



# 2020-2025 Strategic Plan

## Revised April 7th, 2021



<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Mission statement</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Vision</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Goals</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Tackling COVID-19</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>External Partners</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SWOT</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Goals</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Goal 1: Tend and Grow Chamber Revenue Streams (Increase Revenue by 15% by 2022)</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1 Diversify Membership types available	9
1.2 Promote Sign advertising beyond membership	10
1.3 Advertise the Chambers plan	10
1.4 Monetise Educational and Networking opportunities	10
1.5 Host Courses on Business Start-up and Succession planning	10
1.6 Streamline Event rentals	11
1.7 Community Excellence Awards	11
<b>Goal 2: Add Year-Round Opportunities for businesses to Generate Revenue</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 Shop local initiatives	11
2.2 Create Affordable Marketing Opportunities for Businesses	12
2.3 Advocate for local and provincial policies that bring in more revenue	12
2.4 Long term vision - CED participations/ Golden Economic Growth/ year round	13
<b>Goal 3: Offer multiple programs to allow all business types to save on critical expense categories</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 Revitalize M2M program	13
3.2 Promote BC chamber savings - and know how they work!	14
3.3 Education for employees (benefits for all)	14
3.4 Explore Joint Purchasing Opportunities	14
3.5 Connect like-minded businesses for possible savings	14
3.6 Advocate for municipal and provincial policy that promotes business savings	15
<b>Goal 4: Become a go to support for local business by 2023</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1 Business walks	16
4.2 Monthly stakeholder meetings	16
4.3 Monthly meetings with Town CAO and Mayor	16



**4.4 Coffee Hours**

**16**

**4.5 Local Business Problem Case Competitions**

**17**

## Executive Summary

The Kicking Horse Country Chamber of Commerce (KHCCC) has the following goals:

- to create ways to make your business money
- promote ways to save your business money
- provide a support network when issues are bigger than one individual business.

We are the hub of the wheel and need good working relationships with any group or organization providing assistance in town and what those people have as expertise.

The KHCCC also needs to focus on revenue generating streams that will allow the organization to continue to provide value to its members.

## Mission statement

Helping Businesses Thrive in Golden, BC

## Vision

The Kicking Horse Chamber of Commerce works to grow the local economy, to serve as a voice for business and to deliver value in order to ignite success for members of the Kicking Horse Country Chamber of Commerce.

## Goals

1. Tend and Grow Chamber Revenue Streams (Increase Revenue by 15% by 2022)
2. Add Year-Round Opportunities for businesses to Generate Revenue by end of 2021
3. Create programs to allow all business types to save on critical expense categories
4. Become the go to support for local businesses by 2023





## Background

The KHCCC has been through a tumultuous few years, huge changes in mission, agenda and staff have eroded the KHCCC's perceived value in Golden.

The KHCCC used to function as an event organizing association putting on Canada Day Runs, Christmas parades and other community events. In 2017 it was decided that this focus should be put on hold to better serve the businesses by playing the role of political advocate and creating change on an institutional level. Unfortunately, this transition was not well documented or communicated to the membership and led to perceived ineffectiveness by the community.

Ongoing staff and board member change-over has also created confusion and lack of focus. Nearly all institutional knowledge has been lost in the past 3 years of transition leaving a large gap of understanding between current staff and board members and what used to be common knowledge at the chamber.

The membership has dwindled and the participation rate has taken a bigger hit. Those businesses that have stayed are tied to the Chambers Benefits plan for their health insurance. This is an important note as it remains a tangible and irrefutable value add for members. Starting in the Fall of 2020 this ongoing attrition reached its end and new members started to join.

## Tackling COVID-19

The global pandemic became a boon for the KHCCC. While it was a slow start for the organization as it experienced yet another staff transition in the middle of April, it gave the KHCCC the platform to show up for local businesses. Simple things like hosting webinars and deciphering government support programs allowed the KHCCC to regain the confidence of the business community.

