



# TOWN OF INUVIK

Tourism Marketing Strategy



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tucked away in a land of extremes, Inuvik's character is a product of its delicate balance between diverse cultures, the management of fluctuating economic conditions and its dependence on and respect for the natural environment. The region faces many challenges, but in some ways this is what makes Inuvik such a special place to experience.

Just as the Town of Inuvik is a product of its environment, so are its people, and it's safe to say that you haven't really experienced the region until you've immersed yourself in the community. The town truly runs through its people, and the stories and warmth from the community is what sets Inuvik apart. Instead of treating this asset as a resource to be extracted, this tourism marketing strategy acknowledges the community as a source of renewable energy if it is nurtured appropriately. As such, the strategy is built around and for the community, with the understanding that investing in the people and creating a vibrant place to live and work will create a healthy foundation from which to build a visitor economy.

***Mission Statement: Develop a vibrant place to live and visit in a manner that generates economic opportunities, celebrates the region's unique cultures, and nurtures the environment.***

The vision, built from the perspectives of industry and community members, is an extension of the mission statement, painting an ideal picture of what Inuvik will look like in the not too distant future. The Economic Development and Tourism Department is positioned as a collaborative architect, coordinating the construction of the people's vision. It is not a coincidence that this development begins with the needs of community members and works out towards the visitor experience.

As the strategy becomes more tactical, the execution of the mission and vision are organized into the strategic pillars of Attract the Right Visitor, Strengthen Marketing Practices, and Advocate for Change. Furthermore, each of these pillars contain objectives and corresponding tactics. Overall, the strategy leverages Inuvik's strengths, such as its natural assets and rich Indigenous heritage, to pursue responsible tourism development. It also recognizes that the separation of protecting culture and environmental stewardship is a euro-centric worldview, and therefore encourages the integration of these pursuits wherever possible.

The strategy challenges conventional perspectives around what growth in the tourism industry should look like and advocates for the development of tourism market segments based on more than simply revenue potential. It can be beneficial to redefine value and consider community values alignment when prioritizing initiatives. This strategy also blurs the lines between the traditional responsibilities of departments by pushing the scope of recommendations to a place where collaboration is required. The tourism industry intersects with numerous verticals of society, including infrastructure, town beautification, the environment, culture, academia, science, and others. Staying within a traditional notion of a tourism department's responsibilities creates artificial limits for success, while deep collaboration with adjacent stakeholders can unlock significant potential.

As an industry we can do better than minimizing negative impact. Inuvik is contributing to the movement of reimagining tourism as a mechanism for positive impact. Improving the lives of its community, improving the lives of its visitors, and creating a transformational experience that is shared with the rest of the world.

## OVERVIEW OF STRATEGY

The strategy is composed of a collection of building blocks that describe the approach from general to specific. As a statement that was developed collaboratively through community and industry engagement, the Mission acts as our north star, guiding all future actions and initiatives. The Vision statement provides a more detailed depiction of where we will end up if we are true to our mission. In order to arrive at this destination, actions have been organized into strategic Pillars. Pillar 1, Attract The Right Visitor, is subdivided into the five recommended target markets, while Pillar 2, Strengthen Marketing Practices, and Pillar 3, Advocate for Change are stand-alone categories. These pillars each have a key objective to coordinate activities towards a common goal. Finally, there is a collection of recommended Tactics to execute each of the strategic pillars.

Throughout this strategic hierarchy, each component is seen through the lens of Stewardship; therefore, protecting and nurturing the environment and culture is integral in the overarching approach. It encourages the embedding of Indigenous values and Indigenous elements across all strategies and applies an Indigenous lens, or way of seeing the world, that permeates all activities. This integrated approach to Stewardship assures that these values that the community holds so important are not an addition to the strategy but in fact infused into every component of the strategy.



**MISSION**

Develop a vibrant place to live and visit in a manner that generates economic opportunities, celebrates the region’s unique cultures, and nurtures the environment.

**VISION**

Ideal state of Inuvik in the future that has been co-created with community members and industry stakeholders.

**PILLAR 1**

**ATTRACT THE RIGHT VISITOR**

**PILLAR 2**

**STRENGTHEN MARKETING PRACTICES**

**PILLAR 3**

**ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE**

**FESTIVALS & EVENTS**

**Objective:**  
Strengthen local festivals and events to enhance the rich sense of community for residents and visitors

Organize festivals and events with sustainability best practices and target participants who uphold these values

**FIT ADVENTURE TRAVELLERS**

**Objective:**  
Become a preferred destination for FIT adventure travellers focused on hunting, fishing and outdoor adventure (via road and air)

Target sustainably oriented FIT travellers and encourage operators to adopt regenerative tourism practices

**ARCTIC & INDIGENOUS TOURISM**

**Objective:**  
Become a preferred learning destination for Arctic & Indigenous Tourism (arts, education and training)

Protect the integrity of Indigenous cultures and promote cultural learning in a respectful manner that uplifts and acknowledges Indigenous people

**MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS, & INCENTIVE TRAVEL**

**Objective:**  
Cultivate Inuvik as a preferred destination for relevant meetings, conventions, and incentive travel

Organize meetings and conventions with sustainability best practices and target participants and industries who uphold these values

**SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH HUB**

**Objective:**  
Become a hub for scientific fields such as climate change research, arctic social and physical sciences, space and communications, GIS mapping

Attract research initiatives that have social and environmental benefits and promote the integration of western and Indigenous knowledge

**Objective:**  
Implement marketing best practices to increase the effectiveness of the strategy execution

Use the power of marketing to support vulnerable and/or minority populations and attract visitors that uplift the community and nurture the environment

**Objective:**  
Represent the department’s perspective in relevant public affairs to help shape regional society in a manner that is in the best interest of residents and visitors

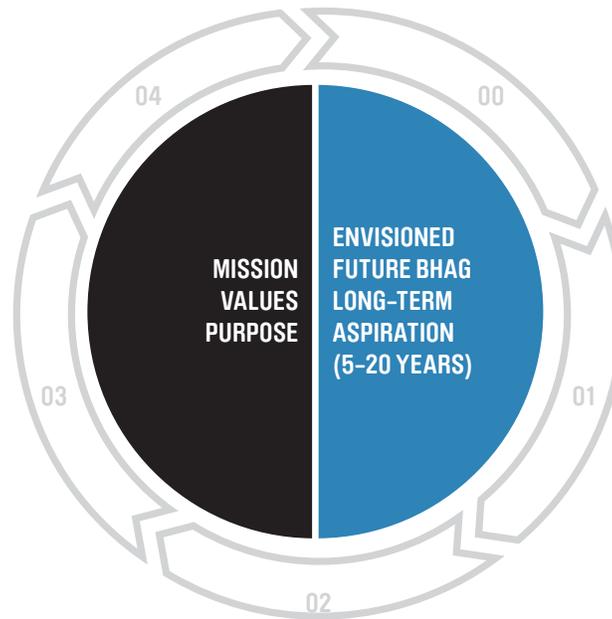
Advocate for systemic changes that make it easier for society to make sustainable choices

