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# ornby Island

## FIve-year mrdt strategic business plan

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Prepared for:

**Destination B.C.**

Prepared by:

**Hornby island Community Economic Enhancement Corporation**

**&**

**Stormy Lake Consulting**

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# Executive summary

## summary

Central to Hornby’s approach to Tourism is the desire to enhance the lives of community members.

The Hornby Island Economic Enhancement Corporation (HICEEC) became interested in ~~the~~ MRDT tax in 2018, when the Provincial Government changed the program to allow affordable housing as an eligible use of funds.

A 3% tax is collected through fixed roof accommodation providers. Currently excluded from the legislation are campsites, glamping and boat moorage which are common forms of visitor accommodation on Hornby.

Destination BC (DBC) administers the MRDT program for the Ministry of Finance. Staff at DBC were contacted to provide guidance in the process. Under the capable hand of DBC staff, HICEEC, operating as Hornby Island’s destination marketing organization (DMO) is applying as the eligible entity, to be the designated recipient of the MRDT revenue. Consultation with Destination BC and the Ministry of Finance in late 2019 confirmed that Hornby Island could be delineated from the rest of the Comox Valley Regional District as an independent designated accommodation area.

If approved, the taxwill be collected by the local fixed roof accommodation providers, and remitted to the Minister of Finance, in a manner similar to the existing 8% Provincial Sales Tax on these units. The Ministry, in turn, disburses the funds to the designated recipient, The five-year strategic business plan must meet the highest standards of accountability and transparency, as dictated by Destination B.C. on behalf of the Finance Ministry.

In 2019, discussions commenced with the six Primary Accommodation Stakeholders, as defined by the Minister of Finance, (operating more than 4 accommodation units), whose support was needed to pursue this new tax. The businesses included are Sea Breeze Lodge, Ford Cove Store & Cabins, Hornby Island Diving, Hornby Island Resort, My Hornby Stays, and Wind ‘n’ Waves. These six accommodation providers unanimously signed on to proceed with the imposition of the tax.

The next step in consultation was to invite Calum Matthews, of Tourism Vancouver Island, to come to Hornby and meet with the Primary Stakeholders and the wider Tourism industry stakeholders. Accommodation providers and local businesses were invited to the public discussions in September of 2019.

Some of the comments in this stakeholder consultation:

Grant Scott, Islands Trust: *“No one likes taxes but this one is unique in that the money comes back to Hornby to be spent here”.*

Calum Matthews: *“A great place to visit is a great place to live”.*

In the Fall of 2019, a local steering committee was established to oversee the application process. One of the first tasks undertaken by this group was direction to hire a consultant to oversee the process. Then COVID hit and Island residents/groups asked Visitors to stay home. Discussions around the program were put on hold.

HICEEC picked up the pursuit of this funding again in the spring of 2021. At that time, Stormy Lake Consulting was engaged to guide the process.

In July 2021 Stormy Lake Consulting conducted an all-inclusive public survey, which fielded from July 6th – July 24th. 264 participants started the survey, with 78% continuing to the end. There was a nearly even split in participation by business owners (largely accommodations) and non-business owners. **Quotes** from the results:

*“There is community consensus on HICEEC priorities All types of residents rate community engagement, planning, and transportation as priorities. Unsurprisingly, business operators see more value in industry-specific ventures than other residents”.*

*“Affordable housing receives strong community support. The majority of all types of residents support use of MRDT funds for affordable housing”.*

*“Most residents of all types support public infrastructure in support of tourism as well as measures to reduce water usage. Business owners view MRDT funds used in marketing more favourably than other residents, especially for the shoulder season”.*

On August 19, 2021, the HICEEC Board and more than 100 accommodation stakeholders were invited on a Zoom call to hear, and discuss, the results of the public survey. Those that attended supported that the tax be used to address the primary challenges the island faces from tourism – impacts related to the carrying capacity of the Island, lack of affordable workforce housing, diversifying the economy from the July/August peaks, and educating our guests on the limitations of island resources.

In summary, the goal of the Hornby Tourism Strategy and applying for the MRDT is to increase the economic benefits of our community, to share our environment, culture and experiences in a sustainable way that preserves the integrity of our Island. It is understood that the MRDT revenue is not intended to cover municipal costs. The benefit of the tax is that through effective targeted marketing and a sustainable increase of visitations, the revenue generated will benefit the economy of the Hornby Island community.

Background information regarding Hornby’s MRDT program can be found on www.hiceec.org

# Mission, vision & values

## Mission

Hornby shares our environment, culture, and experiences with visitors, while enhancing the lives of community members.

HICEEC, as a business and tax funded destination marketing organization (DMO) collectively builds a strong, genuine brand through focused marketing efforts and industry collaborations. HICEEC liaises with all levels of government and promotes best practice policies that endeavor to enhance our community and visitor experience.

## Vision

Starting in 2000, over 500 Hornby residents spent 2 years defining our vision for Hornby over the next 20 years. The summary document, titled VISION 2020, is foundational in Island discussions and planning. This is the vision:

Vision statement summary QUOTE:

*Hornby Islanders have envisioned a future based on our community strengths and our desire to remain a diverse, sustainable, and viable community. Central to this vision are the values that we share as a community–creating a balance with the natural world, working together co-operatively and peacefully, taking personal and collective responsibility for the well-being of the community, and celebrating the special spirit and energy of this unique island and its people.*

*In 2020 tourism is only one part of Hornby Island’s diverse and thriving economy. Tourism is now actively planned and managed by the community for the benefit of residents, visitors, and the island itself. We foster low impact, “intentional” tourism and have a manageable, comfortable number of visitors each year.*

*We prefer the concept of a “visitor” rather than a “tourist”. A visitor is someone who comes to the island in the same manner in which they would visit a friend–respectfully and lovingly–and we welcome them accordingly. We have found ways to inform visitors and summer residents about the lifestyles, values and ecology of the island so that tourism is a positive experience for both year-round residents and visitors.*

