quantifiable objectives, rationale, action steps, potential partnerships, resources, sources of funding, responsibilities, timeframe, budget, and evaluation mechanism.
  4. Please outline the **performance measures, expected outputs and outcomes**. Note, designated recipients receiving a tax rate of 3% are subject to additional reporting requirements. Please refer to Appendix 2.2 for more information about annual reporting of performance measures.

## Project Plan Template

A description/instructions pertaining to each section is provided in grey text as a guide only. **The format of your Project Plan may be developed specific to your community needs and resources. If using this template, please delete the grey text and provide your response accordingly.**

<p><b>Major Category:</b> Marketing</p>
<p><b>Activity Title:</b> Website</p>
<p><b>Tactics:</b></p> <p>The brand concept will inform changes to the website and the website will continue to be used as an important step in the consumer journey to purchase. Rather than a focus on sales at the site itself, the website will be optimized for conversion to stakeholder websites. The consumer journey will be optimized for speed and efficiency of movement from one step in the path to the other. Compelling content, and a greater tie into visitor servicing (frequently asked questions, maps and other wayfinding tools) will be added.</p> <p>As improvements are underway to the overall website, campaign landing pages will support Summer, Fall and Winter marketing efforts.</p>
<p><b>Implementation Plan:</b></p> <p><b>Short Description:</b> Optimize with a website design and functionality that best moves the consumer further along the path to purchase: Draw the consumer in with compelling content, develop a greater tie with visitor servicing for wayfinding and trip planning convenience, and ensure a robust presence for stakeholders. Optimize load speed, images, and Google Analytics.</p> <p><b>Quantifiable Objectives:</b> Increase the number of consumers who move further along each stage of the sales journey: increased website traffic, smart tracking for re-marketing, and conversion to stakeholder websites.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> A strong website is a tool to move consumers from interest, through trip planning to purchase.</p> <p><b>Action Steps:</b> Finalize brand concept, develop website architecture, audit existing content and features, implement design, connect with stakeholders for listings, add new content, refine Google Analytics and launch.</p> <p><b>Potential Partnerships:</b> Community groups and partners, tourism operators.</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> Stakeholder engagement surveys, Consumer Perception Research, Creative and web development agency</p> <p><b>Sources of Funding:</b> MRDT, Destination BC Co-Op dollars</p> <p><b>Timeframe:</b> June to December</p>

**Budget:** \$52,100

**Major Category:** Marketing

**Activity Title:** Consumer Asset Development

2021 will include a particular focus on developing a refreshed brand look and position in the tourism marketplace; as consumers return to travel, demand may be high but so will be the volume of other competing destination messaging. It is imperative that Comox Valley develop a strong value proposition, that can be reflected in a fresh, and inviting way, into a new brand look and campaign concept.

As consumer values shift through the pandemic, this brand refresh puts Comox Valley at an advantage of diving deeply into what motivates the ideal Comox Valley visitor, and therefore how to develop a destination, and sales strategy, that best suits those motivators.

**Objective:**

Refresh the Comox Valley brand to reflect the evolving identity of both the Comox Valley communities and the ideal visitor. Use this brand to tell the story of tourism operators and their offerings within paid media.

Place Comox Valley within the content plans of Destination British Columbia and Tourism Vancouver Island by creating more BC-Brand aligned images that can be shared in the Content Hub.

Lead the tourism industry toward diverse representation of travellers in tourism marketing images, including people with disabilities, people of colour, and transgender, non-binary individuals. Develop content for barrier-free travel experiences to assist travellers in having the best and safest experience on Vancouver Island.

**Strategy:**

Through consultation with industry, develop a strong value proposition and accompany messaging that can be translated into marketing tactics through the year, and create a larger library of diverse traveller images, video and written content.

**Tactics:**

<b>Brand Consultation</b>	<p><b>Short Description:</b> Stakeholder survey and engagement to yield a revised and refreshed brand identity for tourism marketing efforts in the Comox Valley: deliverables include a new logo, brand font, and colours and informed destination positioning.</p> <p><b>Quantifiable Objectives:</b> Increase Stakeholder participation, improve Stakeholder satisfaction, improve consumer engagement measures (Social Media)</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Better alignment with the BC-Brand for best use of Provincial brand equity, stronger alignment with primary qualities of the destination, as well as travel motivators of target consumer.</p> <p><b>Action Steps:</b> Distribute stakeholder and resident survey, examine results, engage with perception and MobileScapes research providers as applicable to process. Develop and test concepts with consumers and stakeholders.</p> <p><b>Potential Partnerships:</b> Community partners, tourism operators, Destination BC Brand Team, Creative Agency, Research Firms.</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> Creative Agency, research and survey tools</p> <p><b>Sources of Funding:</b> Destination BC Co-Op Dollars, MRDT</p> <p><b>Time Frame:</b> April to July</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> \$16,500</p>
<b>Images</b>	<p><b>Short Description:</b> Gather BC-Brand aligned images for a significant contribution of Comox Valley assets to the Content Hub. Include diverse representation of travellers in image assets, and ensure images support overall Brand and marketing strategy.</p> <p><b>Quantifiable Objectives:</b> increase # of BC-Brand aligned images of the Comox Valley contributed to BC-Content Hub.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Foundation to marketing efforts - compelling imagery that reflects the experience of visiting the Comox Valley.</p> <p><b>Action Steps:</b> Develop an image asset collection list and photo brief, contract a photographer/photographers, arrange shoots, select images, share images with partners.</p> <p><b>Potential Partnerships:</b> Community partners, content creators, tourism businesses</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> Photographer</p> <p><b>Sources of Funding:</b> MRDT, Destination BC Co-Op Dollars</p> <p><b>Time Frame:</b> Ongoing (Summer, Fall and Winter assets required)</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> \$24,000</p>
<b>Video</b>	<p><b>Short Description:</b> Gather video (b-roll) assets for ongoing marketing efforts, and use video footage to create a “hero” video, with social media cut-downs to inspire travel to the Comox Valley. Use video as a means to profile individual Stakeholder businesses with a visit now and safety/welcome message.</p> <p><b>Quantifiable Objectives:</b> Video completion, video views</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Video continues to be a compelling storytelling medium, showing efficient engagement and reach on social media (outperforming image and written content).</p> <p><b>Action Steps:</b> Develop video concepts with a video contractor. Arrange shoot, and participation of stakeholders, review footage, submit to Destination BC for brand review, share video and distribute to partners for sharing.</p> <p><b>Potential Partnerships:</b> Destination BC Brand Team, community groups, tourism businesses</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> Videographer</p> <p><b>Sources of Funding:</b> MRDT and Destination BC Co-Op Dollars</p> <p><b>Time Frame:</b> June through September</p>