**STEWARDSHIP GUIDANCE**

# TOURISM MARKETING STRATEGY BACKGROUND

## Methodology

This tourism marketing strategy project followed a multi-step approach that takes a holistic placemaking perspective, incorporating global trends, the latest industry insights, and specific regional context. This approach ensures we have a clear understanding of the current state and are able to work with all relevant data, gather stakeholder insights and apply best practices through a highly collaborative and inclusive process.



## 00 KICK-OFF & PROJECT PLANNING

Initial engagement provided an opportunity to establish challenges and opportunities for this project and to set a clear project plan. The key objectives, scope, and process were confirmed to create alignment.

## 01 BACKGROUND REVIEW

A comprehensive, foundational understanding of the current state of tourism in Inuvik required in-depth review of key sources of information to provide a clear picture of the current environment. Documents were reviewed to understand the size and composition of the tourism economy, as well as its challenges, opportunities, competitors and the existing tourism strategy.

## 02 STAKEHOLDER & COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Stakeholder and community consultation was at the heart of the strategy process, and its implications are considered during every phase. This form of engagement consisted of an industry/resident survey, phone and in-person interviews, and interactive workshops. This was a key step in drawing out the expertise and experience of the region's diverse stakeholders, and it ensured that the strategy delivered was built by Inuvik for Inuvik.

### Summary of participation:

Online survey responses: 28

In-person interviews: 3

Written response interviews: 4

Phone interviews: 3

Public session attendees: 34

## 03 FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

Before drafting the final strategy, a preliminary findings report was presented that includes a summary of the background review, stakeholder Interview, the survey results, and community consultation workshops. It also included the initial proposed strategic direction providing an opportunity for the Town of Inuvik team to guide the direction of the strategy.

## 04 FINAL STRATEGY & TACTICS

The collective output from the previous steps informed the overall strategy and the tactics to achieve the defined objectives within an action plan. This was an iterative process involving feedback from key stakeholders.

## REPORT FORMAT

This marketing strategy begins with a wide lens before arriving at the granularity of specific recommended tactics. Current Market Trends are outlined to provide general context and highlight some overarching risks and opportunities. This covers global trends, an assessment of the state of tourism in Inuvik and the resulting conclusions for this strategy. Within this context, Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles are developed to provide a north star for this strategy to work towards. Next, Inuvik's Unique Characteristics are defined to inform brand considerations and a section on Niche Marketing depicts a targeting strategy that leverages the region's strengths. The Analysis of Current and Potential Markets provides insights into 5 key market verticals that can be focused on and prioritizes their importance. Building off of this analysis, the strategy's Action Plan recommends tangible tactics that are organized into three pillars: attract the right visitors (divided into five

subsections corresponding to the target markets identified), strengthen marketing practices, and advocate for change. To provide guidance for measuring success Key Performance Indicators are identified. Although this strategy takes a long-term view, there is significant potential for the current COVID-19 pandemic to have lasting impacts so planning strategies are addressed in the COVID-19 Planning section. The strategy concludes with Next Steps, which outline how Inuvik can move forward as a community to accomplish its vision.

## CURRENT MARKET TRENDS

### Global Trends

The tourism industry and society in general is evolving quickly so it is important that any marketing strategy stays relevant and ahead of any global trends. A landscape analysis reveals that tourism has experienced robust growth, and despite current events which will dampen progress, it is forecasted to continue to grow over the long-term. It is also evident that people are choosing to travel differently as a social movement to travel responsibly sweeps the industry. Finally, environmental considerations, particularly climate change, present significant risks and opportunities in the coming decades.

### Economic Trends

Over the course of 2019, 1.5 billion international tourist arrivals were recorded which resulted in a 4% growth rate from the previous year. Not only does this represent a healthy growth rate but it is now the 10th consecutive year of global tourism growth. The sector is also among the leaders in terms of exports and job creation.

Looking forward, another year of 4% growth has been forecasted; however, the COVID-19 pandemic and increasing calls for an economic downturn have created an environment of uncertainty. Despite these short to medium term economic conditions the longer-term trend of pursuing responsible growth should prevail.

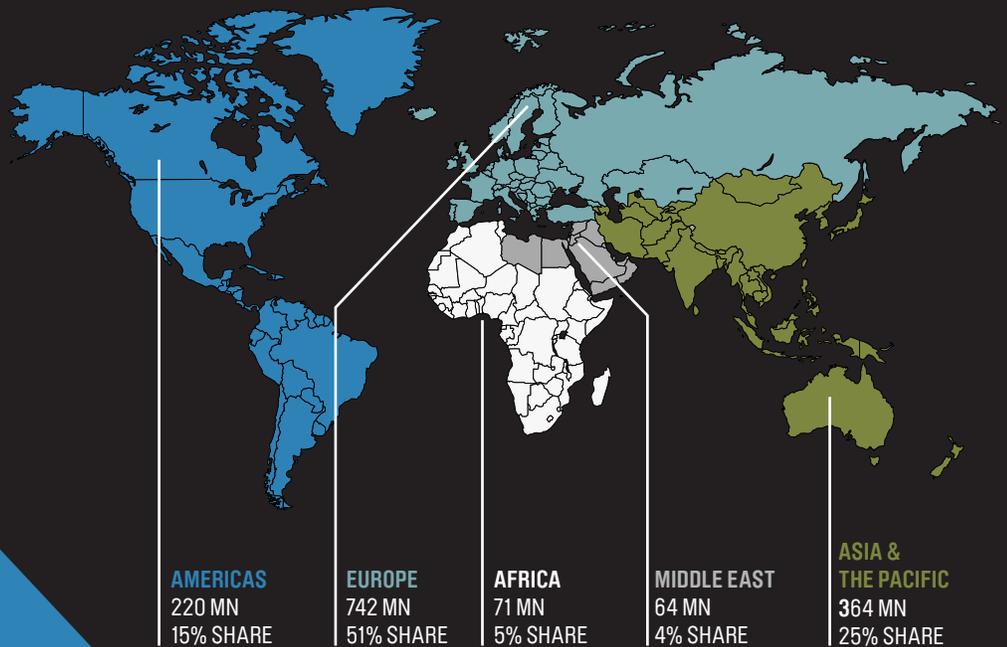
Business leaders and other tourism stakeholders are recognizing that not all growth is equal and there can be some significant consequences of indiscriminate growth. The negative impacts of over tourism and consequences of pursuing revenue from any demographic segment has catalyzed a shift towards the high value traveller who spends more than average, creates less negative impact, and aligns with the offerings and values of a region. This focus provides the best opportunity for any phase of the market cycle.