## External Partners

The Town of Golden



While the KHCCC often is at odds with the town bringing policies forward to champion business, the two parties can work together to create more opportunities for businesses in Golden. By understanding the limitations of local government and amplifying critical messages for the town to businesses the KHCCC can create real change faster and uphold positive brand recognition for each group.

#### Golden Community Coop- Community Economic Development Function

The newly created Community Economic Development position is held by the Golden Community Coop. An organization that has traditionally run many of the social services in the Town of Golden.

The KHCCC currently has a seat on the community round table and are working closely with the Coop to bring events and programs to the community. Continued collaboration will allow the limited resources of both organizations to go further and create more opportunities for local businesses.

#### Tourism Golden

Many KHCCC members are also stakeholders with Tourism Golden (TG). TG acts as a digital marketing agency beckoning visitors to Golden while also addressing larger issues, like short term rentals and the worker shortage with the Town of Golden and Provincial counterparts. TG and the KHCCC are logical partners in advocating for businesses and the growth of Golden. The KHCCC currently holds a non-voting seat on the TG board.

#### Columbia Valley Chamber of Commerce

The neighbouring Chamber based in Invermere, has more resources and staff at its disposal. At the moment they are happy to help and partner on projects and various opportunities for members.

They are a part of the larger Kootenay Chamber Network all of whom join together to present and champion ideas and policies to the BC Chamber and the BC government.

#### Imagine Kootenay (IK)

A local economic development organization that works with every town in the Kootenay region. They are currently under new management and working to develop plans with each specific town to meet localized needs. New plans will be developed in March 2021.

The KHCCC is also under contract with IK to deliver the services for the town of Golden.

#### Other

Golden has an additional tapestry of Nonprofits and organizations willing to lend a hand. While this is fantastic it can also create frustration and competing programs. Good relationships with external groups should not be taken for granted.



## SWOT

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Chambers Benefits plan has good retention</li> <li>● Newsletter Readership</li> <li>● Community Excellence Awards</li> <li>● Member2Member program</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Poor brand reputation</li> <li>● Engaging membership</li> <li>● Past programs have little desirability</li> <li>● Other Revenue Streams</li> <li>● Sharing KHCCC work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with other local organizations to provide great programming</li> <li>● Huge number of Non-profits in Golden</li> <li>● Tighter Connection to the Town of Golden</li> <li>● Imagine Kootenay is restructuring and looking for our assistance</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Virtual Offerings from around the world (networking and learning)</li> <li>● Other options for health benefits</li> <li>● The KHCCC Value Proposition could easily be taken by another organization in the community</li> <li>● Small town politics (he said/she said)</li> <li>● Overlap with Tourism Golden / CED</li> </ul>



## Goals

### **1. Tend and Grow Chamber Revenue Streams (Increase Revenue by 15% by 2022)**

Create sustainable revenue streams so the KHCCC can continue to provide more options for their members and more resources to support the community of Golden.

1. Diversify Membership types available (Increase by 30 Members)
2. Promote Sign advertising beyond membership (Increase sign revenue by 15%)
3. Advertise the Chambers plan (Increase Chamber plan memberships by 20)
4. Monetise Educational and Networking opportunities
5. Create and run the Golden Business Incubator Program
6. Streamline Event rentals
7. Community Excellence Awards

### **2. Add Year-Round Opportunities for businesses to Generate Revenue by end of 2021**

Work to provide various programs that bring in revenue to local businesses. These can be one off events or larger ongoing initiatives. While the kickoff will be complete by the end of 2021, the true success will be to continue to provide year-round opportunities indefinitely. These will also include collaboration with Tourism Golden, the Town of Golden and the CED at the Community Coop to stretch our resources.

1. Focus on Shop Local initiatives
2. Create affordable marketing opportunities for businesses
3. Advocate for local and provincial policies that bring in more revenue
4. Establish consistent, High Speed Internet for all businesses in Golden
5. Long term vision - CED participations/ Golden Economic Growth/ year round

### **3. Create programs to allow all business types to save on critical expense categories**

The businesses need ways to keep expenses down. The KHCCC can use the coordinated mass of businesses to receive economies of scale where possible.