*The ideal visitor would:*

* *Come here because they appreciate and share our interests and values*
* *walk, bike or use public transportation*
* *purchase local goods, food and services*
* *walk lightly on the land (including water use and disposal)*
* *contribute time and energy for the benefit of the community and participate in the community*

*We have incorporated some of the ideas from the “Slow Cities” movement such as preserving and celebrating our traditions and lifestyles and then encouraging our visitors to participate in them. We work at what we love, and people come to learn about what we have to offer. Visitor accommodation is accessible for people of all income levels. The community feels energized and stimulated by visitors to the island and welcomes the excitement and fun provided by interaction with new people and new ideas. Visitors leave the Island feeling revitalized in body, mind and spirit.*

In the Fall of 2020, HICEEC engaged the original lead author of the VISION 2020, Darlene Gage, to do a Desktop Review of the document, and its’ contents. Over 50 local community leaders were consulted, by area of sectoral specialty, to adjudicate outcomes and current priorities. This work is not quite completed, but preliminary analysis shows that the VISION section on Tourism has stood the test of time.

## Values

In July 2019 UBC Marketing Grad, Carlyn Bishop, authored a Content Marketing Report, for HICEEC, to help guide shoulder season development. This report helped guide a comprehensive, ‘invite by attraction’, rebuild of our community marketing website, [www.hornbyisland.com](about:blank), which was launched in 2021.

From the report, our tourism decisions are guided by the following:

***Core Values:***

***Welcoming****: We are excited to welcome Visitors to “the path less travelled” and offer enriching experiences.*

***Proud****: We are proud of Hornby Island and the contribution that we make to a sustainable economy.*

***Collaborative and Inclusive:*** *We foster open communication, inclusiveness, teamwork, and community engagement, ultimately building trust with our community members, stakeholders, and regional partners.*

***Accountable****: We are dedicated to operating in a transparent and fiscally responsible manner.*

***Responsible****: We strive to operate and encourage our stakeholders to operate in an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable manner.*

***Progressive****: We monitor emerging best practices for visitor management and operations and adopt new practices that will help us excel.*

***Fun****: We are passionate about creating and sustaining an enjoyable atmosphere in all we do.*

# Strategic content

## Tourism today

As the world looks for ways to mitigate the environmental degradation of many of the historic economic staples, like manufacturing, resource extraction, forestry, fishing, etc., tourism is seen as a “clean” alternative. This graph shows how that can look for economic, social, cultural, and environmental considerations.

A picture containing timeline

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*Credit: Tourism Vancouver Island*

The tourism sector is growing faster than the provincial economy with increasing revenues, employment, wages, and number of visitors. In 2017, B.C.’s tourism industry generated $18.4 billion in revenue (an 8.4% increase over 2016) and made a direct contribution of $9.0 billion to B.C.’s gross domestic product (GDP).

For every $100 M of revenue, tourism generates $69 M in economic spinoffs that improve the quality of lives of British Columbians, as well as 1,373 new jobs. This compares to $50 M in economic spinoffs and 438 jobs for the industry mining sector, and $41 M and 326 jobs for oil and gas.

Tourism in British Columbia has seen record growth since 2014, after more than a decade of steadily losing market share as the global tourism industry has expanded with new choices and greater travel volumes from emerging source countries. During 2016, 2017 and 2018 international arrivals to BC increased 12.3%, 2.9% and 6.4% respectively.

94% of BC residents believe that the tourism industry plays an important role in the economic well- being of British Columbia. And, nearly 90% of BC Chamber of Commerce members surveyed say tourism, as a sector, will become even more important over the next decade.

In 2019, 82% of B.C. residents strongly believe that tourism supports a greater diversity of amenities in their community. \*(DBC, March 2021 Profile doc.)

Nearly 138,000 people were employed in tourism-related businesses in 2017 but acute labour shortages are being felt across the province. Provincial labour market analysis indicates that the tourism sector is facing a labour shortage, which can limit some existing tourism businesses’ operations and delay development plans. The tourism industry provides 1 out of every 16 jobs in the province. In 2017 there were between 13,000-20,000 job vacancies depending on the time of year4.

Continued growth of the sector has resulted in concerns about the need for proactively managing growth in some of B.C.’s most iconic and popular places to ensure we preserve the quality of life for residents and visitors alike. This includes management strategies such as compression, dispersion geographically and seasonally, visitor use management and pricing strategies, as examples. A focus on sustainable growth has been identified through the destination development planning efforts throughout the province as being a strong principle and goal of tourism development.

Analysis of visitations attempts to exclude the variables created with the global pandemic, and the restrictions for travel that were imposed. In all sectoral reporting, revenues in 2020, for tourism operators, was reduced. Optimism exists for a strong recovery.

Due to limited research on Hornby’s visitors, this analysis will look at visitor data from relevant regions, as well as psychographic and demographic profiles on both Canadian and British Columbian travellers.

Canadian travellers

Insights West’s 2015 report on Canadian travel trends, based on an extensive segmentation analysis of the US traveller market in 2014, found that the largest segments among Canadian travellers are Family-Oriented Frugals (29%) and Active Adventurers (25%), with BC accounting for the largest proportion of Active Adventurers in the country (42%). Active Adventurers are slightly more male (56%) with a smaller household size (2.8). They are less likely to have children (39%) and have a higher income. This segment travels often (with an average of 5.4 trips per year) and it more likely to travel within their home province. They have great interest in nature and outdoor sports and enjoy doing new things. Family-Oriented Frugals, on the other hand, are slightly more female (57%) with lower income. They are less frequent travellers (an average of 3.4 trips per year) and put emphasis on factors such as English being spoken and not requiring a passport in their destination decisions (Insights West, 2015).

B.C. travellers

Tourism is British Columbia’s single largest primary resource industry and a key driver of socio-economic progress through the creation of jobs and businesses, export revenues, and infrastructure development. In 2019, the provincial tourism industry generated $22.3 billion in revenue. The largest component of the sector was accommodation & food services (33.2%), followed by transportation (26.7%), and retail (18.4%).