## 2019 TOURISM RESULTS ANOTHER YEAR OF GROWTH

**1.5 BILLION**  
International tourist arrivals

**+4% CHANGE**

**4 MILLION**  
Arrivals a day



## Social Trends

As social trends shift tourism preferences, it puts pressure on destinations to adapt accordingly. Travellers are looking for more than a cookie cutter, generic vacation. They are increasingly seeking an impactful experience that not only transforms themselves but leaves the world a bit better off than when they arrived.

On the other side of the equation, destinations will adapt by facilitating opportunities for visitors to contribute to the local quality of life beyond economic value. A key example of this is the rise of cultural focused travel. In particular, there is an opportunity to support Indigenous individuals in leading this effort to develop and deliver tourism products that provide authentic experiences. Slow travel is also growing in popularity, encouraging visitors to spend more time in a location and escape from the frantic bucket list style of seeing a place. It facilitates

an experience that is closer to being a resident than a tourist and allows for a more immersive experience with more human connection. Voluntourism is another way people are structuring their vacations around giving back to a community. There are numerous forms of this type of travel, from working at an orphanage to repairing trails.

According to a study conducted by Accenture, 62% of consumers want companies to stand up for the issues they are passionate about and a Cone Porter Novelli study found that 77% of consumers have a stronger emotional bond to purpose driven companies. Progressive destinations are aligning with these findings by structuring their offerings to align with building amenities that residents benefit from, protecting cultural heritage and supporting environmental initiatives.

## Environmental Trends

In terms of environmental trends, there is no greater challenge currently than climate change. It is clear that the effects of the climate emergency are significantly affecting destinations today and will have increasing impacts in the future. The risks are present in many forms including, permafrost/snow melt, sea level rise, storm frequency and intensity, biodiversity loss, fires, and water stress.

In addition to the lives lost and displaced, the consequences for the tourism industry manifest as increased costs as destinations are having to manage crises more frequently and rebuild damaged assets. Also, insurance companies who don't want to be exposed to rapidly increasing climate change risks are raising premiums and lowering property valuations. Brand degradation is also a major challenge as the images of destinations that suffer from high profile climate events are being

negatively impacted, leading to economic loss from reduced visitation. Finally, there is a risk of the loss of social license to operate for tourism stakeholders. As climate change gets worse, non-essential travel/tourism activities are at risk of losing their social license if they are not seen as part of the solution.

Despite these risks, climate change represents a significant opportunity. Protecting the environment and the revenue generating natural assets of a destination makes business sense. In addition, according to a 2016 study titled "The Role of Sustainability in Travel and Tourism", it was found that sustainable tourists, on average, spend 50% more than other leisure travellers. Targeting this segment of traveller not only represents a revenue opportunity but it also attracts the type of visitor that will have less negative environmental impact on the region.

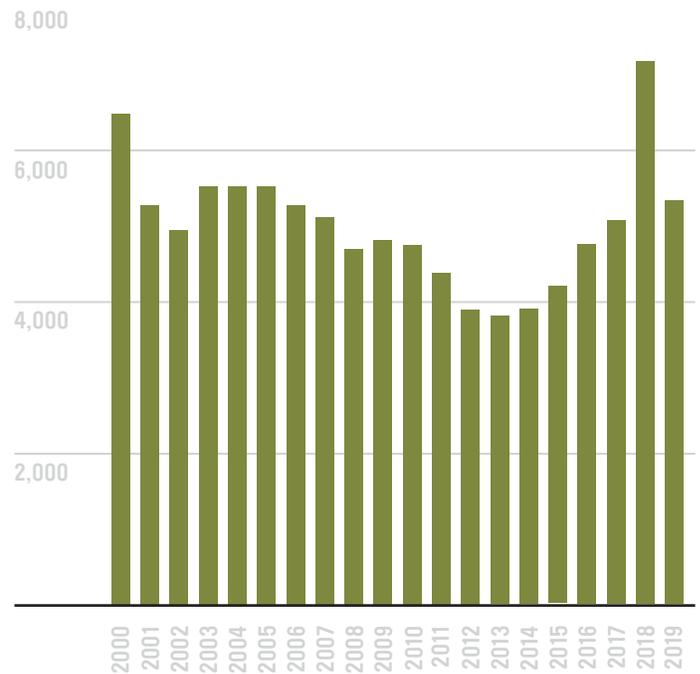
# TOURISM IN INUVIK

## Visitation Data

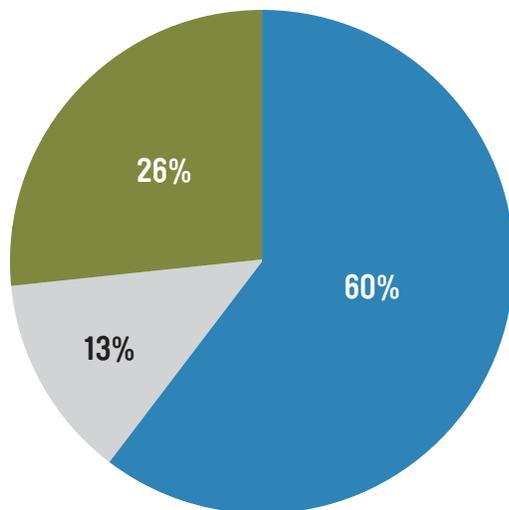
While the visitation numbers reported by the Western Arctic Regional Visitor Centre (WARVC) are not comprehensive because not all visitors visit the centre, this data can still be used as a reasonable estimate of the visitation trends. The annual number of visitors has oscillated between 3,751 and 7,114 from 2000-2019, with the lowest year being 2013 and the highest visitation year being 2018.