1. Revitalize M2M program
2. Promote BC chamber savings - and know how they work!
3. Education for employees (benefits for all)
4. Explore joint purchasing opportunities
5. Connect like-minded businesses for possible revenue growth



6. Advocate for municipal and provincial policy that promotes business savings

#### **4. Become the go to support for local business by 2023**

Create a connection to the Chamber and be the first place to go when businesses have questions. Business is hard, but you don't have to do it alone. To succeed the KHCCC must be vocal about every part of the day to day.

1. Business walks
2. Monthly Stakeholder meetings
3. Monthly meetings between the town CAO and Mayor
4. Coffee Hours
5. Local Case Competitions
6. Board Succession and Sustainability

### **Goal 1: Tend and Grow Chamber Revenue Streams (Increase Revenue by 15% by 2022)**

#### **1.1 Diversify Membership types available**

Current membership tiers discourage businesses from joining the chamber, while also undervaluing the full value of the basic membership price. By adding a few additional tiers the Chamber can bring in more members and continue to offer great services.

New tier's should include:

- Associates membership - under \$100. Will not qualify you for the Chambers plan or networking events, gives discount on the sign and access to other advertising platforms.
- Side Hustle Membership - under \$100. Not qualify for the chambers plan, will have to pay full price for the sign, - get access to networking events and placement on the website. Note this could also be a way to work with current members that have multiple companies.

Existing Tiers should be increased by 2% for the 2022 Membership push.



## 1.2 Promote Sign advertising beyond membership

Current pricing for non-members is a bargain. Increase the amount non-members pay for the sign by 5% to bring in more revenue while maintaining a low cost option for members.

Use all our channels to advertise the sign as a great marketing opportunity both to members and non-members. Talk about this with the paper and the radio station (maybe consider an in kind swap for advertising time).

Target out of town companies that are providing a service for Golden but not directly competing with a local business.

In addition, the chamber will seek funding to add 1-3 additional signs that will be managed by the Chamber and create additional benefits for our members.

## 1.3 Advertise the Chambers plan

Do two campaigns every year to promote and sell the Chambers plan. One of these should be a session with Kisa to explain just how it works and why it's beneficial.

The second should be a month of sign time and supporting social media stories and articles in the newsletter.

## 1.4 Monetise Educational and Networking opportunities

Bring in courses and speakers that are worth paying for and monetize these events to fundraise to offset Chamber costs.

## 1.5 Host Courses on Business Start-up and Succession planning

These will give the Chamber a reason to be involved in businesses no matter what stage they are in. Working with partners we can bring these courses to Golden. These courses will create relevance for the Chamber with new businesses that may not otherwise be able to afford or justify the cost of the membership. Additionally, longstanding businesses that may see the chamber as unnecessary for their established state can find relevance in the idea of preparing for the future.

Look into Startup Canada options and the League of Innovators  
<https://www.theleagueofinnovators.com/>



## 1.6 Streamline Event rentals

Increase the fee for non-members to use the rentals, they tend to be hard to work with and do not respect chamber time.

Introduce a weekly rate and a weekend rate to encourage easier pickup and delivery.

## 1.7 Community Excellence Awards

The Community Excellence Awards is a long standing event that has been a good source of recurring revenue for the Chamber of Commerce. While the 2020 event brought in very little money it was done with the primary goal of creating member engagement.

Future events will be leveraged as a Fundraising opportunity. Sponsorships should be a coveted space to be seen in the business community.

# Goal 2: Add Year-Round Opportunities for businesses to Generate Revenue

## 2.1 Shop local initiatives

A year round message from the chamber should encourage the shop local message. This particular message has great traction at the moment with the call from Small Businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new KHCCC member signage will have 'buy local' incorporated to display this message loud and proud throughout the community.

The shop local sentiment will be anchored with 2 annual projects. One shop local drive in the early summer to incorporate local food vendors and highlight summer experiences. While a second should be run in early December to keep holiday retail revenue in the community. If possible prizes should be provided through the Chamber or grant function so businesses do not have to constantly donate or create a sale. It may also make sense to host fundraisers throughout the year to cover some of these costs.



