



District of 100 Mile House Community Tourism Plan Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

Community Overview

The District of 100 Mile House (100 Mile House) is a welcoming community within British Columbia’s South Cariboo region. This region attracts visitors seeking exceptional outdoor experiences from cross-country skiing and snowmobiling in the winter to fishing, and hiking in the summer months among many other experiences. 100 Mile House serves as a service hub and gathering place for visitors to the South Cariboo. Tourism is a significant economic driver for the region and has further potential to help local communities flourish. This potential is recognized by 100 Mile House and tourism stakeholders, which is why the District has undertaken the development of a Community Tourism Plan.



“Fishing, hunting, ATVing, and boating in the South Cariboo are all great memories for me.”

—Survey Respondent

Project Purpose

The purpose of the Community Tourism Plan is to provide a firm stepping stone for continued planning within the community, guide future investment into tourism initiatives, and support long-term and sustainable growth of tourism. It is recognized that tourism in 100 Mile House is deeply linked to tourism in the surrounding South Cariboo region. For that reason, the Community Tourism Plan considers input from regional partners and stakeholders and provides direction for developing tourism in 100 Mile House and the South Cariboo.

Community Engagement

As an input toward the Community Tourism Plan, tourism industry stakeholders, residents, District Council, and regional partners were engaged through a variety of activities, including a survey, facilitated workshops, and one-on-one interviews.



Fly fishing near Canim Lake
Photo Credit: Destination BC, Andrew Strain

Current State

A high-level analysis of 100 Mile House and the South Cariboo’s strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as they related to tourism was completed to support the plan. The key findings from this analysis are provided below.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › There is a wealth of natural attractions providing an abundance of year-round outdoor recreational opportunities. › The region is very welcoming to visitors. › Large number of accessible, high-quality lakes support tourism uses (e.g. fishing, boating). › Well-established fishing resort sector in the region provides a solid foundation to build from. › Strong interest in tourism development from businesses, stakeholder groups, governments, and residents. › 100 Mile House serves as a regional service hub for visitors and regional residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Lack of role clarity among organizations that support tourism development. › Tourism marketing is fragmented between several different sources. › Tourism is highly seasonal with most visitation occurring during the summer months. › Limited number of visitor and market-ready experiences to complement established tourism products. › Limited funding and capacity to support tourism development. › Engagement in the South Cariboo Cooperative Marketing Program is somewhat limited and has stagnated in recent years.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Organizing and aligning key stakeholders for tourism development. › Accomplishing “quick wins” during implementation of the plan to build momentum and encourage stakeholders who want to see action to get involved. › Enhancing collaboration between tourism businesses and support organizations. › Consolidating and improving visitor information to provide a comprehensive resource for visitors to plan their trip. › Supporting established tourism operators and encouraging new operators. › Expanding and diversifying complementary experiential offerings. › Reducing seasonality by offering more year-round experiences. › Capitalizing on the trend of entrepreneurs moving to small communities and rural areas to start new tourism-related businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Increasing costs to operate tourism businesses threatens the sustainability of existing operations and reduces the attractiveness of starting new businesses. › Environmental threats including natural disasters (e.g. wildfires, floods), climate change impacts, and ecosystem degradation. › Competition for limited investment and development resources (locally and provincially). › Competition for visitors from other destinations that offer outdoor recreation opportunities. (e.g. Kootenays, Vancouver Island, Northern British Columbia).

Tourism Product Opportunities

High-potential tourism product development opportunities were identified for the South Cariboo region as described next.

1. **Fishing Highway Programs and Events** – Strengthening links to culinary tourism through the consumption of locally sourced fish, developing a large signature event to promote the Fishing Highway, and offering complementary non-fishing programming focused on females and youth.
2. **Family Friendly Entertainment** – Expanding the diversity of family friendly entertainment options.
3. **Agritourism and Culinary** – Further developing the region’s agritourism and culinary offerings such as farm tours and meals made with local ingredients.
4. **Outdoor Adventure** – Further developing outdoor adventure tourism offerings such as mountain biking, hiking, paddling, boating, cross-country skiing, and mechanized pursuits year round.
5. **Activate 100 Mile House Downtown** – Transforming downtown 100 Mile House into a focal point for tourism activity in the region through programming, events, destination animation, enhanced interpretation of cultural and historical aspects, and patio dining options.
6. **Enhanced Accommodation Options** – Diversifying the accommodation offerings available for visitors, especially options that add to the visitor experience.
7. **Meeting Spaces and Conference Facilities** – Redeveloping meeting spaces and conference facilities to further strengthen and leverage 100 Mile House’s position as a regional service hub.



“100 Mile House is a unique place to visit. It is also a place where people are kind and approachable.”

—Survey Respondent

Vision for the Future

The following vision with supporting outcome statements has been developed to guide the Community Tourism Plan.

10 Year Vision Statement

“By 2034, 100 Mile and the South Cariboo will be recognized as the best place to go in the Cariboo Chilcotin to experience the great outdoors and connect with the welcoming people who call this amazing place home.”