While visitation in Inuvik was up during the first year that the Tuktoyaktuk Highway was opened (2018), it dropped in the second (2019). Although the cause has not been confirmed, one hypothesis is that visitors arriving by vehicle are bypassing Inuvik and driving straight to Tuktoyaktuk, since it has the appeal of being situated right on the Arctic Ocean. If this is true, it will be important for Inuvik to communicate the value of spending time in town before continuing on to the next stop.

WARVC



VISITOR ORIGIN 2019



- CANADA (NON NWT RESIDENTS)
- USA
- OTHER COUNTRIES

Visitors to Inuvik primarily originate from somewhere in Canada, with the top province of origin being British Columbia (37%), Ontario (27%) and Alberta (18%). The second most popular country of origin is the USA with the top states being California (17%), Alaska (11%) and Washington (9%). Finally, if the visitor came from another country they were most likely to originate from Germany (38%), Switzerland (11%) or China (10%).

It should be noted that the Canadian visitors referenced do not include residents of the Northwest Territories. While engaging with Inuvik’s residents, feedback indicated that many of the annual visitors have some previous connection to the town. This often comes in the form of friends or family members still living in the town and/or previous work experience that had them stationed in the region in the past. The human connection and nostalgic feeling present in these types of visitors is important to understand as marketing campaigns are developed.

## Visitor Spending

Currently there is limited data relating to the types of activities that Inuvik visitors are spending money on; however, there is territory wide data that provides some valuable insights. If we assume that tourism spending across the Northwest Territories is representative of spending in the Inuvik region then we can use the data below as an indicator of spend breakdown and trends.

MAIN PURPOSE OF TRAVEL	VISITORS (2018-2019)	REVENUE (2018-2019)	REVENUE / VISITOR
Aurora Viewing	41,500	\$67,700,000.00	\$1,631
Fishing	4,800	\$11,600,000.00	\$2,417
General Touring	17,900	\$17,800,000.00	\$994
Hunting	530	\$7,400,000.00	\$13,962
Outdoor Adventure	7,200	\$15,600,000.00	\$2,167
Visiting Friends and Relatives	15,600	\$10,900,000.00	\$699
<b>Total Leisure Visitation</b>	<b>87,530</b>	<b>\$131,000,000.00</b>	<b>\$1,497</b>
Business Travel	32,600	\$79,400,000.00	\$2,436
<b>Total Visitation</b>	<b>120,130</b>	<b>\$210,400,000.00</b>	<b>\$1,751</b>

The main purpose of travel for visitors to the Northwest Territories is Aurora viewing (41,500), business travel (32,600), general touring (17,900) and visiting friends and relatives (15,600). However, if we analyze the revenue generated per visitor to determine which segments are high value travellers we get a different picture. The segments that spend the most per visitor are hunting (\$13,962), business travel (\$2,436), fishing (\$2,417), and outdoor adventure (\$2,167). When analyzing high value travellers we must also consider their social and environmental impact on a region and their values alignment; however, these high revenue per visitor findings provide some insights as to which segments could be valuable to pursue.

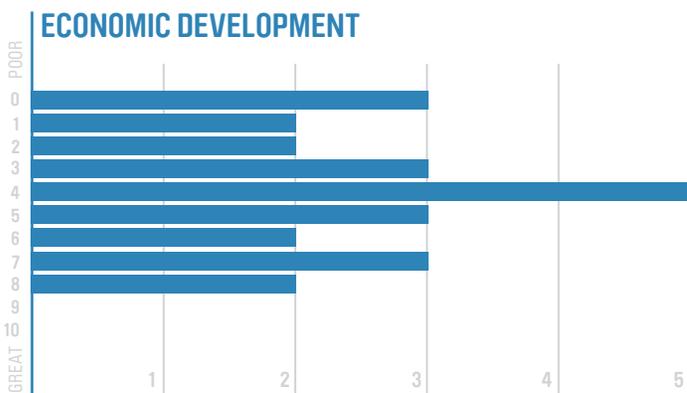
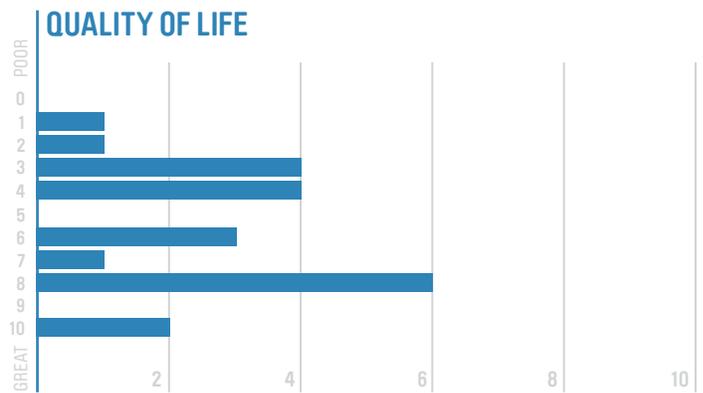
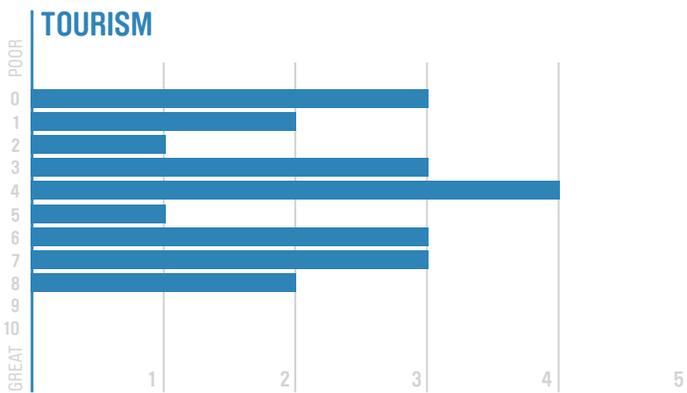
### Resident & Industry Sentiment

One of the forms of community engagement utilized a survey to gather feedback from Inuvik’s residents and tourism industry stakeholders. When asked how Inuvik is performing within the tourism sector and a collection of related subsections of society, these stakeholders provided some data on where improvements can be made. While no sector’s performance scored exceptionally high, festivals and events and quality of life scored relatively better than others. It was perceived that the tourism industry, and economic development have room for improvement. Fortunately, improvements within the tourism industry should have positive spillover effects to economic development.