	<b>Budget:</b> \$24,000
<b>Written Content</b>	<p><b>Short Description:</b> Develop itinerary and blog content that will expand available storytelling on the DiscoverComoxValley.com and that can form the basis of niche advertisements on social media.</p> <p><b>Quantifiable Objectives:</b> Increase website pageviews and unique visits, increase time on page, and conversion rates (to stakeholder websites)</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Website content that will highlight specific experiences and tourism businesses in the Comox Valley, positioned as a vehicle for moving consumers along the path to purchase from Inspired to Booked.</p> <p><b>Action Steps:</b> Identify content gaps and unique selling propositions, work with tourism businesses to incorporate business and product into content.</p> <p><b>Potential Partnerships:</b> Tourism operators, content creators</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> Content writers</p> <p><b>Sources of Funding:</b> MRDT and Destination BC Co-Op Dollars</p> <p><b>Time Frame:</b> Ongoing</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> \$6,000</p>

<b>Major Activity:</b> Marketing	
<b>Activity Title:</b> Media Advertising	
<p>As travel restrictions lift, and consumers begin to spend money planning leisure travel, the travel marketing space will be crowded with global competitors. The first phase of travel resumption will include a regional, then provincial approach to movement. Comox Valley will respond to travel measure relaxation accordingly, and will continue to support safe, responsible travel messaging.</p> <p>In addition to ensuring the website and social media channels contain accurate and timely travel information, media advertisements will target right-fit consumers with compelling motivational messages, and will begin the process of capturing consumer interest in visiting the Comox Valley: for long-term brand development and immediate bookings.</p>	
<b>Tactics:</b>	
<b>Print (Newspaper/Magazine)</b>	<p><b>Short Description:</b> Regional consumers present the first opportunity to welcome travellers back to the Comox Valley. Working with regional print publications will help Comox Valley align with the brand equity and audiences of those publications that typically hold a niche and revered space in their communities.</p> <p><b>Quantifiable Objectives:</b> Reach a target consumer with a call to book travel in the Comox Valley this year. (Measure impressions, direct call-to-action results.)</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> To maximize exposure through media partnerships that reach a regional consumer.</p> <p><b>Action Steps:</b> Engage media outlet, determine creative direction and message, ad creation</p> <p><b>Potential Partnerships:</b> Tourism businesses</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> Media outlet, creative agency</p>

	<p><b>Sources of Funding:</b> Destination BC Co-Op Dollars, MRDT  <b>Time Frame:</b> June to October  <b>Budget:</b> \$15,000</p>
<b>Television</b>	<p><b>Short Description:</b> GlobalBC, and ChekTV will be utilized for traditional and integrated content that supports a Fall and Winter campaign push. Contesting will be used on both channels as a means of capturing email addresses for future marketing efforts.  <b>Quantifiable Objectives:</b> Reach a target consumer with a call to book travel in the Comox Valley this year. (Measure impressions, direct call-to-action results.)  <b>Rationale:</b> Extensive reach with BC’s most popular news provider to target market, increase brand awareness for fall and winter activity offerings.  <b>Action Steps:</b> Engage media outlet, determine creative direction and message, ad creation  <b>Potential Partnerships:</b> Tourism businesses  <b>Resources:</b> Media outlet, creative agency  <b>Sources of Funding:</b> Destination BC Co-Op Dollars, MRDT  <b>Time Frame:</b> August to November  <b>Budget:</b> \$50,000</p>
<b>Email Marketing</b>	<p><b>Short Description:</b> Focusing on developing a sales funnel that includes “owned” leads enables marketing and re-marketing tactics to a captive and known-to-be-relevant audience.  <b>Quantifiable Objectives:</b> Increase subscribers, number of opens and engagement with the content.  <b>Rationale:</b> Email marketing is cost-efficient and enables Comox Valley to build a community of consumers and potential consumers for continual marketing.  <b>Action Steps:</b> Email software subscription and website installation, email capture campaign, regular email development and deployment.  <b>Potential Partnerships:</b> Community partners and tourism businesses.  <b>Resources:</b> Marketing software for email delivery, creative agency  <b>Sources of Funding:</b> MRDT and Destination BC Co-Op Dollars  <b>Time Frame:</b> Ongoing  <b>Budget:</b> \$10,000</p>
<b>Paid Search /Search Engine Marketing</b>	<p><b>Short Description:</b> Initiate an always-on Search Engine marketing strategy to capture consumers as they begin their vacation planning process.  <b>Quantifiable Objectives</b> Reach a target consumer with a call to book travel in the Comox Valley this year. (Measure impressions, direct call-to-action results.)  <b>Rationale:</b> Search Engine Marketing provides for a cost-effective strategy at influencing consumer buying behaviour at a crucial time in their vacation planning process.  <b>Action Steps:</b> Identify key search terms, write ads, purchase ads.  <b>Potential Partnerships:</b> N/A  <b>Resources:</b> N/A  <b>Sources of Funding:</b> MRDT and Destination BC Co-Op Dollars  <b>Time Frame:</b> Ongoing</p>