Timeline

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In GDP terms, the 2019 provincial tourism industry contributed 3.4% or $8.7 billion of value added to the BC economy, 2019 figures were consistent with figures from 2018, where tourism contributed more to GDP than any other primary resource industry (forestry & logging $1.8B, agriculture & fishing $3.2B, oil & gas $4.9B, and mining, $5.2B).

The tourism sector in B.C. is also outperforming tourism in the rest of the country, thanks to advantages stemming from the spectacular beauty of our Province, the natural environment, friendly people, diversity of cultures, and the range of places and experiences on offer.

In 2021 Destination B.C. published provincial travel profiles, with pre-COVID data, 2019 base year.

over 20.5 million overnight visitors travelled to and within BC. Destination BC’s Market

A picture containing chart

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Profile on British Columbia looks at BC travellers as a key geographic target market. Their research found that most BC travellers fall within the 25-34 age range (22%), followed by 35-44 (16%), 45-54 (17%) and 55-64 (17%). The average trip length of BC travellers is 2.7 nights, with an average per person spending of $317. These travellers are most likely to stay at a hotel/resort (43%) or with family/friends (26%), and travel in a car or truck (78%). Of this audience, 89% have traveled within BC in the past five years. Most travel in the summer (67%), followed by the fall (49%), spring (44%) and winter (31%). The Vancouver region is most popular with this market (42% of travellers visit), followed by Vancouver Island and the Okanagan, tied at 33% each.

Vancouver Island

On Vancouver Island, tourism is the first or second economic driver in nearly every community. It generated over $1.7B annually, directly employs 16,800 people in an estimated 3,136 tourism businesses. Employment opportunities and revenues continue to rise in the sector, securing the success, diversification, and growth of Vancouver Island economies. Communities will need to plan strategically to leverage their unique local resources and assets, setting themselves up to best capitalize on the opportunity that the tourism sector presents.

Chart, pie chart

Description automatically generatedDestination BC (DBC)’s 2017 Regional Tourism Profile report on Vancouver Island (VI) found that British Columbia residents make up the largest share of overnight visitation on VI (62%), followed by Washington (7%) and Alberta (6%). On average, the report found that BC travellers in the VI region stayed 2.7 nights and spent $95 per night during their trip while non-BC resident Canadian travellers stayed 6.9 nights and spent $108 per night (Appendix B). Most people visited the VI region during the peak season (July – September), however, BC residents were significantly more likely to travel to VI during the fall and winter months than all other regions (DBC, 2017).

Table

Description automatically generatedFerry usage to the Gulf Islands is on the rise.

*Credit:* [*Destination BC*](about:blank)

2021 was a banner year for Island visitations, fueled in part by the Provincial State of Emergency in competing tourism destinations, due to wildfires. This includes the Okanagan, the Kootenays, and other parts of Western Canada. Additionally, the border to the U.S. was closed due to the pandemic. These factors are seen to be creating an artificial robust climate in 2021 and would be expected to normalize again.

A picture containing person, table, tree, outdoor

Description automatically generatedHornby Island

Historically Hornby Island’s resource industries included fishing and logging industries. These industries have literally disappeared from the landscape. Agriculture is evidenced, but the small land mass, pressures of subdivision, parkland dedications, and remoteness to markets are limiting factors.

Hornby Island is a well-known tourism destination in B.C. with a reputation for unusual scenic beauty, sandy beaches, warm waters, well maintained parks and trails, a low-key funky vibe, lively music scene, talented artisans, clean air, a gentle climate, and more. Like many places in the Vancouver Island Region, Hornby Island residents and businesses are feeling the pressure of increased visitor volume focused on the summer months, and the Municipal and Regional District Tax program has been identified as an opportunity to secure funding to promote the destination, which in turn provides economic benefits to the local community. A vital part of the MRDT planning process is bringing together interested parties to work collaboratively, set strategic direction, and ensure that limited resources are used in a sustainable manner.

Our ferry dependent island often uses the line-ups at the ferry as a barometer on how the pressure is building. With lengthy summer ferry line-ups, many community members feel that the summer is busy enough, and strategies should focus on building a year-round economy. Attracting off-peak visitations continues to be a challenge, and the focus of marketing efforts.

Since 2014, BCF ridership statistics show that Hornby has been steadily building market momentum. Two factors are at work, the increasing awareness of Hornby Island as a visitor destination and the increase in numbers of retirees making Hornby their home. Many of these retirees have owned their properties for lengthy periods of time, just waiting to leave the workforce and upgrade their cabin to a full-time home. So, corresponding with the improvement in the tourism industry, is a thriving construction sector on the island. Opportunities for contractors and carpenters abound. However, many of the trades, and most supplies, need to be brought from off-island, and result in increasing ferry ridership.

The increase in tourism, and the opportunity for local people to rent their homes out and make money as short-term vacation rentals, has opened up a grass-roots component in the tourist economy. Likewise, retirees contribute towards the average annual disposable income on the Island, and economically enhanced the home support sector. The dark side of these two trends is that there is an ever-diminishing number of homes available in the rental market. The inventory of rental units is critical to maintaining the Island’s workforce, and in attracting young families to locate here. One of the strategies to try to improve the inventory of rentals is seen to be MRDT revenue. The Primary Stakeholders, and other business owners on the island, have identified workforce housing as being the primary rationale for implementing the tax.

Statistics on ridership, from B.C. Ferries, visually depicts the seasonality of the demand for both usage of the ferries, and demand for visitations to Hornby Island.

Note that HICEEC realizes that MRDT revenue can be generated by both tourism and project-based visitations (e.g., construction projects) and that increases in MRDT revenue may not be 100% attributable to the activities of HICEEC.

