



STAFF REPORT TO COMMITTEE

DATE OF REPORT November 28, 2023
MEETING TYPE & DATE Committee of the Whole of December 13, 2023
FROM: Economic Development Division
Strategic Services Department
SUBJECT: Tourism Cowichan 2023 Annual Work Plan and Financials
FILE: 0230-20 Tourism Cowichan 2023

PURPOSE/INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to seek Board approval of the Tourism Cowichan 2023 Annual Work Plan and Financials.

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION

That it be recommended to the Board, on December 13, 2023, that the Tourism Cowichan Annual Work Plan and Financials for the period January 1 to December 31, 2023, as outlined in the Economic Development Division staff report to the Committee of the Whole, be approved.

BACKGROUND

In order for Tourism Cowichan Society (TCS) to receive an annual contribution from the CVRD for the provision of regional tourism services, TCS must present an annual work plan and budget to the CVRD, along with financial statements from the last completed year of operation. The TCS work plan for 2023 is based on the One-Year Tactical Plan and Budget submitted to the Province of BC's Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) program, found in Attachments A and B to this report. The 2022 financials are outlined in the TCS Financial Statement, found in Attachment C to this report.

The above reporting requirement, for 2023, is based on the terms of a previous Regional Tourism Services Contribution Agreement and resulted in a situation where the CVRD Board did not have an opportunity to comment on the annual work plan and budget until after it had been finalized. Staff note that the recently approved Regional Tourism Services Contribution Agreement 2023-2025 outlines changes in reporting requirements to the CVRD, including a provision for the Committee to provide comment on the draft work plan and financials before they are finalized. For this reason, on this date, the Committee will see two separate annual work plans and financial reports for approval, this one (for 2023) completing the reporting requirements of the previous Contribution Agreement, and a separate report with the draft TCS plans for 2024, based on the new Contribution Agreement.

The 2023 Work Plan contains the following marketing components:

- Print and digital collateral (Cowichan Touring and Exploring Guide, tear-away maps, etc.);
- Updates and enhancements to TourismCowichan.com website;
- Traditional advertising (print ads, radio, television, etc.);
- Digital marketing (social media, email marketing, and paid digital advertising);

- Travel trade and media relations;
- Asset development (written content, video, imagery, etc.); and
- Consortium investments (marketing in partnership with sector organizations).

The Work Plan also outlines a number of other activities around destination and product experience management such as the new Tourism Development Fund to support the development of incremental tourism and event products and increase the overall amount of tourism product in the Cowichan Region.

Tourism Cowichan Society intends to rate its performance in 2023 based on a series of measurables closely related to its tactical plan, including stakeholder satisfaction and engagement, the number of publications it distributes, website and social media engagement, and the number of travel trade and media tours hosted.

Goals for the organization outlined in the Tactical Plan include increasing visitation and expenditures of travellers to the region, extending visitation into the shoulder and off-seasons, and increasing stakeholder collaboration and export readiness.

TCS subcontracts the delivery of regional tourism services to 4VI, formerly known as Tourism Vancouver Island (TVI). 4VI is the regional destination management service provider for Vancouver Island and works through a shared-cost agreement with Destination British Columbia. The TCS Board guides the work of 4VI, who manages the delivery of tourism services on the Board's behalf. As part of providing services to Cowichan, 4VI maintains a dedicated Marketing & Engagement Coordinator to support operational activities in Cowichan.

ANALYSIS

The TCS bylaws stipulate that the organization be industry-led and that Board members represent an industry segment. The current Board of Directors are:

Last Name	First Name	Status	Board Role	Business
Open	Open	Elected	Chair, Director at Large, Attractions	
Bogwald	Leif	Appointed	Director of Corporate/ Professional, Treasurer/ Secretary	Vancouver Island Expeditions
Chilton	John	Appointed	Ex-officio Chambers of Commerce Rep	Cowichan River Lodge/ Cowichan Lake Chamber of Commerce
Colebank	Brennan	Elected	Director, Agri-Tourism	Stillhead Distillery
Docherty	Janet	Appointed	Ex-officio Director, Past-Chair	Merridale Cider & Distillery
Day	Bob	Elected	Director, Arts, Culture & Heritage/ Interim Chair	Ts'uubaa-asatx Nation
Handysides	Josh	Elected	Director at Large	Malahat Nation
Koops	Evelyn	Elected	Director, Accommodation <25	Farm Table Inn

Kosmuk	Shawn	Elected	Director, Sports, Outdoors & Marine	Oak Bay Marine Group
McPherson	Ian	Elected	Director at Large	Brentwood College School
Open	Open	Elected	Director, Food Beverage Retail	
Open	Open	Elected	Director, Accommodation >25	

The CVRD's Manager of Economic Development Cowichan acts as a liaison between TCS and the CVRD's Legislative Services and Finance Divisions in administrative and financial matters pertaining to the Municipal Regional District Tax.

Economic Development Cowichan supports the outcomes outlined in Tourism Cowichan Society's Annual Work Plan for 2023.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Funding of \$120,000 less the government allocation of \$2,347 means that a total of \$117,653 was awarded to the Tourism Cowichan Society in 2022.

In 2023, with funding of \$120,000 less a government allocation of \$2,353, it is estimated that Tourism Cowichan Society will be awarded \$117,647 by the CVRD.

The requisition provided through the CVRD is used to leverage support from Destination BC, which is anticipated to be \$120,000 for 2023. Also, MRDT funds budgeted to flow to TCS in 2023 are estimated at \$475,000 in the 2023 MRDT One-Year Tactical Plan 2023 Budget.

Staff note the actual carry forward as recorded in the Financial Statement as of 2022-12-31 (\$466,066), was significantly higher than expected when preparing the 2023 One Year Tactical Plan Budget (\$85,000). This surplus is addressed in the 2024 Tactical Plan and Budget, which is the subject of a subsequent staff report.

COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS

N/A

STRATEGIC/BUSINESS PLAN CONSIDERATIONS

The effective delivery of destination marketing services by Tourism Cowichan Society runs parallel to Economic Development Cowichan efforts to support tourism development in Cowichan.

Referred to (upon completion):

- ☐ Community Services *(Cowichan Community Centre, Cowichan Lake Recreation, South Cowichan Recreation, Arts & Culture, Facilities & Transit)*
- ☒ Corporate Services *(Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Legislative Services)*
- ☐ Operations *(Utilities, Parks & Trails, Recycling & Waste Management)*
- ☐ Land Use Services *(Community Planning, Strategic Initiatives, Development Services, Building Inspection & Bylaw Enforcement)*

☒ Strategic Services (*Communications & Engagement, Economic Development, Emergency Management, Environmental Services*)

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:



Nicole Rallis, Special Projects Assistant
Economic Development



Barry O'Riordan, Manager
Economic Development



Clayton Postings
General Manager

Reviewed for form and content and approved for submission to the Committee:

Resolution:

Financial Considerations:

☒ Corporate Officer

☒ Chief Financial Officer

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A - MRDT One Year Tactical Plan dated 2022-11-30

Attachment B - MRDT One Year Tactical Plan Budget dated 2022-11-30

Attachment C - TCS Financial Statement as of 2022-12-31