<b>Paid Social Media</b>	<p><b>Budget:</b> \$10,000</p> <p><b>Short Description:</b> Social Media advertising will support campaign objectives as they evolve: direct booking call-to-actions to influence immediate bookings/revenue potential, brand awareness, fall and winter experience-based ads and brand awareness in the Alberta market for air travel through Comox Valley airport.</p> <p><b>Quantifiable Objectives</b> Reach a target consumer with a call to book travel in the Comox Valley this year. (Measure impressions, direct call-to-action results.)</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Influence immediate bookings, introduce new Comox Valley branded ads, and develop ongoing and cost-efficient visibility within targeted key markets.</p> <p><b>Action Steps:</b> Identify key markets, messages and creative, develop ads, purchase ads.</p> <p><b>Potential Partnerships:</b> Community partners, Tourism businesses</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> Images, Creative Agency</p> <p><b>Sources of Funding:</b> MRDT and Destination BC Co-Op Dollars</p> <p><b>Time Frame:</b> Ongoing</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> \$30,000</p>
<b>Display and third party advertising partnerships (digital)</b>	<p><b>Short Description:</b> Display (image) advertisements will drive brand awareness of the new Comox Valley look/message. Third party advertising partnerships on digital news and media sites will enable integration of the Comox Valley message into trusted networks that reach a right-fit target market.</p> <p><b>Quantifiable Objectives:</b> Reach a target consumer with a call to book travel in the Comox Valley this year. (Measure impressions, direct call-to-action results.)</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> To maximize built-in audiences of trusted networks for the purposes of developing greater brand awareness for the Comox Valley as a destination.</p> <p><b>Action Steps:</b> Identify key markets, messages and creative, develop ads, purchase ads.</p> <p><b>Potential Partnerships:</b> Community partners, Tourism businesses</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> Images, Creative Agency</p> <p><b>Sources of Funding:</b> MRDT and Destination BC Co-Op Dollars</p> <p><b>Time Frame:</b> Ongoing</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> \$30,000</p>

<b>Major Activity:</b> Marketing	
<b>Activity Title:</b> Social Media Management (Organic)	
<p>Invest in the social media tool Crowdriff, which enables the legal curation of user generated content, the most powerful content marketers can utilize on social media for engagement and reach.</p> <p>Invest in regular social media management in the form of posting new content and responding to comments and questions about the destination.</p>	
<b>Tactics:</b>	
<b>Crowdriff Subscription</b>	<p><b>Short Description:</b> Software tool for the curation of user generated content, which may be used with appropriate rights granted by the image owner, on social media.</p> <p><b>Quantifiable Objectives:</b> Increase Social Media engagement, reach, click through rate (as a result of software use)</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> User generated content is the most powerful content.</p> <p><b>Action Steps:</b> Purchase and implement software</p> <p><b>Potential Partnerships:</b> Tourism businesses</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> Contractor</p> <p><b>Sources of Funding:</b> Destination BC Co-Op Dollars, MRDT</p> <p><b>Timeframe:</b> Ongoing</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> \$8,000</p>
<b>Social Media Management</b>	<p><b>Short Description:</b> Regular social media posting, along with responding to comments and questions from Social Media followers.</p> <p><b>Quantifiable Objectives:</b> Increase Social Media engagement, reach, click through rate (as a result of software use)</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> To curate inspiring images and amplify them across social platforms reaching new and supportive consumers.</p> <p><b>Action Steps:</b> Purchase and implement software</p> <p><b>Potential Partnerships:</b> Tourism businesses</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> Contractor</p> <p><b>Sources of Funding:</b> Destination BC Co-Op Dollars, MRDT</p> <p><b>Timeframe:</b> Ongoing</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> \$18,000</p>
<b>Amplify Stakeholder Content and Events</b>	<p><b>Short Description:</b> Use social media to build an amplification network for the cross-promotion of stakeholder offers, products and community events relevant to travellers.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Many channels working to amplify common messages will result in larger organic reach.</p> <p><b>Action Steps:</b> Purchase and implement software</p> <p><b>Potential Partnerships:</b> Tourism businesses</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> Contractor</p> <p><b>Sources of Funding:</b> Destination BC Co-Op Dollars, MRDT</p> <p><b>Timeframe:</b> Ongoing</p>