Excluding COVID-19 in 2020, Hornby’s visitor accommodation sector has also continued to see strong year over year growth with increases in both occupancy and average rate. HICEEC initiated a Visitor Survey in 2019, to be completed in 2021. Initial results show~~ed~~ that Hornby’s summer visitors originate primarily from BC’s Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island. Visitors from the rest of Canada make up the bulk of the remaining visitors, with Alberta and Ontario generating the most visitations. Additionally, the Western United States contributes, mainly through family visits. In the initial survey~~ing~~, 87% of the respondents were leisure visitors.

But, with success also come challenges. Distinct issues face tourism, that require a united advocacy effort to ensure the success of the industry. While enjoying an increase in destination awareness and visitation, Hornby, like many BC communities, faces some significant challenges. A lack of staff housing is affecting the ability of local tourism businesses to deliver remarkable visitor experiences. HICEEC recognizes the need to be involved and engaged in helping to address some destination development issues, such as workforce housing, water conservation, septic maintenance, ferry service, short-term rentals management, and ensuring wider tourism stakeholder support for destination marketing. There is an opportunity to increase industry engagement in cooperative marketing opportunities and increase stakeholder engagement and collaboration.

### Hornby Island Content Marketing Plan (2019)

Over the years, Hornby Island has become a well-known and sought-after tourist destination in British Columbia, noted for its’ white sandy beaches, lush forests, and laid-back, creative community. Like other tourist destinations in BC, Hornby’s tourism industry thrives in July and August, which creates a seasonal economy geared towards summer residents and visitors. As Hornby continues to reach capacity in the summer months, the Hornby Island Economic Enhancement Corporation decided to concentrate their community marketing efforts on shoulder season visitation.

On that, the primary goal of this content marketing plan is to develop valuable, relevant, and consistent content that will increase awareness and engagement with Hornby’s target audience to drive shoulder season tourism by 10%, particularly through the revitalization of hornbyisland.com and social media channels. The secondary goal speaks to the community’s preference towards a ‘visitor’, rather than a ‘tourist’ and looks to capitalize on visitors that are already on Hornby. Specifically, the secondary goal of this content marketing plan is to develop a targeted social media campaign aimed at summer visitors that promotes local businesses and sustainability to decrease environmental impact and increase economic reach by 15%.

### Hornby Island Official Community Plan, Bylaw No. 149 (2014)

Section 1.6. Socioeconomics of Hornby Island

A permanent population of 958 persons in 2011 represents a population decrease of 10.8% since 2001. The population is generally aging with a median age of 58 years. The population is characterized by lower-than-average incomes and higher than average education. If trends continue, the challenges of ensuring housing affordability and safety, mobility and security will increase and efforts to provide for supportive services will be of concern.

The economy follows a seasonal cycle and is highly dependent on a population of visitors that is estimated to quadruple the island population in summer months. There are an estimated 100 businesses on Hornby Island, of which about 80% operate as home-based businesses. Tourism is the major economic driver manifested in the range of accommodations, services, arts and crafts, performing arts and alternative health experiences that are available. There has been a long history of homeowners renting their homes to others for short periods of time (vacation home rentals) as a means of creating an income or to offset some home ownership costs. This activity has made a significant contribution to the island’s economy. The construction industry, some public service positions and an increasing number of caregivers rounds out an integrated economy.

### Hornby Island Business Summit (2015)

In October 2015, HICEEC organized a retreat in Tofino, for people from the 8 largest businesses/ non-profits on Hornby Island. The intent of this retreat was to get the pulse of the local business climate by identifying successes and obstacles that Hornby businesses may be facing. The primary objectives of the Summit were to:

* Engage local Leaders, and decision makers, in looking for cooperative actions that will create jobs and enhance the Hornby year-round economy.
* Inform the delegates about initiatives that have been undertaken which could move the economic dial on Hornby.
* Create an action plan to respond to those needs identified such as technical assistance, workforce development, financing, and building new markets.
* Demonstrating to those that have already invested in our community that they are valued, appreciated, and supported.

HICEEC hosts business networking events every Spring and Fall, as one strategy to keep engaged with the business community. In these, and other, ongoing discussions, local businesses indicate that little has changed since the 2015 brain-storming session. In 2015, a S.W.O.T. analysis was conducted. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats all still exist, and offer a current “read” of the Hornby economic landscape.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **STRENGTHS** | **WEAKNESSES** |
| “Spirit of Hornby” | Housing affordability |
| People’s independence, individualism, diversity | Unskilled, high priced labour |
| Physical beauty/beaches | Remoteness |
| Support/right to finish life at home | Lack of public transport |
| Arts Council, artists, creative people | Not knowing people/available resources |
| Entrepreneurship | Fishbowl |
| Unpolluted water table | Complacency |
| Reputation | No public showers or modern washrooms |
| Strong summer tourism/loyal visitors | No float plane facility |
| Volunteerism, community spirit | No fuel/water for the marina |
| Home care for the elderly | Expensive groceries |
| Climate | Expensive transportation |
| Warm ocean water | Ferry dependence – fares & service/schedule |
| Captive audience/little competition between businesses | Small, aging population |
| Multi skills and talents | Lack of services |
| Safe from animal predator inhabitants, like bear & cougars | Trades |
| Accountability and strong responsibility from the sole proprietors, home based business owners and independent entrepreneurs | Organized recreational activities off season |
| Trails | Stuck in our ways |
| Visitor guide |  |
| [www.hornbyisland.com](about:blank) | Reliance on cars |
| Summer jobs for locals and summer resident’s kids | Government interference – CVRD and Island Trust do not have streamlined application processes. |
| ~~Ocean~~ | Cell service black holes |
| Ferry experience | No high school |
| 24-hour medical – doctors, first responders, dentist | Lack of teenage programs and partying tolerance |
| Drawbridge/moat after 6 | Independence/protectionism |
| Appreciation for the environment | Slow internet/none |
| Progressive thinkers |  |
| Low crime rate |  |
| Free post (free central message board) |  |
| Recycling centre/depot/free store |  |
| Pub – 26 years of jazz |  |
| Festivals – Hornby Fest and Blues |  |
| Outdoor Education Centre: |  |
| -Deaf youths’ camp |  |
| - Incubator for future visitors, 3000 kids/year |  |
| Circles/interlinked common interests |  |
| Wedding destination |  |
| Coop/membership |  |
| Ford Cove – open 364 days/year |  |
| Business icons – stable |  |
| Controlled development – no franchises |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **OPPORTUNITIES** | **THREATS** |
| Target travellers   * Nature lovers * Foodies/wine | Ferries   * Increasing fares * Schedule reductions * Denman attitude * Hornby/Denman ferry, not sharing priority ridership |
| Promote off season   * Storm watching * Environmental education/recycling centre | Bylaws   * Enforcement * Unnecessary |
| Back to the land movement   * Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms (these volunteer “apprentice” farm workers are referred to as Woofers) | Housing   * Workers/summer, nowhere to live |
| Remote/online workers or travel to work elsewhere |  |
| Bulk buying | Global warming – land loss/tides |
| Winery tours | Tourism competition |
|  | Slow internet |
|  | Not enough summer workers |
| Venison industry | Water and potability |
| Alternative to ferry service   * 12 passenger boat/Deep Bay * Public transportation consolidation/links | Governance   * High taxes for not many services * High user fees |
| Film industry   * Media, TV, reality shows, series * Educational videos – recycling, conferences * Farming | Population drain   * Elders leaving – with their affluence and volunteer expertise |
| Promote experience cards for clients |  |
| International high school (Pearson College link)   * Boarding/home stays | Cost of wastewater treatment |
| Centralized employment service   * Woofers, apprentices, job shop, employers * Match youth to elders work |  |
| Create own employment |  |
| Education/yoga/workshops/retreats |  |
| Work available – event planner |  |
| Mortgage/investment advice locally |  |
| Garbage pick-up |  |
| Hotels   * Elder * Youth |  |
| Boutique hotel |  |
| Catering, in home |  |
| Claw back dollars from the government   * e.g., Enhancement: pay $85,000, get $62,000 back |  |
| Shopping service   * Business and individual * Off island and on island |  |