*“I think Inuvik has a great opportunity but they also need to be world leaders in tourism done right. I hope the town doesn’t jump into tourism too quickly because we are so desperate for any economy. We need to learn from other places about the downsides of tourism.”*

Inuvik Resident

During community engagement workshops there was also valuable feedback from both residents and tourism industry stakeholders. A key strength of the town is its tight knit community and a strong spirit to help each other. This is something that can be built upon and it was communicated that it should be protected as the industry grows. There seems to be a strong need for additional amenities for residents such as a coffee shop, restaurants and places for the community to gather in the evenings. Fortunately, these types of additions would also greatly benefit visitors as well. There is also a call for more beautification and sustainability initiatives to address the garbage issue, run-down buildings and planting/protecting green spaces. Overall, there is a desire for a holistic, sustainable approach to growing the tourism industry. The general sentiment is that the community and industry do not want it to grow at any cost, but to be deliberate with the types of visitors that are pursued and the initiatives that are focused on.



## Coordinating with NWTT and the Wider Region

Since Northwest Territories Tourism supports tourism activities for the wider region, it makes sense to avoid duplication of efforts and align as much as possible with their initiatives. In particular, there is an opportunity to align with NWTT on their theme of transformational travel. Communicating to visitors how the region can be a catalyst for positive change and personal growth not only aligns with the broader social movement towards meaningful tourism but also resonates with many of Inuvik's community members. This theme can certainly be woven into Inuvik's marketing initiatives in a way that grounds it in the town's unique context.

There are also limitations with the coordination of activities between NWTT and Inuvik. It has been communicated that Inuvik does not always see itself in the overarching strategies from NWTT. Many of the organization's members are from Yellowknife and logistically Yellowknife does not always represent an ideal hub from which to travel to Inuvik. Therefore, other partnerships with stakeholders in locations such as Whitehorse and Dawson City will have to be strengthened. These destinations are located more conveniently, particularly for road access.

In general, pursuing a strategy to embed Inuvik more fully in the region might provide additional tourism opportunities and uncover additional strategic areas for tourism development. In addition to being a destination in and of itself, Inuvik is also the gateway for access to other attractions in the Western Arctic region, which includes three world class national parks – Ivvavik, Tuktut Nogait, and Aulavik – one fascinating territorial park, Herschel Island – Qikiqtaruk, and of course Tuktoyaktuk. These places already attract visitors for which Inuvik could expand their tourism offerings, but they could also help attract new and different types of visitors to Inuvik. Indeed, there will have to be active engagement between a number of stakeholders to achieve regional coordination.



## KEY CONCLUSIONS FOR THE STRATEGY

### **Inuvik has a unique offering of cultural and outdoor experiences**

This differentiated combination of offerings is ideal for niche marketing to a specific subset of travellers whose values and passions align. There is also an opportunity for more Indigenous community members to lead the growth of this area of tourism.

### **Tight knit community is at the heart of what makes Inuvik special**

This needs to be protected so that the integrity of the town is not compromised. It is a strength that can be built upon and lends itself well to organic ambassadors. Visitors are increasingly looking to immerse themselves in a region by living like a local so much of a visitor's enjoyable experience is linked to a supported and happy resident.

### **Inuvik needs more amenities**

Residents and visitors would both benefit from an expansion and upgrade in amenities to provide more options for food and social gathering spaces.

### **Additional beautification/sustainable initiatives are required**

First impressions are important for visitors driving into town and a clean town is helpful for enhancing community pride.

### **Align with NWTT transformational tourism**

NWTT represents an important partner, and global trends as well as Inuvik's characteristics reinforce the benefits of aligning with transformational tourism that provides meaningful, sustainable experiences.

### **Designing the right type of growth is vital**

It is clear that growth is not desired at any cost. There is an opportunity to focus on high value travellers to maximize revenue as well as the positive impact that the right kind of visitor can provide. A high value traveller consists of revenue generated, their values alignment, and Inuvik's competitive advantage in attracting them.

## MISSION, VISION & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### Mission

The Economic Development and Tourism Department plays an important role in shaping life in Inuvik. While the two key areas of responsibility are developing Inuvik as a premier destination to live, work and invest and developing Inuvik as a premier destination to visit and hold meetings and conferences, in reality, the department's activities intersect with a wide range of government departments and community stakeholders. In particular, effective execution of its responsibilities requires collaboration between stakeholders in the categories of industry, local businesses, government departments (municipal, territorial, federal, and aboriginal) and tourism marketing organizations. As such, it is clear that The Economic Development and Tourism Department plays a key role, alongside other stakeholders, of shaping the Town's development in a manner that aligns with the values and aspirations of the community. Research and community/stakeholder engagement has indicated that the shared vision is the following:

*Develop a vibrant place to live and visit in a manner that generates economic opportunities, celebrates the region's unique cultures, and nurtures the environment.*



### Vision

In the not too distant future, the community will reflect upon 2020, as the year when a diversity of Inuvik's stakeholders came together to acknowledge the challenges that the Town faced and took bold action to build the sustainable future they envisioned.

The Economic Development and Tourism Department led this effort by acting as a collaborative architect to shape the Town and its surrounding region. It was through listening to all stakeholders, deep partnerships, and a shared responsibility for action that so much was accomplished within a relatively short-time frame.

The focus of the improvements centered around making Inuvik a vibrant, healthy, and fulfilling place to live and work for local residents. Beautification and sustainability initiatives have been incredibly successful, especially along the corridor leading into the heart of town. New amenities, local businesses and communal gathering areas are thriving, providing good paying jobs and more opportunities for human connection. Furthermore, annual festivals have grown while maintaining their intimacy and authenticity. Throughout these festivals as well as other conferences and events, it is clear that the community is proud of its Indigenous cultures and is invested in protecting and celebrating the traditions, artistic expressions and practices that make the region unique.

The Economic Development and Tourism Department has done an excellent job of spotlighting and facilitating story-telling throughout the region. This effort has successfully communicated that Inuvik has so much more to offer than the Northern Lights, resulting in Inuvik gaining a reputation as a hub to experience the "real north". Complementing this, the improvements in the quality of life for residents creates a sense of pride and energy that is infectious for anyone who visits, resulting in a level of organic resident and visitor advocacy that is unmatched by competing destinations. Residents feel compelled to share their unique way of life and visitors forget they're visitors, as they slip into a local mindframe in the way that they experience and care for the region.