	<b>Budget:</b> \$0
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<p><b>Major Category:</b> Marketing – Development of New Markets</p>
<p><b>Activity Title:</b> Travel Trade and Media</p>
<p>Support travel trade initiatives through Destination BC and Tourism Vancouver Island, Support the Destination BC and Tourism Vancouver Island media program.</p>
<p><b>Implementation Plan</b></p> <p><b>Short Description:</b> Travel Trade and Media efforts led by Destination BC, and Tourism Vancouver Island. Support these efforts by providing relevant and current content on products and experiences, hosting press visits and coordinating private sector “in-kind” support in the Comox Valley. Host independent media, travel trade and/or influencer trips to Comox Valley.</p> <p>Quantifiable Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of new market opportunities as measured by number of impressions in markets outside of Alberta and BC</li> <li>• Development of new travel trade product opportunities as measured by an increase in the number of travel trade-ready stakeholders</li> </ul> <p><b>Rationale:</b></p> <p>These tactics enforce the following strategic directions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the Comox Valley as a touring/exploring and overnight destination</li> <li>• Build equity in the Comox Valley Brand</li> <li>• Execute effective marketing strategies that increase overnight stays</li> <li>• Support media relations efforts in the primary market</li> <li>• Support Destination BC and Tourism Vancouver Island in Travel Media efforts</li> <li>• Encourage stakeholder support for travel media</li> </ul> <p>As well as building positive relations with other communities on Vancouver Island, and the regional and provincial tourism partners.</p> <p><b>Action Steps:</b> Provide monthly/quarterly product and experience information to Tourism Vancouver Island for travel trade and media pitches. Book familiarization trips to the Comox Valley and host, as required by Destination BC and Tourism Vancouver Island.</p> <p><b>Potential Partnerships:</b> Tourism stakeholders, Tourism Vancouver Island, Destination BC</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> Partnerships, Tourism Vancouver Island staff, Destination BC, existing media and travel trade networks.</p> <p><b>Sources of Funding:</b> MRDT</p> <p><b>Timeframe:</b> Ongoing, as required.</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> \$5,000</p>

<b>Major Category:</b> Destination & Product Experience Development
<b>Activity Title:</b> Research
<b>Implementation Plan</b> <p><b>Short Description:</b> Invest in consumer perception research for the Comox Valley that will better inform marketing strategy going forward.</p> <p>Invest in MobileScapes research for 2021, which accesses actual visitation data and analyzes it using known consumer profiles per Canadian postal codes. This research was purchased for 2020 and 2019, and therefore continuance of the research allows for comparisons.</p> <p>Invest in Visitor Experience Survey – a measure of consumer satisfaction, and estimated spending, when in market – designed as a self-reporting mechanism that is incentivized with prizes.</p> <p>Quantifiable Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the available data on optimal target markets, create appropriate messaging that might influence conversion, completion of surveys (number of respondents) and number of FSAs collected, and customer profiles created from this data.</li> </ul> <p><b>Rationale:</b>        These tactics enforce the following strategic directions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target the most appropriate consumer segments</li> <li>• Promote the development and delivery of remarkable experiences in the Comox Valley</li> <li>• Use market intelligence to define vertical market opportunities</li> <li>• Build a high level of trust with the Comox Valley community partners and tourism businesses</li> <li>• Build greater community support for tourism in the Comox Valley</li> </ul> <p><b>Action Steps:</b> Confirm contract, develop research terms, receive and review final report.</p> <p><b>Potential Partnerships:</b> Contractor, Community partners, Stakeholders</p> <p><b>Resources:</b> Stakeholder relationships, contractor</p> <p><b>Sources of Funding:</b> Comox Valley Regional District, MRDT</p> <p><b>Timeframe:</b> April to December</p> <p><b>Budget:</b> \$17,000</p>

<b>Major Category:</b> Destination & Product Experience Development
<b>Activity Title:</b> Experience Development
<b>Implementation Plan</b>

**Short Description:** Support industry in developing and expanding remarkable tourism experiences that will appeal to a target consumer.

Engage an experience design specialist to work in group, and one-to-one formats, with tourism operators to refine and better their product, business strategy and attraction.

Quantifiable Objectives:

- Number of new tourism products developed as a result.

**Rationale:**

These tactics enforce the following strategic directions:

- Target the most appropriate consumer segments
- Promote the development and delivery of remarkable experiences in the Comox Valley
- Increase value of Comox Valley tourism to the stakeholders

**Action Steps:** Confirm contract, develop curriculum, plan events, organize support and review a final report.

**Potential Partnerships:** Contractor, Community partners, Stakeholders

**Resources:** Stakeholder relationships, contractor

**Sources of Funding:** Comox Valley Regional District, MRDT

**Timeframe:** October to December

**Budget:** \$15,000

**Major Category:** Destination & Product Experience Development

**Activity Title:** Stakeholder Engagement

**Implementation Plan**

**Short Description:**

Stakeholder Survey: An annual stakeholder survey will ask for feedback on marketing programs, and identify key challenges facing stakeholders. Deployment can be accomplished at a minimal cost.

Stakeholder Engagement Sessions: Host three annual stakeholder engagement sessions, each in a different location in the Comox Valley (ie. Courtenay, Comox, Cumberland). Stakeholder engagement group sessions will engage attendees in developing ideas, learning new skills and developing collaborations around key questions and topics.

Ongoing Stakeholder Meetings (one-on-one): Regular meetings throughout the year with stakeholders one-on-one will ensure marketing and development efforts remain relevant to industry, and will keep the community informed and invested.

Email Communication to Stakeholders: Send a quarterly email newsletter to stakeholders to share news, campaign results and upcoming opportunities and events.  
Invest in a Customer Management System for maintaining Stakeholder contact information and for developing and recording an ongoing stewardship program for stakeholder relations.