### A picture containing outdoor, sky, people Description automatically generatedIndigenous Relations

The Hornby Arts Council, Islands Trust, and at least one local business has been reaching out to the K’Omoks First Nations in a welcoming manner. There are lands on Hornby that may form part of a band treaty negotiation, and if/when that happens there may be opportunities arising for additional, mutually beneficial engagement.

# Tourism Strategy: Overall goals, objectives & targets

HICEEC will strive to achieve the following goals and objectives by 2027 in support of our mission, vision, and values. Specific tactics will be defined annually to support the achievement of these goals.

## tourism goal

To develop a sustainable three-season, spring/summer/fall, tourism sector.

* By diversifying the peak summer travel period, we will be able to create more sustainable tourism revenues for local businesses and reduce the environmental footprint of tourism on the Island. 12% of the respondents to this summer’s consultation survey were people who identified themselves as Artists. Construction has commenced on a beautiful, new Hornby Arts Centre, due to be completed in 2022. it is the Arts Council’s stated intent to be open year-round, *“broadening opportunities to appreciate, enjoy and participate in artistic and cultural activities through events and workshops”.* Music camps and film festivals are proven to attract people in the shoulder seasons.
* Winter is not recommended as a marketing focus until spring and fall are busy.
* By addressing expanding affordable housing for the summer workforce, we will reduce labour constraints in the peak season and mitigate issues arising from informal, temporary housing currently used by some seasonal workers.
* Identifying strategies for shoulder season marketing and visitor education.
* Pursue strategies that are respectful of the social and environmental values of the community.

## Target audience

Active lifestyle Authentic Experiencers from Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island.

* Authentic Experiencers are well-educated, higher income and older travellers who like to travel in off-peak seasons for local cultural and nature activities.
* They are a significant proportion of BC residents (18%)
* With no young children living at home, these travellers have the flexibility to travel in spring and fall seasons.

HICEEC manages an active website and social media presence, under #hornbyisland, and #myhornbystory

## Strategies

1. Affordable housing for a sustainable workforce
2. Identify the tourism carrying capacity of Hornby Island
3. Visitor education
4. Shoulder and off-season marketing
5. Responsible management, governance and administration of the MRDT program

Affordable housing

### Conduct a housing needs assessment and feasibility study for an affordable housing initiative

Hire a consultant to conduct a needs assessment and feasibility study. Ensure primary research is undertaken during this study to consult public stakeholders including tour operators, employees, residents (see below), partners, government. More on housing in Appendix 1.8 of our application, and also on page 27 of this Strategic Plan.

### Ongoing community support

Maintain ongoing communication to residents through appropriate communications channels and partners about the initiative as it unfolds. This can include updates in the HICEEC monthly newspaper and Hornby island Residents and Ratepayers meeting reports. With over 2000 members each, there are two local Facebook pages that have a wide reach. HICEEC meets regularly with local business owners and accommodation providers. HICEEC also partners with local stakeholders through their advertising venues – [www.hornbyisland.com](about:blank) and the annual production of the Hornby Denman Visitor Guide.

### Identify additional grants to leverage

Identify federal and provincial grants to support affordable housing

Carrying capacity

Conduct a carrying capacity study

Engage a consultant to conduct a thorough assessment of the Hornby Island across all four seasons. This will include – but not be limited to:

* Accommodations
* Transportation
* Park uses
* Trail use
* Food and beverage
* Moorage

Ongoing communication with the community will be essential.

Visitor education

### Create a virtual “responsible tourism guide”

This can be conducted two ways:

1. An interactive page hosted on the Hornby Island website and featured on the landing page. A downloadable PDF is also available for those wanting to read it in static text and save to their device for future reference. Once developed, create a QR code that links to this page of the website. Use the QR code in high-traffic, enroute or in-destination visitor marketing materials such as Hornby Island Visitor Guide, ferry signage. Disseminate to partners, such as accommodation providers and encourage them to share with their guests.
2. Investigate developing an app for visitors to download which includes this guide along with other important information (i.e., water mitigation education, seasonal notifications), day-trip itineraries (see below), map of the island, etc.