The work required to build this vision alongside Indigenous groups, government, industry and other community stakeholders was challenging at times to balance a diverse set of needs, values, and ambitions. However, ultimately it was this thoughtful coordination of stakeholders and an alignment towards sustainable growth that allowed Inuvik to build upon its strengths, and overcome its challenges as it shaped the town for the benefit of residents and visitors alike. Indeed, Inuvik is now looked to as a leader, inspiring other towns as they plan for the future.

### Guiding Principles

The Economic Development and Tourism Department sits within an ecosystem of overlapping stakeholders and has many responsibilities competing for attention. The following principles can provide guidance to focus and shape activities within this environment.

1. Focus on what the tourism industry cannot do for itself by supporting and collaborating with tourism stakeholders
2. Complement overarching tourism stakeholders such as NWTT and ITI
3. Build awareness and preference for the Inuvik as a tourism destination
4. Approach initiatives through the lens of "will this benefit the community socially, economically, environmentally, and culturally?"

## INUVIK'S UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS

Our identity is not a choice. It's a representation of who we are. Our brand is a choice. It's how we want to present our identity to the world. Our unique characteristics help set us apart from other destinations by painting a clear picture of what makes Inuvik distinct.

### How Inuvik differs from other Arctic regions

To begin, it is important to differentiate Inuvik from other Arctic regions. During recent community workshops, we saw Inuvik described as the "real north" when compared to Yellowknife. This statement helps summarize the perceived difference between Inuvik and similar destinations. Inuvik offers more than pristine wilderness areas and Northern Lights, it is a town at the top of the world with a unique collection of cultures and a place of surprising extremes.

### Tone of Voice

Inuvik's voice in tourism communications should reflect its unique identity as a community-oriented town and its truly Northern lifestyle.

Inuvik is true to itself. It's a town that understands its identity and embraces its community, cultural heritage, and landscapes with pride. Its tone of voice is dependable and familiar-- not only because residents are there for each other, but also because it's been so formative in the lives of past residents and visitors who now live somewhere else.

Inuvik's voice is welcoming, but in a patient way. It's not intimidating or pushy to travellers. It gives visitors the time and space to decide that they're ready for the transformative journey they'll find here. Its tone reflects that Inuvik is a place of calm, and a peaceful retreat that gives travellers the freedom to explore the North and learn more about

themselves and their place in the world. Inuvik can inspire a traveller to come visit, but never in a salesy way.

Where possible, we use "we" and "our" to softly underline the sentiment that the town is inviting the world in to learn more about its unique way of life first hand. Inuvik does not invite tourists to visit, instead it welcomes temporary locals.

## Positioning

Inuvik is a tight knit community and land of extremes. Homeland of the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in peoples, it has since welcomed a diverse range of individuals who call it home. This diverse community reflects the mix of arts, culture, science and research fields that make Inuvik a unique place to work and live.

An Arctic environment and pristine wilderness, this is a place that people dream of going to but rarely get to. Remote in distance but not in heart, it's a place where you leave your car unlocked, where your children play with other children in the streets, and where neighbours still stop over to chat.

Our rich Indigenous history lives on in our amazing arts and culture scene. From local events to festivals, we celebrate our past and look to the future. It is this history that represents the backbone of who we are today. It is also these stories, practices and traditions that the rest of the world should know about as Inuvik invites temporary locals to immerse themselves in the region.

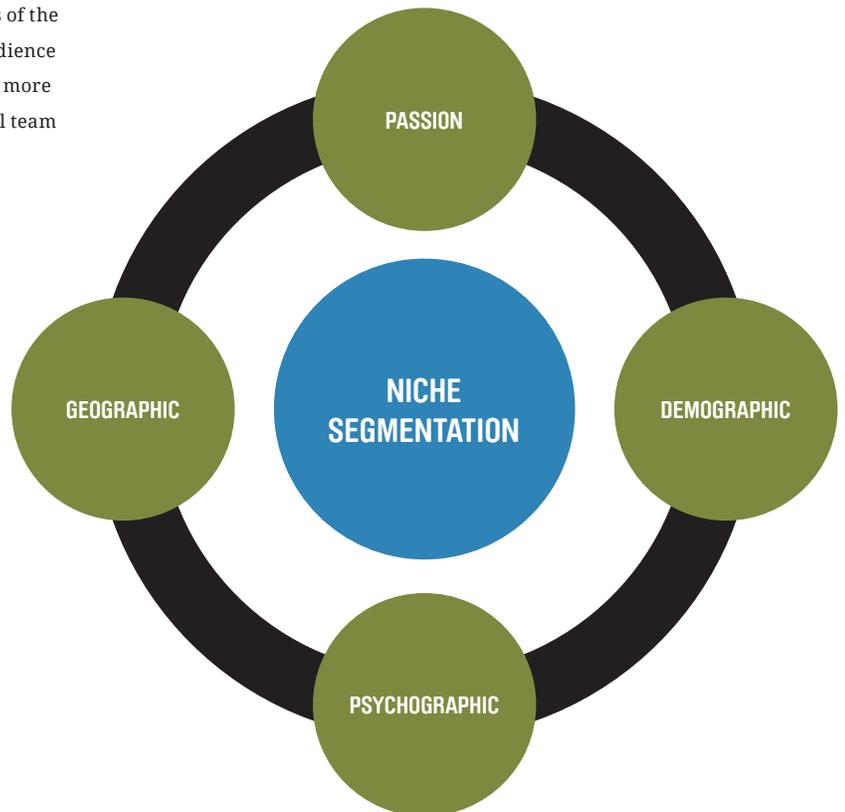


**Niche Marketing**

Capturing the attention of a target market is increasingly difficult, so in order to deeply connect with potential visitors, refining market segmentation is critical. Digital advances have removed the traditional geographic separation of potential visitors. In the past, citizens of a country would be constrained in watching local TV stations, reading local magazines and papers, and limited to local travel agents; however, this is no longer the case. As our globalized world diminishes the importance of national boundaries, a Japanese and Canadian fishing enthusiast can have more in common with each other than their next door neighbours. This speaks to the decreasing importance of geographic/national segmentation and the increasing importance of identifying niches of people with similar interests and values.

Redefining market segmentation from a focus on geography and demographics, to include psychographic, and passion-based profiling is vital in reaching visitors effectively. Especially for a town such as Inuvik, leveraging a powerful niche can overcome visitation challenges such as time, distance and price. For someone searching for a culturally authentic, dog sledding experience, that allows them to unplug from the world, Inuvik's remoteness and unique way of life that may lack certain amenities, does not detract but enhances the attractiveness of the region for this potential visitor. Furthermore, narrowing down audience segments allows marketing efforts to be more budget efficient, and more effective with messaging. This is particularly important for a small team with a limited budget.