**Quantifiable Objectives:**

- Achieve a completed survey rate of 30%
- Achieve an email open rate of 25% (average)
- Achieve an attendance rate at engagement sessions, and one-on-one meetings, of 40% of total stakeholder list

**Rationale:**

These tactics enforce the following strategic directions:

- Engage tourism stakeholders in co-operative programs
- Manage revenues and expenses effectively
- Build a high level of trust with the Comox Valley Regional District
- Build greater community support for tourism in the Comox Valley

**Action Steps:**

Clean and grow the stakeholder list of CASL compliant stakeholders subscribed to receive emails from Comox Valley Tourism, and develop a communication strategy for keeping stakeholders engaged and informed (when to send newsletters, engagement sessions and how to book one-on-one sessions). Develop a calendar of contact with individual stakeholders so Comox Valley Tourism staff are guided to make particular points of contact, at particular points in time (and to ensure contact is made with as many stakeholders as possible). Develop and deploy emails to stakeholders. Meet with stakeholders. Host engagement sessions.

**Potential Partnerships:** Stakeholders, Regional District, other community entities (Chambers of Commerce that may also want to work on engagement with businesses)

**Resources:** Partnerships, survey software, venues, facilitators

**Sources of Funding:** Comox Valley Regional District, MRDT

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

**Budget:** \$5,000

**Major Category:** Destination & Product Experience Development

**Activity Title:** Festival & Event Creation Support

**Implementation Plan**

**Short Description:** Support the creation of new events, and enhancements to existing events through event creation/coordination skills development, and funding initiatives that enable community groups to activate tourism relevant events in the Comox Valley community.

Quantifiable Objectives: Event attendance from outside markets.

**Rationale:** Comox Valley has established world-recognized music and food events. Continue to support community groups for the marketing and development of these events into tourism attractions that fill hotel occupancy during off-season.

**Action Steps:** Consult with community leaders to determine best development and execution of support and funding opportunities for tourism-relevant events.

**Potential Partnerships:** Stakeholders, Regional District, community groups and organizations

**Resources:** Partners and Stakeholder relations

**Sources of Funding:** Comox Valley Regional District, MRDT

**Timeframe:** Ongoing

**Budget:** \$50,000

**Performance Measures:**

**Output Measures:**

1. On-time completion of each tactic
2. Stakeholder participation
3. Increased content inventory
4. Google analytics – page views, bounce rate, view time and etc.
5. # of social media referrals
6. Stakeholder satisfaction
7. # of Consumer inquiries
8. # of impressions
9. # of publications distribution
10. # of travel counsellors trained
11. # of Travel Trade FAMs hosted
12. Amount of private sector in-kind support received

**Outcome Measures:**

1. Increase Net Promoter Score
2. Increase consumer awareness and desire ratings
3. Increase visitor volume
4. Increase accommodation revenues
5. Increase length of stay
6. Increase visitor spending
7. Increase # of press visits and journalists
8. Increase # of travel trade tariffs featuring Comox Valley

**Section 3: MRDT Budget for Year One**

Designated recipients **must** complete the budget table as provided below.

<b>Appendix 2.3</b>	
<b>Section 3: Budget for One-Year Tactical Plan</b>	
<b>Revenues</b>	<b>Budget \$</b>
MRDT (net of admin fees)	\$206,554
MRDT from online accommodation platforms (AirBnB)	\$91,864
Local government contribution	\$256,000
Stakeholder contributions (i.e. membership dues)	\$0.00
Estimated Co-op funding (e.g. CTO; DMO-led projects)	\$233,000
Grants - Federal	
Grants - Provincial	\$20,066.00
Grants/Fee for Service - Municipal	
Retail Sales	\$10,000.00
Interest	
Other (please describe):	
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$817,484</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Budget \$</b>
<b>Marketing</b>	
Marketing staff – wage and benefits	\$130,000
Media advertising and production	\$145,000
Website - hosting, development, maintenance	\$52,120
Social media	\$26,000
Consumer shows, events	\$0
Collateral production and distribution	\$0
Travel media relations	\$5,000
Travel trade	\$0
Consumer focused asset development (written content, video, photography)	\$70,500
Other (please describe)	\$0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$428,620</b>
<b>Destination &amp; Product Experience Management</b>	
Destination and product experience management staff – wage and benefits	\$0.00
Industry development and training	\$5,000
Product experience enhancement and training	\$15,000
Research and evaluation	\$17,000
Other (please describe): Festival & Event Creation Support	\$50,000

	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$87,000.00</b>
<b>Visitor Services</b>		
Visitor Services Wages and Benefits		\$150,000.00
Visitor Services Operating Expenses		\$50,000
Other (please describe)		
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$200,000.00</b>
<b>Meetings, Conventions, Events &amp; Sport</b>		
Staff – wage and benefits (if stand alone)		\$0
Meetings, conventions, conferences, events, sport, etc.		\$0
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Administration</b>		
Management and staff unrelated to program implementation - wages and benefits		\$0.00
Finance staff – wages and benefits		\$0.00
Human Resources staff – wages and benefits		\$0.00
Board of Directors costs		\$0.00
Information technology costs – workstation related costs (i.e. computers, telephone, support, networks)		\$8,000.00
Office lease/rent		
General office expenses		\$2,000.00
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>Affordable Housing</b>		
Expenses from OAP revenue (if applicable)		\$91,864
	Subtotal	<b>\$91,864</b>
<b>Other</b>		
All other wages and benefits not included above (please describe)		0
Other activities not included above (please describe)		\$0
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$0</b>
	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$817,484</b>
	<b>Surplus (Deficit) of revenues over expenditures for the year</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Carry-Forward (Net Assets) Information (If applicable)</b>		
<b>Beginning of year (Required when completing tactical plan)</b>		
Restricted		
Unrestricted		
	<b>Total</b>	