### Incorporate water use mitigation education into signage & marketing materials

Focus on signage on the ferry to/from Hornby Island as well as in-destination that has high visitor traffic such as the Hornby Island Bus, accommodations, park and beach facilities, and on the ferry to/from Hornby Island.

Highlight this in the Hornby Denman Visitor Guide.

Shoulder and off-season marketing

### Build “experience bundles” of available off-season product

Create 5 self-guided, day-trip itineraries for visitors. Some of the itineraries can be themed to one aspect of Hornby Island (i.e., adventure or health & wellness) while others can feature aspects of all Hornby Island has to offer (i.e., ocean-based, land-based, art, food). These itineraries will live on Hornby Island tourism website with optional PDF downloads so visitors can print or access them on their mobile devices even without Wi-Fi service. Businesses should be educated on these offerings, including accommodations, so they can direct and speak to them should visitors inquire about things to do during their visit. Also, included will be print media distribution via the annually produced self directed Visitor Guide, for our area, which is available through B.C. Ferries and Visitor Centre distribution channels.

Using these bundles, create a “Authentic Hornby” self-guided tour highlighting the arts and cultural experiences

### Use online channels to market to active-lifestyle authentic experiencers aged 50+ in the Lower mainland and on Vancouver Island

The best channels for marketing to this audience are Facebook, Google, YouTube and traditional online ads (banner, big box, etc.). Videos work well, especially if they include detailed information.

### Promote weekend getaways to Vancouver Island residents

Through Facebook and online ads, remind Vancouver Island residents—located within 3-hours driving distance—of Hornby Island and promote weekend getaways. These should be developed for last-minute travelers looking to escape within 1-2 weeks.

### Develop a signature shoulder season event or festival Create a seasonal festivals and events with activities. Promote to locals and invite visitors.

To showcase the shoulder seasons in Hornby Island and encourage visitation, develop a signature event or festival in fall and spring.

Fall – Around thanksgiving, host a weekend food festival celebrating the agricultural bounty and culinary innovators of Hornby Island and Vancouver Island. A special farmers market could feature local farmers and food and beverage artisans. Local restaurants could be encouraged to participate by sourcing local ingredients and food products to create a special feature dish over the weekend. Participants would be encouraged to try as many special dishes as possible.

Spring – To welcome spring on the island and demonstrate support for environmental protection, host a Hornby Island Earth Day Festival in Tribune Bay on April 22. Showcase local Vancouver Island speakers and activists on a stage; provide booths for local businesses with an environmental message to sell merchandise and provide information; organize a beach clean-up; offer a beach yoga class; offer live music, food & beverages.

### Develop shoulder season assets

Shoulder season asset development, with an emphasis on spring and fall, will build an inventory of professional year-round video and photographic materials that will be used by HICEEC for marketing purposes and will be made available to local businesses. Building a strong asset library is essential to fuel online, social, and traditional media. Diversity of shots is recommended (i.e., landscape and people; day and night; indoors and outdoors; varying weather)

**Use what is here now**

In 2014 Cadence Strategies was engaged by HICEEC to investigate Shoulder Season development. A key strategy identified was to create a series of themed packages leveraging experiences that are already available and/or open for business during May/June/September. For example

* + Food and Wine
  + Mountain biking
  + Hiking, boating and wildlife viewing
  + Art on Hornby
  + Wellness including yoga retreats and body work
  + Relaxation
  + Learning on Hornby
  + Music events

These are the types of activities that are of interest to locals and visitors alike.

Maintain MRDT reporting

Annual Stakeholder Survey - As a 3% designated recipient, Hornby will be required to conduct an annual stakeholder survey and do annual reporting for the revenue spending.

# Brand positioning

In 2016, VentureWeb out of Squamish was contracted to help with visual branding for Hornby Island.

**Key Phrase**: “There is no such thing as an accidental tourist on Hornby Island. Tucked away between Vancouver Island and the mainland of British Columbia, it takes a least two ferries to get here. Yet the unique blend of sandy beaches, temperate rainforests, and laid-back island lifestyle continue to draw people to this idyllic piece of paradise.”

**Keywords**: Unique, Creative, Natural Beauty, Laid-back, Magnetic, Historical, Experience the joy, Precious, Versatile, Natural.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **SEASON** | **DEMOGRAPHY / ACTIVITY** | **TARGET MARKET** |
| Summer | * Average 7-night stays. * Summer residents & cottagers. * Families, aged 30-60, travelling with children, groups, personal vehicle/ferry transport.  Marine enthusiasts, including travelling boaters. * B.C.'s key EQ (Explorer Quotient) segments: Authentic Experiencers, Cultural Explorers, Free Spirits and Gentle Explorers. | * Lower mainland * South and central Vancouver Island * Rest of BC * Alberta * Ontario * Western USA |
| Spring/Fall Off-season | * Average length of stay: extended weekends * Men, aged 25-40, married with children under the  age of 49, work full-time, slightly higher-than-average  household income. * Women aged 35-49, married with children between the ages of 6 and 17, work full-time and have a  higher-than-average household income. * Couples and older demographics, Nature Lovers,  Authentic Experiences, Gentle Explorers. * Working aged men, off-island workers and contractors. * Visitors seeking food and beverage experiences | * Lower mainland * South & central Vancouver Island * Alberta * Western USA |

In the 2019 HICEEC Content Marketing Plan, this was phrased:

The Hornby Island brand’s current positioning for all market segments focuses on mystery, magic, nature, culture, creativity, and community. The website, the Visitor Guide, all social media, and any other outbound content primarily showcases Hornby’s natural beauty, followed by the community and creativity of the island. This is complemented by copy that emphasizes Hornby’s unique magic, written to evoke allure and wanderlust.