Messages will be included in social media content and any other collateral. These messages will also be extended through Imagine Kootenay and Tourism Golden to the external audiences.

Find ways to include non-traditional retailers in these initiatives.

## 2.2 Create Affordable Marketing Opportunities for Businesses

Access the many regional publications to find a larger audience for businesses in Golden. Use larger buying power of multiple businesses to keep this affordable for many. Start with Kootenay Biz and Kootenay Mountain Culture.

Work with EZ Rock to provide a Chamber's Member Discount on Advertising. The local radio station is a perfect place for local businesses to advertise and be heard at a relatively low cost. As a bonus, supporting the local radio station supports an underappreciated resource in our town. A similar approach could be taken with The Golden Star, for discounted paper ads.

Push the digital sign for members as affordable and effective advertising for local businesses. Create and share default campaign ideas to help businesses appreciate and understand what is possible on the sign. Sales, new hours, new products, services and events.

With the digital sign being a popular asset the Chamber **will begin looking for grants to purchase another sign board to create more marketing opportunities throughout Golden.**

## 2.3 Advocate for local and provincial policies that bring in more revenue

There are many larger socio-political issues that stop businesses in Golden from increasing revenue.

### 1. Labour Market

Alongside the CED, Town of Golden, Tourism Golden, Work BC and Imagine Kootenay we can create lasting change that will provide an accessible, year-round talent pool in Golden.

### 2. Reliable, Fast Internet Access for all Businesses in Golden by 2023.

Unreliable internet access has been an ongoing issue in Golden and often has businesses losing sales due to credit and debit machines not functioning. This will be a long road and need the cooperation of many different stakeholders. This will be a primary focus of the next few years.

Tourism Golden is currently working with Telus Insights to gather some critical information. We will also be able to work with the CED function and CBT grant money to gather the necessary resources to make this happen.



3. **Commercial and Retail Space availability**
4. **Transportation to the Highway Strip**

## 2.4 Long term vision - CED participations/ Golden Economic Growth/ year round

Working with the Golden Community Coop we will understand the many facets of a complete economic development plan. This will open up areas the Chamber can work to complete. At this point it is most important that the Chamber participates in this process to the fullest extent and be ready to help spearhead specific projects as they arise.

## Goal 3: Offer multiple programs to allow all business types to save on critical expense categories

### 3.1 Revitalize M2M program

The member to member program has been left to languish for the past few years. In order to make it desirable it needs to be easy to use and easy to know who is participating.

Proof of Membership - each member should receive a membership card and number that can be checked quickly for easy confirmation from other members.

Encourage participation: A newsletter campaign, sign and social encouragement in the spring to bring in new members. Calls to members to explain what they may be able to offer and why they should participate. These can be prompted from calls for requests.

Showcase the offers: Need a quick way to find all the offers and match them with their needs. For the first while the chamber staff will need to be a connector for businesses and offerings. Create an instagram gallery and a facebook directory.

Use the newsletter to have a bi-weekly spotlight on a M2M offer - preferably when the business first joins the program but can schedule beyond this.



### 3.2 Promote BC chamber savings - and know how they work!

Through the BC Chamber there are plenty of savings available. The Chamber staff need to know what these are and how to register for them. This information needs to be readily available and promoted to the membership.

Again - the newsletter will act as a promotional tool for these. Should be every other week, alternate with the M2M program.

This can be amplified through the social media channels as well.

### 3.3 Education for employees (benefits for all)

Many small businesses do not have time to organize education or extra dollars to bring people in. By offering courses for the employees to better themselves it would create a retention benefit for businesses to retain talent.

### 3.4 Explore Joint Purchasing Opportunities

By banding together and understanding various needs for businesses the KHCCC can coordinate economies of scale. This should start small, with specific groups. This will require more research and understanding before proceeding.

Beginning to create a possible shipping discount for commerce between Golden and Invermere with the Columbia Valley Freight.

### 3.5 Connect like-minded businesses for possible savings

Creating small peer groups of businesses with similar frustrations or needs to help reduce expenses.