<b>End of year (Required when completing year end financial report - should be blank for tactical plan)</b>		
Restricted		
Unrestricted		
<b>Total</b>		

**Projected Spend by Market (*broad estimate*)**
*Add more rows as needed.*

<b>Geographic Market</b>	<b>Total Marketing Budget by Market</b>	<b>% of Total \$ by Market</b>
BC	\$257,172	60%
Alberta	\$128,586	30%
Ontario		
Other Canada ( <i>please specify</i> )		
Washington State	\$42,862	10%
California		
Other USA ( <i>please specify</i> )		
Mexico		
China		
UK		
Germany		
Australia		
Japan		
Other International ( <i>Plasespecify</i> )		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$428,620</b>	

Office of the Chair

770 Harmston Avenue, Courtenay, BC V9N 0G8  
Tel: 250-334-6000 Fax: 250-334-4358  
Toll free: 1-800-331-6007  
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File: 6750-20/CV and 400-60/Courtenay

May 27, 2021

Sent via email only: [wsorichta@courtenay.ca](mailto:wsorichta@courtenay.ca)

Mayor and Council  
City of Courtenay  
830 Cliffe Avenue  
Courtenay, BC V9N 2J7

Dear Mayor and Council:

**Re: Support for City of Courtenay Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT)**

At the May 25, 2021 meeting of the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board, directors considered the request for support from the City of Courtenay for their application to implement the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) for accommodation rentals within the City of Courtenay.

The Board recognizes that the existing MRDT regulation in place for the City of Courtenay will be repealed with the cancellation of Comox Valley Economic Development Society contract with the CVRD. On behalf of the board of directors, I am pleased to provide the CVRD's support of the City of Courtenay's application to implement the Municipal and Regional District Tax for accommodation rentals within the City of Courtenay.

If you have any questions please contact Lisa Kilpatrick, Economic Recovery and Community Resilience Coordinator, at [lkilpatrick@comoxvalleyrd.ca](mailto:lkilpatrick@comoxvalleyrd.ca).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jesse Ketler', is written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

Jesse Ketler  
Chair

cc: Geoff Garbutt, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Courtenay



### Announcing MFA's Fossil Fuel Free Investment Options

With many local governments who have declared a state of climate emergency in their communities, we are pleased to announce fossil fuel free investment options now available to our Clients.

In addition to our **2 Pooled High Interest Savings Accounts with CIBC and National Bank**, which can be considered fossil fuel free, we announced the launch of our new **Fossil Fuel Free Short-term Bond Fund (FFF ST BF)** on May 4<sup>th</sup>. We have been actively working with Phillips, Hager, and North (PH&N) to bring you the first of its kind in Canada – a fixed income fossil fuel free investment fund.

In addition to the launch of the new FFF ST BF, we announced effective May 25<sup>th</sup> the repositioning of our previously named Intermediate Fund. The “tilt” focuses on highly liquid government securities and includes only the 6 Domestically Systematically Important Banks (D-SIB). This Fund is now called the **Government Focused Ultra-short Bond Fund (GF US BF)** and is also considered to be Fossil Fuel Free.

Both the FFF ST BF and the GF US BF provide a credible and well-diversified active investment solution to MFA Clients who choose to divest from fossil fuel investments.

### Fossil Fuel Free Short-term Bond Fund - Highlights

- Fund Manager, PH&N, will use a third-party screening service provided by Sustainalytics and the Carbon Underground 200 list to "screen out" fossil fuel related companies
- The FFF ST BF fund will be among the lowest cost actively managed Bond Fund of its type in Canada
- Minimum contribution - \$10,000
- Most appropriate for reserve moneys not needed for 3 years or longer, due to the interest rate sensitivity of the fixed rate investments in the pool
- The Fund invests in high quality Canadian-dollar denominated fixed income investments and is appropriate from a risk perspective for Local Governments
- Offers a very cost-effective opportunity for professional management and diversification into a broad category of bonds otherwise not featured in many local government investment portfolios



## Municipal Finance Authority of BC

### Government Focused Ultra-short Bond Fund - Highlights

- Composition of the fund has the highest quality and most liquid securities, 10% Federal Bonds, 65-90% Provincials/Municipals, and 0-25% D-SIB Financials
- Appropriate for clients with a time horizon of 0 to 15 months
- Provides clients with an ultra-conservative and ultra-liquid investment option
- Minimum contribution - \$10,000
- Reduced fees from 0.20% to 0.15%.
- Allows efficient access to government securities that are not available in any other form to the majority of our clients

If you would like to discuss these new fossil fuel free options please reach out to one of our Client Services Team at [invest@mfa.bc.ca](mailto:invest@mfa.bc.ca). We are available to discuss in-depth details of the Funds and provide assistance if you are preparing a report to your council or board.

More information about these and any of our Funds can be found on the [MFA website](#). The direct link to the Mandate Profiles for these new Funds can be found here: [FFF ST BF](#) - [GF US BF](#)

Once you are ready to subscribe to the FFF ST BF or the GF US BF, please complete the **Subscription Request Form** located [here](#).