*Specific spring/fall/off-season activity segments are as follows:*

* *Eco-tourism, connecting with nature and those seeking time away from busy urban lives.*
* *Mountain bikers.*
* *Destination weddings.*
* *Marine & nature aesthetics enthusiasts, including kayakers, divers, photographers, birders, and boaters.*
* *Educational tourism and learning opportunities, focused on the shoulder and off-season.*
* *Agri-tourism and culinary travel.*
* *Health and wellness travel.*
* *Small group/solo travel.*
* *Cultural, art, music, film, and entertainment tourists.*

In the Spring of 2020. in the midst of the COVID-19 devastation to the world’s tourism industry, the HICEEC Board moved decisively to review their marketing and it’s impacts. One on hand, HICEEC used its’ social media reach to ask Visitors not to visit the island, and on the other hand wanted to be able to make a comeback when the Public Health Officer directed that the time was right.

For this reason, HICEEC will market locally for the first two years and re-evaluate other markets once covid recovery is in place.

With the use of leveraged funds, HICEEC owned half of a community website, in conjunction with a private partner and webmaster. This website, www.hornbyisland.com, had lost functionality in the backend, was glitching with user searches, and was taking some criticism in the community as being overly inviting.

A Victoria company, LEAP Web Solutions, was contracted to rebrand and rebuild the website.

Funds from DBC supported establishing a regional media library, and some of the photographic and video content was used in this rebuild.

A new logo and tag line were developed, and a new modern, technically functional website was produced.

In the choice of wording and visual content, the purpose was to share more about the community, and the people that live here. The intent of the work was to provide a virtual portal into the community, with both an inward and outward facing site, which would capture the essence of Hornby and show it to its’ advantage.

This exciting new site can be viewed at: [www.hornbyisland.com](about:blank)

# Target markets

Key target markets areas are British Columbia (in particular the Greater Vancouver Area and Central/South Vancouver Island), Alberta (Calgary) and Washington State (Seattle), which collectively represent a market of 16 million.

## Hornby island positioning statement

A group of people in the water

Description automatically generated with low confidenceHornby Island is recommended as a naturally beautiful and free-spirited destination that values the environment. The target markets should associate Hornby with nature, friendship, community, beaches, carefreeness, and ecology.

The points of differentiation of Hornby versus other BC destinations are:

* A sense of community and connection
* Eco-conscious and free-spirited locals
* White sandy beaches (Big Tribune Bay, Little Tribune Bay, Whaling Station Bay)

Hornby Island is the ideal BC destination that offers pristine, beautiful beaches and a sense of connection with the eco-conscious and free-spirited community.

Everyone enjoys a little Hornby Island time.

## Explorer Quotient

Explorer Quotient, also known as EQ, was developed by Destination Canada in partnership with Environics Research Group. EQ is a proprietary market segmentation system based on the science of psychographics. Rather than marketing to or developing products for travellers based on traditional segments, such as demographics (e.g., age, gender, income, etc.) and/or geography, EQ emphasizes the importance of traveller segmentation based on their psychological characteristics, such as their attitudes, beliefs, values, motivations, and behaviours. When various psychological characteristics are combined, different types of travellers emerge. These are known as Explorer Types.

Destination BC uses their EQ system, like Insights West psychographic segmentation, to group and describe travellers based on their values. According to DCB, BC’s top three EQ types are Gentle Explorers, Free Spirits, and Authentic Experiencers (DCB, 2018). The Gentle Explorer will often return to past destinations and enjoys the security of familiar surroundings. They like luxury and comfort when they travel and typically avoid the unknown. Free Spirits, on the other hand, can be described as thrill-seeking hedonists. Travel satisfies their need for the exciting and exotic. This group of travellers are typically open minded, adventurous, and social. Finally, Authentic Experiencers appreciate the beauty of natural and cultural environments. They want to be fully immersed in their travel experience and tend to stray from rigid plans. These travellers are spontaneous, ethical and eco-conscious (Destination Canada, n/d).

## Hornby island

Hornby’s top EQ types are Authentic Experiencers, Free Spirits, and Rejuvenators.

**A picture containing linedrawing

Description automatically generatedAuthentic Experiencers**, BC’s second largest EQ type (18% of short-haul visitors), are travellers looking for authentic and tangible engagement with their destinations. They value spontaneity, cultural sampling, historical travel, and cultural immersion, and typically try to avoid overly ‘touristy’ destinations. They are not looking for relaxation, refreshment or getting away on their leisure trips. Rather, they enjoy stepping outside of their comfort zone to experience new things and have great interest in nature and outdoor sports. These travellers either don’t have children or have new babies, so they are more available in the shoulder seasons (DCB, n/d).

**A picture containing shape

Description automatically generatedFree Spirits**, accounting for 12% of BC’s short-haul visitors, are highly social and open-minded. They are experimental and adventurous, and enjoy hedonistic experiences shared with others. They are always looking forward to planning and taking their next trip and feel a strong need to ensure they have seen all the well-known sites in their destination. This group likes to brag about their trips and will post online to ensure everyone knows where they are (DCB, n/d).

**A picture containing text

Description automatically generatedRejuvenators**, representing 7% of BC’s short-haul visitors, are family-oriented people who travel with others to escape from the stresses of everyday life. These travellers typically take short vacations to familiar places. They cherish meaningful moments, and travel to escape, rejuvenate and share experiences with people they care about. These travellers search for a tranquil, warm, and rural destination where they can relax among friends. They typically have children, so they enjoy destinations with activities for their kids (DCB, n/d).

2018 statistics from hornbyisland.com showed that 22.88% of website visitors live in Vancouver, followed by Courtenay (10%) and Victoria (10%). Of this group, 67% were male and 32.5% were female, with the majority of visitors falling within the 35-44 age group (57%), followed by 25-34 (35%), 45-54 (18%) and 55-64 (10%).