It should be noted that a niche is not a prison. In the following section a collection of market segments are identified and analyzed; however, they do not necessarily represent a visitor in their entirety. There will be crossover between niches, for example, a Cultural Explorer may also love fly fishing or bird watching. Niche marketing simply helps us focus our marketing efforts so that we can have meaningful conversations with passionate groups of people. This is always preferred over trying to talk to everyone. DMO partners find high value in focusing on interest-based travel, as opposed to the typical one-size-fits-all marketing of the past. If you market your destination to a mass audience, your communications will be less impactful. If you talk to people honestly about experiences they're already passionate about, they'll listen and you'll cut through the noise.



# TARGET MARKET SEGMENTS

There are five key market segments that represent the most opportunity for Inuvik to build upon and pursue as the tourism industry is further developed. These segments include festivals and events, FIT adventure travellers, arctic and Indigenous tourism, meetings conventions and incentive travel, and scientific research hub.

## Market Segment Analysis

Analysis of the market segments identified current and potential markets for each of the market segments outlined. These current and potential markets were rated based on their maturity, potential, positioning and competitiveness. This provided insight into the characteristics of each segment to identify where strengths can be built upon and where opportunities still exist to expand into. Current and potential product experiences were also identified and rated in the same manner, outlining the types of offerings within each segment and their state of development. Finally, current and potential marketing programs and assets associated with each of the segments were outlined. After conducting an inventory of the types of marketing programs and assets utilized, it was determined that there are a number of opportunities to incorporate other tactics and strategies to build upon the success of past campaigns.

There are a number of different niche traveller profiles that could be targeted for each of the market segments. This is due to the fact that the market segments could be broad and appeal to a range of visitors. Within the FIT adventure travellers segment, examples of niche visitor groups include a nerd adventure traveller who takes a more academic approach to experiencing outdoor adventure, and a thrill seeking adventure traveller who wants to push their survival skills to the limits. Despite the differences between market segments, there is significant overlap in the potential for cross marketing between niche visitor groups. For example, visitors who travel to Inuvik to immerse themselves in the Indigenous cultures may choose to attend a local festival as a means of engaging with the community further.

MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS, & INCENTIVE TRAVEL	ASSESSMENT	SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH HUB	ASSESSMENT	ARCTIC & INDIGENOUS TOURISM	ASSESSMENT	FIT ADVENTURE TRAVELLERS	ASSESSMENT	FESTIVALS & EVENTS	ASSESSMENT
<b>CURRENT MARKETS</b>									
<b>POTENTIAL MARKETS</b>									
<b>CURRENT PRODUCT EXPERIENCES</b>									
<b>POTENTIAL PRODUCT EXPERIENCES</b>									
<b>CURRENT MARKETING PROGRAMS &amp; ASSETS</b>									
<b>POTENTIAL MARKETING PROGRAMS &amp; ASSETS</b>									

[View full analysis](#)

### Market Segment Prioritization

While each market segment represents opportunity, there are not all made equal. They have different characteristics including values alignment, revenue potential and the town’s capacity to deliver. Values alignment is particularly important because the market segment dictates the types of industries developed and has spillover effects in how these industries affect the local community. It also determines, to a large extent, the types of visitors attracted to the town and their associated values could influence how they positively or negatively impact the region. With these characteristics in mind, the five market segments were scored on a scale of 1-5 in each category and prioritized accordingly.

MARKET SEGMENT	CRITERIA SCORED ON A SCALE FROM 1-5			TOTAL
	VALUES ALIGNMENT & IMPORTANCE TO COMMUNITY	REVENUE POTENTIAL	CAPACITY TO DELIVER	
Festivals & Events	5	4	5	14
FIT Adventure Travellers	4	5	4	13
Arctic & Indigenous Tourism	5	3	4	12
Meetings, Conventions, & Incentive Travel	3	4	3	10
Scientific Research Hub	4	2	3	9

Festivals and events currently form the backbone of the visitor economy and are an important contributor to community building for local residents. For a tourism strategy that puts its residents first, it makes sense to continue to build upon the success in this category. FIT adventure travellers is also a strong current market segment that can be prioritized to build upon. The adventure tourism activities align with outdoor practices that are important to the community and this segment also represents one of the most profitable verticals of the tourism industry. While arctic and Indigenous tourism does not currently generate the level of revenue of adventure tourism, protecting and sharing Indigenous culture and practices is a core value of the community and the economic incentives of tourism could act as an

important mechanism in preserving cultural practices. Meetings and conventions can be logistically difficult to host in Inuvik, however, targeting the right size and type of meeting or convention could play an important role in the overall tourism industry. One weakness is the town’s amenities and infrastructure to execute these events to the desired quality but this can be improved over time. Developing Inuvik as a scientific research hub is one of the more nascent tourism segments and caters to a niche visitor market but its potential over the long-term is significant. Climate change science in particular could see major growth in this region with the right nurturing, and there are ways in which other visitor segments could be cross promoted to, further boosting the segment’s visibility.

# ACTION PLAN

The following action plan translates the previous strategy guidance into tactical initiatives that can be carried out by the Economic Development and Tourism Department along with other relevant stakeholders. Based on the mission and vision, it is organized into three key strategic pillars, including Attract the Right Visitor, Strengthen Marketing Practices and Advocate for change. The first pillar, Attract the Right Visitor, is further broken down into five subsections that align with the market segments that were analyzed in the previous section. Environmental and cultural stewardship is integrated into every element of the strategy.

The following tables of tactical initiatives under each category can be seen as a checklist to accomplish the associated objective for each section. Furthermore, the table provides additional guidance for each tactic in the form of who is responsible for execution, an estimate of the level of ambition required, and the timing of the initiative.