## ESG and MFA Pooled Investment Funds

### About the Municipal Finance Authority of BC

The Municipal Finance Authority of British Columbia (MFA) believes that investment processes that incorporate ESG factors and other broad systemic issues can lead to better investment outcomes. We are committed to creating and offering best-in-class investment products to local governments and have been actively engaged in the Sustainable Investing landscape with the view of offering workable investment solutions for local governments. As such, MFA will only partner with UN PRI signatories in our pooled fund product line. Away from our Pooled High Interest Savings Accounts (PHISAs) which are managed internally by MFA, all the MFA Pooled Investment Funds are currently managed by Philips, Hager and North Investment Management Ltd. (PH & N). PH & N is a signatory to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment (UN PRI). As indicated in their most recent 2020 Assessment Report's Summary Scorecard, the UN PRI rated PH&N an A+ across all categories:



### What is ESG?

ESG investing focuses on using three non-financial factors as a part of a framework in the evaluation of companies for investment decision-making. **Environmental criteria** focus on stewardship of the natural environment and its resources. **Social criteria** look at the company's treatment of people and impact on societal issues. **Governance criteria** focuses on how an organization is presided over and its corporate policies.

Although not an exhaustive list, potential issues are listed below:



#### Environmental Issues

- Waste and Pollution
- Green house gas emissions
- Water management
- Land use
- Climate change risks and opportunities
- Natural Capital



#### Social Issues

- Health and Safety
- Customer engagement
- Employee relations
- Workforce and diversity
- Community relations
- Data protection and privacy



#### Governance Issues

- Bribery and Corruption
- Compliance and reporting
- Board composition
- Executive compensation structure
- Donation and lobbying
- Corporate risk management

## What is Socially Responsible Investing?

Socially Responsible Investing also known as sustainable, responsible, "green" or ethical investing, is any investment strategy which seeks to consider both financial return and social/environmental good to bring about social change.

## United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment

The United Nations-supported Principles for Responsible Investment (UN PRI) is an international network of investors working together to put six principles into practice. Its goal is to understand the implications of sustainability for investors and support signatories incorporating these issues into their investment decision-making and ownership practices. In implementing the Principles, signatories contribute to the development of a more sustainable global financial system.

The Principles offer a menu of possible actions for incorporating environmental, social, and corporate governance issues into investment practices across asset classes. The Principles are designed to be compatible with the investment styles of large, diversified, institutional investors that operate within a traditional fiduciary framework.

### The 6 principles that guide the UN PRI are as follows:

1. We will **incorporate ESG issues** into investment analysis and decision-making processes.
2. We will be **active owners** and incorporate ESG issues into our ownership policies and practices.
3. We will **seek appropriate disclosure** on ESG issues by the entities in which we invest.
4. We will **promote acceptance and implementation** of the Principles within the investment industry.
5. We will **work together** to enhance our effectiveness in implementing the Principles.
6. We will each **report on our activities and progress** towards implementing the Principles.

## PH&N and Responsible Investing

PH & N believes that being an active, engaged, and responsible owner is empowering in enhancing the long-term, risk-adjusted performance of portfolios and is part of their fiduciary duty. Their approach to Responsible Investing is comprised of three pillars and specific actions are taken under each of these pillars to deliver on its duty of maximizing clients' investment returns without undue risk of loss.

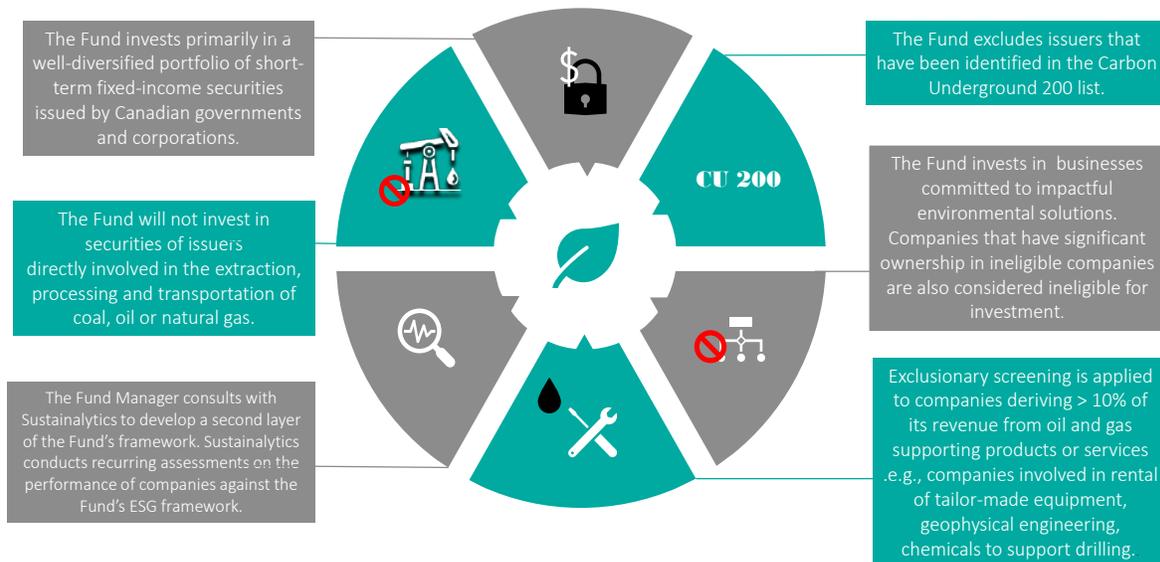
**Integrating relevant ESG factors.** First, by tailoring ESG integration tools and processes to their investment strategies. Second, by focusing on materiality, the attention is put towards those ESG factors that have the potential to impact the value of the investment. Third, transparency and accountability are key, by properly disclosing ESG risks and opportunities by the companies and countries in which we are invested in, it shows that these issuers are accountable in managing their material ESG risks and opportunities, leading to long-term sustainable performance. Fourth, through improvement and innovation, PH & N is always exploring new and better ways to integrate material ESG factors into the investment process.