For example, if multiple businesses are shipping goods to Invermere and Revelstoke they could combine shipments and split the delivery costs. It may also open opportunities for new services and ventures.

This could also take the form of introducing vendors looking for shelf space with retailers looking for more products.



To make this work it will be critical to understand what our members need and be able to create timely connections.

### 3.6 Advocate for municipal and provincial policy that promotes business savings

As Golden's voice for business the KHCCC has to understand and respond to the needs of local business overtime. Being successful with the objective will require in-depth conversations with local businesses and the municipality to truly understand the issues as well as close ties to the BC Chamber and Kootenay area chambers to create momentum behind the change that is needed. Exactly what issues need to be supported will change and shift over time, but the process will remain the same. At its simplest the KHCCC needs the trust and respect of local businesses and the ties higher up to create change.

A big portion of this will be done in conjunction with the BC Chamber and their policy session in the spring each year. Supporting those policies that best reflect the needs of our town and joining with other Chambers to support the needs of small businesses BC wide.

From conversations with the Town of Golden one of the first initiatives should be to address zoning requirements and taxation brackets which are provincially regulated. Currently, the municipality is tied to specific taxes based on these designated zones in the municipality and has little room to adjust taxation to reflect the current climate. For example, in 2020 the town would have shuffled the tax burden away from the restaurants and onto industry and retail but they are not allowed to make changes of that nature.

## Goal 4: Become a go to support for local business by 2023

This goal is all about being there for our membership, these tactics will build trust with our members, allow the KHCCC to be responsive to business needs, connect businesses with supports and other key stakeholders. All in all, this will give KHCCC a physical presence in the community and a place in businesses minds from startup to succession planning.

To ensure this goal is being met the Chamber will answer the question; where do you go first when you've got a question regarding your business? Success will be measured by having greater than 50% of respondents state that the Chamber is the first place they go with business questions.



## 4.1 Business walks

Go to the members. An annual business walk will be a group of staff, board members and even volunteers or stakeholder groups stopping by each business in town with a short survey and then intention to understand the current frustrations and successes of the business landscape in Golden.

This would be a chance to meet the board members, to see the chamber in action, to hear what businesses don't like about the current plans and to hear what they need.

This should happen in Early April when businesses have slowed down from the winter but have yet to ramp up for the summer. It will make sure the volunteers are more accepted when they enter the building.

The survey should be the same year over year and data can be collected and shared with the community as a public service. These questions should give a window into possible joint purchasing options, larger issues to tackle with provincial governments. As well as the brand recognition of the chamber and the general well being of the town of Golden.

## 4.2 Monthly stakeholder meetings

There are so many nonprofits and organizations in Golden that it can be difficult to know where to go and what supports are even available. By meeting with all these groups once a month we can gather a more complete picture of the current landscape.

This will also give all stakeholders a chance to understand each other's strengths and work together to provide a comprehensive service to the community.

## 4.3 Monthly meetings with Town CAO and Mayor

Meeting with the Town CAO and the Mayor monthly will allow us to see the current business concerns from their perspective. It will create a strong foundation for a working relationship and ensure that even if the KHCCC is opposed to a town project we can still work together to serve the community.

## 4.4 Coffee Hours

As our current office facility is incredibly hard to access Chamber staff should make a point of frequenting establishments all around town and being generally accessible. When appropriate, the Chamber staff should plan to spend 2+ hours a week working from somewhere about town.



#### 4.5 Local Business Problem Case Competitions

Twice a year, host a case competition to solve an ongoing local issue. Look for sponsorships for the prizes. Create connections with local stakeholders like the community college to engage the larger community with the Chamber.

This will give a tangible way to make businesses feel heard.

#### 4.6 Board Succession and Sustainability

In order to keep our member relationships strong it will be key to have good continuity with the Board.

Each year, after the AGM and the addition of new board members the board will sit down with a third party consultant to review the chambers goals, vision and mission. This will allow for the Board to acquaint themselves, ensure the goals and vision are still on point.

This should be budgeted into the yearly Chamber of Commerce budget.