Outcome Statements

- › Tourism marketing organizations will be working well together to implement impactful collaborative marketing campaigns that draw visitors to the area.
- › There will be more market-ready tourism products available for visitors to enjoy year-round.
- › More visitors will be travelling to 100 Mile and the South Cariboo to experience the area’s offerings in a responsible way.
- › Tourism operators will be in a stronger position to continue their operations and the area will see new operators start businesses. There will be new investment into tourism ventures.
- › Tourism will be widely recognized by communities as a key driver of economic, social, and environmental benefits that serve to regenerate the destination.

Strategy for Tourism Development

It is recommended that 100 Mile House and the South Cariboo employ a product development strategy as its strategic focus over the next 10 years. A strong outdoor recreation product base to build from, a need for new complementary and year-round experiences, and a large available market in British Columbia support this focus.

Target Markets

Considering the visitor data described in the plan, and taking into account what inspires tourists to travel to 100 Mile House and the South Cariboo, the following target markets have been identified for the plan.

Primary Target Market:

Visitors from across British Columbia who are seeking outdoor recreation experiences that deepen their connections to the natural world.

Secondary Target Market:

Visitors from across Canada, Europe, the US, and Mexico who are seeking to immerse themselves in the natural world through outdoor recreation experiences.

Goals

Four overarching goals have been developed to guide the plan.

1. Organizational Development

Goal: *Establish a framework for stakeholder collaboration and invest in organizational capacity to support tourism development in 100 Mile and the South Cariboo.*

2. Product Development

Goal: *Develop more market-ready experiences and diverse accommodation options that will attract visitors to 100 Mile and the South Cariboo.*

3. Marketing and Promotional Development

Goal: *Expand and enhance tourism marketing activities to entice more visitors to travel to 100 Mile and the South Cariboo.*

4. Destination Development

Goal: *Enhance the capacity of operators and communities to develop tourism, as well as strengthen their resilience so they are better prepared to respond to future challenges.*

Implementation Framework

The Community Tourism Plan includes an implementation framework that describes how stakeholders will come together to action the plan. The District of 100 Mile House is recommended to fulfill the role of Host Organization to provide oversight and ensure the plan is moving forward in the most effective and cohesive manner. Investment into a Tourism Development Coordinator is recommended in order to enhance the District's capacity to action the plan. It is envisioned that the District will be supported by a Tourism Development Task Force made up of individuals who are champions of tourism, collaboratively minded, and stand to gain by building the visitor economy in 100 Mile and the South Cariboo. A host of other local, regional, and provincial partners will also contribute toward implementation.



Kayaking in Moose Valley Park
Photo Credit: Anton Bielousov

Action Plan

The action plan contains many action items across the four goals of the plan. Performance measures were included, in addition to tourism funding and support programs, to assist with implementation. The following actions have been identified as the top priorities of the plan. They are listed in a recommended order of priority.

Top 10 Action Items

- 1 Establish the District of 100 Mile House as the Host Organization and a Tourism Development Task Force who will be primarily responsible for implementing the Community Tourism Plan.
- 2 Allocate resources to implement the plan. Wherever feasible, resources should be leveraged between partner organizations to build collaboration.
- 3 Work with Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism to develop and implement a high-impact collaborative marketing campaign that will serve to increase awareness of, and drive visitation to, 100 Mile and the South Cariboo.
- 4 Increase capacity to implement the plan by investing in a Tourism Development Coordinator or contracted resource.
- 5 Host a South Cariboo Tourism Forum to encourage collaboration and officially kick off the broader implementation of the Community Tourism Plan.
- 6 Position the South Cariboo Visitor Centre as the leading source of local visitor information and the go to organization for all things tourism. Revamp the South Cariboo Cooperative Marketing Program to better align the offering with the needs of tourism operators and consider renaming and rebranding the organization to better reflect its role in tourism development and the services it provides.
- 7 Develop a Tourism Product Development Plan for 100 Mile and the South Cariboo.
- 8 Develop and implement a Tourism Business Retention and Expansion Program and a Tourism Entrepreneur Attraction Strategy.
- 9 Develop an Investment Prospectus for a new hotel and conference centre in 100 Mile House.
- 10 Develop a Tourism Emergency Communications Plan.

Conclusion

The District of 100 Mile House Community Tourism Plan offers a strategic direction and tactical actions that will advance 100 Mile and the South Cariboo toward its vision and desired outcomes. The region has a strong foundation of tourism assets on which to build from and indications are pointing toward strong opportunity for tourism growth.

To be successful, the plan will require a high degree of collaboration among stakeholders, investment from multiple partners, and a strong focus on impactful actions. It will be important to accomplish significant initiatives in the near term in order to build enthusiasm and momentum for implementation. The return on these investments will be a revitalized and growing visitor economy that regenerates communities and the environment.



Watch Lake Lodge
Photo Credit: Destination BC, Michael Bednar