# Management, governance, and administration

Hornby Island Community Economic Enhancement Corporation (HICEEC) is a duly constituted Federal non-profit corporation, with bylaws amended in 2014. HICEEC is run by a volunteer Board by members who are nominated and elected by the membership. Membership is open to all members of the Community, interested in the economic welfare of the Island. HICEEC maintain compliance with the Non-Profit Corporation Act through required annual filings. HICEEC contracts with the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) for the provision of the tax-funded Economic Development function, for Hornby Island, in the CVRD. The Annual Plan, 5-year Plan, and yearly financial statements are submitted to the CVRD.

As the primary industry on Hornby Island is tourism, members of the HICEEC Board are generally stakeholders in that industry. For practical purposes, this meets the requirement of DBCs’ directive that the MRDT funded Destination Management & Marketing Organization (DMMO) have an elected board that represents a broad cross-section of tourism industry.

In addition to the 8 member HICEEC Board, the 6 primary accommodation stakeholders on Hornby Island, are all supportive of the collection of MRDT funds and the use of general MRDT revenue towards affordable housing initiatives. Consultation with stakeholders and the general community have been in person and through surveys, spanning the time from September 2019 to July 2021.

The HICEEC Board, and stakeholders, will be presented with a yearly plan, discuss tactics and opportunities, and offer feedback on workforce housing, promotions, events, festivals, and promotional activities for the benefit of the island. Lines of communication will be maintained with the:

* Comox Valley Regional District
* Hornby Islands Trust
* the general community through:
  + the Hornby Island Residents and Ratepayer’s Association
  + the First Edition newspaper
  + hiceec.org MRDT page

Performance measurement will be based on MRDT revenue generated, occupancies, ferry passenger counts, Coop Store sales (largest retailer on the Island) and periodic surveys.

HICEEC will be the designated recipient of 3% MRDT funds, to oversee the delivery of the goals and strategies in the Five-Year Strategic Plan, and annual Tactical Plans.

In early consultation with Destination BC and the Ministry of Finance, it was confirmed that Hornby Island can be a designated accommodation area and defined as the “Hornby Island Local Trust Area”, under the *Islands Trust Act* legislation.

In preliminary consultation back in September 2019, representatives from the local Island Trust, and Comox Valley Regional District were invited to be part of the MRDT consultation process. It is anticipated that the representatives for these governing bodies will continue to bepart of the ongoing public discussions and input.

**Certificate of Insurance:**

**A Certificate of Continuance under the *Canada Not-for profit Corporations Act* demonstrates meeting the criteria for “is a not-for-profit business association” under the definition of “eligible entity”.** That Act also relates to not-for-profits federally.

* The ministry of finance has historically interpreted that an eligible entity must be a “a not-for-profit business association”, an eligible entity can be incorporated under an act that incorporates a non-profit other than the *Societies Act*.
* A Certificate of Continuance is basically certifying that an entity has moved from one legislation it was incorporated to another (i.e., the entity has been “continued” to a new legislation). Hornby Island was originally incorporated under the *Canada Corporations Act* but has since been “continued” under the *Canada Not-for profit Corporations Act*.

# 

Affordable housing

Hornby Island is experiencing severe affordable housing shortages with many long-time residents unable to secure suitable rental properties. This issue has been consistently identified in local and regional planning documents, going back into the 1990’s. It has attained a higher profile in the last few years due in part to the emergence of short-term rental phenomena, and the 2018 BC legislation that precludes fixed contract rentals. (Historically, some summer residents would rent their homes to locals over the 10, off-peak, months.)

It is noted that many local businesses are experiencing difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified personnel due to the workforce housing shortage, and that a resolution of this crisis will greatly benefit the economic sustainability of the Island. In this context, the term “workforce housing” refers to housing that is affordable for households with an earned income that is insufficient to secure quality housing within a reasonable proximity to a workplace. These are households of the gainfully employed ~~and~~ represent a group of people who are not typically thought of as the focus of affordable housing. Many of those affected by the lack of ‘affordable housing’ on Hornby include those who work in the service and tourism industry, which is the Island’s largest employer.

Because MRDT revenue to be received through Online Accommodation Platforms (OAP) cannot be projected with confidence, it is expected that this component of the revenue over time will provide increasing funds to support Affordable Workforce Housing. In the meantime, it is considered necessary to also have general MRDT funds available.

While it is hard to predict how much of both general and OAP revenues will be generated, the current need is to support Affordable Workforce housing as bulleted. HICEEC’s recommendation to seek out solutions towards securing workforce housing in the following areas:

1. Summer seasonal housing supply, including for caravans and trailers
2. Long-term housing supply for families and working singles

# Conclusion

In this 5 Year Strategic Plan, Hornby Island priorities are based on the community’s feedback, and will be applicable for the period through the 5-year term to 2027 or 2028 depending on the application process timeframe.

Revenues from both the OAP and a portion of the general MRDT funds are targeted for use to address workforce housing.

Specific tactics will be defined annually to support the achievement of the Strategic Plan.

The over arching strategy is to develop a sustainable three-season tourism industry. Specific tasks have been identified to do that in a way that allows the Island to remain a diverse, sustainable, and viable community, in balance with the natural world.

The priorities are affordable workforce housing, respecting the limitations of the land, sharing the Island in a caring manner, and developing a shoulder season economy that supports local businesses, artists, musicians, practitioners, non-profits, and service providers.

Central to Hornby’s approach to Tourism is the desire to enhance the lives of community members and to have a dynamic, seasonally balanced Island economy.

NOTE:

This Five-Year Strategic Plan was made available on the website: https://hiceec.org/mrdt from October 22, 2021, through to November 5, 2021, to give the community an opportunity for input and feedback on this Plan. On October 22/21, email notification of this location of the Plan has been sent to the HICEEC Board, the Island Trust, Area A Regional Director for the Comox Valley Regional District, all paid advertisers on [www.hornbyisland.com](http://www.hornbyisland.com), (which includes all six of the accommodation providers with over 4 units and most in-homes rentals), the Hornby Island Housing Society, and the Hornby Island Short Term Rental Association,