**Active Stewardship.** PH & N conveys its views through thoughtful proxy voting, engagement with issuers and regulatory bodies, and collaboration with other like-minded investors. As stewards of their clients’ assets, they are committed to ensuring that the issuers in which they invest act in alignment with the long-term interests of their clients. This means conveying to issuers and regulatory bodies their views on topics such as board structure, executive compensation, gender diversity, and climate change. This is done by employing the following three methods. First, voting responsibly at the general meetings of their public equity holdings is an important way to act in the best interest of their clients. Second, their investment teams meet with the issuers in which they invest on an ongoing basis. Third, they participate in initiatives that will increase transparency, protect investors, and foster fair and efficient capital markets.

**Client Driven Solutions and Reporting.** Transparency and accountability are key to maintaining meaningful relationships with their clients and delivering on their fiduciary duty. Examples of such reporting: responsible investment reports, climate-related disclosures, proxy voting disclosures, reporting on their Responsible Investment commitments, RBC GAM responsible investment survey, and ESG insights.

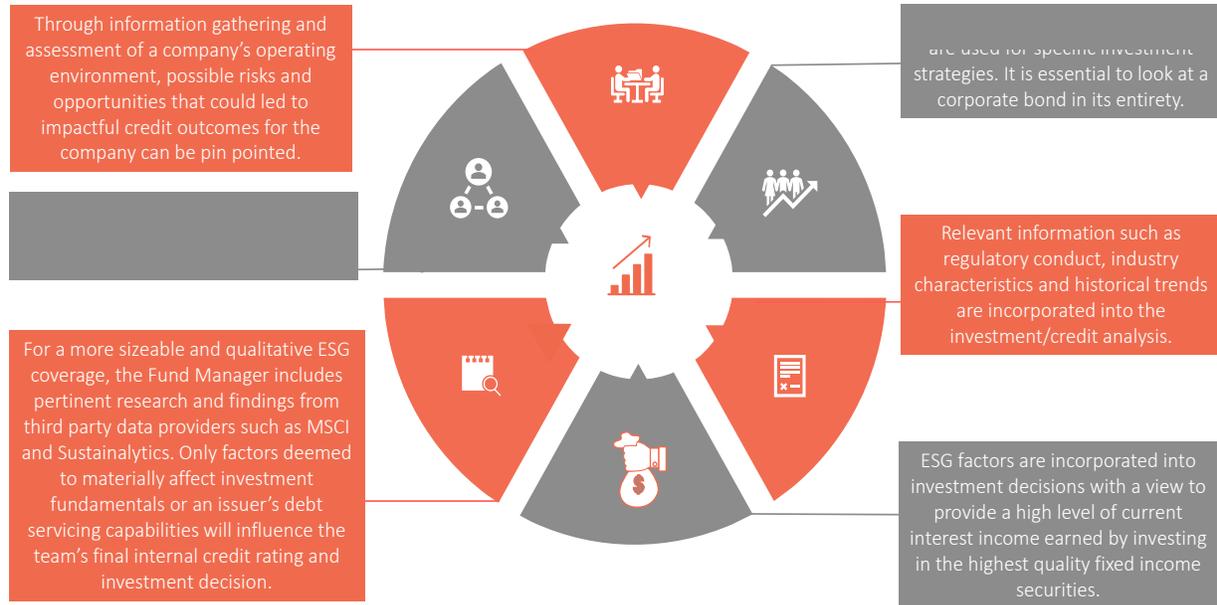
### Fossil Fuel Free Short-term Bond Fund and ESG Integration

In addition to employing ESG integration, the Fossil Fuel Free Short-term Bond Fund does not invest in any corporate securities of entities directly involved in the “extraction, processing and transportation of coal, oil or natural gas”. The Fund employs a commonly used screen that excludes fossil fuel-related companies. Sustainalytics, an independent market leading ESG ratings firm, manages and provides the definition and screening methodology.



## Money Market Fund, Government Focused Ultra-short Bond Fund, Short-term Bond Fund and ESG Integration.

All of MFA's pooled funds managed by PH&N employ ESG integration. In addition, like the Fossil Fuel Free Bond Fund, the Government Focused Ultra-short Bond Fund (GFUS BF) does not invest in fossil fuel related companies. The composition of allowable investments in the GFUS BF are primarily government and government related securities and have a maximum 25% exposure to Big 6 Canadian Banks.





## Mortgage Fund and ESG Integration



## Pooled High Interest Savings Accounts

MFA provides access to three Pooled High Interest Savings Accounts at extremely favorable rates for our Members. The current offerings are three of Canada’s leading Big 6 banks, National Bank, CIBC, and Scotiabank. Most Members consider these funds to be fossil fuel free given that they are direct deposits into entities not “directly involved in the extraction, processing and transportation of coal, oil or natural gas”. In addition, the Canadian Big 6 banks have significant commitments to helping create sustainable futures for all Canadians.

Please find the ESG disclosures provided by each of these institutions below:

National Bank of Canada

<https://www.nbinvestments.ca/content/dam/bni/publication/publication-report-esg-advances-2019.pdf>

Scotiabank:

<https://www.scotiabank.com/ca/en/about/responsibility-impact/esg-publications-policies.html>

CIBC:

<https://www.cibc.com/en/about-cibc/corporate-responsibility.html>