<b>MISSION</b>						
Develop a vibrant place to live and visit in a manner that generates economic opportunities, celebrates the region's unique cultures, and nurtures the environment.						
<b>VISION</b>						
Ideal state of Inuvik in the future that has been co-created with community members and industry stakeholders.						
<b>PILLAR 1 ATTRACT THE RIGHT VISITOR</b>					<b>PILLAR 2 STRENGTHEN MARKETING PRACTICES</b>	<b>PILLAR 3 ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE</b>
<b>FESTIVALS &amp; EVENTS</b>	<b>FIT ADVENTURE TRAVELLERS</b>	<b>ARCTIC &amp; INDIGENOUS TOURISM</b>	<b>MEETINGS, CONVENTIONS, &amp; INCENTIVE TRAVEL</b>	<b>SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH HUB</b>		
<b>Objective:</b> Strengthen local festivals and events to enhance the rich sense of community for residents and visitors	<b>Objective:</b> Become a preferred destination for FIT adventure travellers focused on hunting, fishing and outdoor adventure (via road and air)	<b>Objective:</b> Become a preferred learning destination for Arctic & Indigenous Tourism (arts, education and training)	<b>Objective:</b> Cultivate Inuvik as a preferred destination for relevant meetings, conventions, and incentive travel	<b>Objective:</b> Become a hub for scientific fields such as climate change research, arctic social and physical sciences, space and communications, GIS mapping	<b>Objective:</b> Implement marketing best practices to increase the effectiveness of the strategy execution	<b>Objective:</b> Represent the department's perspective in relevant public affairs to help shape regional society in a manner that is in the best interest of residents and visitors
Organize festivals and events with sustainability best practices and target participants who uphold these values	Target sustainably oriented FIT travellers and encourage operators to adopt regenerative tourism practices	Protect the integrity of Indigenous cultures and promote cultural learning in a respectful manner that uplifts and acknowledges Indigenous people	Organize meetings and conventions with sustainability best practices and target participants and industries who uphold these values	Attract research initiatives that have social and environmental benefits and promote the integration of western and Indigenous knowledge	Use the power of marketing to support vulnerable and/or minority populations and attract visitors that uplift the community and nurture the environment	Advocate for systemic changes that make it easier for society to make sustainable choices

STEWARDSHIP GUIDANCE



## PILLAR 1: ATTRACT THE RIGHT VISITOR

Finding the ideal visitor is critical to get right. It requires an honest and thoughtful analysis of the strengths and values of a region and a balance between building within current limitations and ambition for the future vision. This is all about focusing on the quality of visitors instead of quantity in order to maximize positive impact and minimize the negative consequences of tourism.

Research and stakeholder feedback has revealed five key visitor segments, including Festivals & Events; FIT Adventure Travellers; Arctic & Indigenous Tourism; Meetings, Conventions, & Incentive Travel; and Scientific Research Hub. This pillar has been divided into these markets and they have been listed in priority order based on their values alignment and importance to the community, revenue potential, and the Town's capacity to deliver.



000944

### Borders Old and New

Historical Homelands

Law and Seasonal Borders

Recent Land Claim Agreements

Historical Homelands

Law and Seasonal Borders

Recent Land Claim Agreements

### You Have Reached the Centre of the World

Northwest Territories

A Natural Highway

Arctic Wildlife



## Festivals & Events

Currently, the collection of festivals and local events that occur annually are a vibrant expression of what makes the town unique. While this area of focus may not hold the same potential for growth as some of the other more nascent markets of Arctic and Indigenous Tourism or developing Inuvik as a Scientific Research Hub, it is a core piece of Inuvik's identity today. Also, these events are first and foremost for local residents as a means of facilitating community building, celebration and economic opportunity. Many visitors have some kind of connection to Inuvik either through friends and family or previous work experience so the annual festivals and events provide an opportunity for these folks to visit. As a foundational community and tourism offering, Festivals & Events is a strong base from which to build other tourism markets.

*Objective: Strengthen local festivals and events to enhance the rich sense of community for residents and visitors*



<b>TACTIC DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES &amp; COLLABORATORS</b>	<b>LEVEL OF AMBITION</b>	<b>TIMING</b>
<p><b>Increase Notice</b></p> <p>Market festivals, events and further in advance than in previous years. Feedback from stakeholders and research indicated that more lead time would be beneficial to plan trips around these events with increased notice.</p> <p>There is also potential to increase awareness to other indigenous groups around the world. For example, The Riddu Riddu festival for the Sami in Finland invites many other Indigenous groups to join and share their culture during the festival time.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> <a href="#">Cultural Impact of Riddu Riddu Festival, Norway</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism</li> <li>• Collaborate with festival and event organizers</li> </ul>	Low	Short-term
<p><b>Effective Volunteer Organization</b></p> <p>Create a volunteer database or call sheet to coordinate volunteers for each major event. As many events rely on volunteers and this resource is limited, maximizing the number of volunteers and spreading out responsibilities to reduce burnout through effective organization is crucial.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism</li> <li>• Collaborate with festival and event organizers</li> </ul>	Low	Short-term
<p><b>Event Online Presence</b></p> <p>More online presence would be helpful for the Muskrat Jamboree festival, and other festivals. This can be enhanced by increasing online presence within other websites related to communities such as Yellowknife, Whitehorse and other communities where attendees are drawn from.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism</li> <li>• Collaborate with stakeholders of related websites in target communities</li> </ul>	Low	Medium-term
<p><b>Feature Human Stories</b></p> <p>Feature the stories behind the vendors of the arctic market. Spotlight different people throughout the year through a short story delivered via social channels. This will help to move travellers toward active consideration by giving them a more in-depth understanding of the people and culture that make Inuvik's events unique.</p> <p><i>Examples:</i> <a href="#">Humans of New York</a> <a href="#">Tourism Fiji</a> <a href="#">Riddu Riddu Festival</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium-term



## **FIT Adventure Travellers**

Inuvik is a land of extremes providing rugged outdoor adventure opportunities, so the FIT Adventure Travellers market segment is very important to this region. Moreover, one can encounter wilderness in its purest form and in a way that is different than almost anywhere else in the world, which is a huge draw to this market segment. It currently represents key tourism offerings from tour operators such as dog sledding, snowmobiling and ice road tours. The revenue opportunity is also significant with spend per visitor averaging \$2,167 for the outdoor adventure segment. Related segments such as fishing and hunting

also have high revenue opportunities with average spends per visitor of \$2,417 and \$13,962 respectively. FIT travellers are better suited to Inuvik than large groups that could overwhelm accommodation and operators and can leave larger environmental footprints. They also have the independent characteristics that will allow them to navigate an environment that doesn't always "hand hold" each visitor in a manner that mainstream destinations do. There seems to be significant room for growth with this segment and reason to believe that marketing investment will generate a healthy return in the form of revenue spent for each one of these types of visitors.

*Objective: Become a preferred destination for FIT adventure travellers focused on hunting, fishing and outdoor adventure (via road and air)*





<b>TACTIC DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES &amp; COLLABORATORS</b>	<b>LEVEL OF AMBITION</b>	<b>TIMING</b>
<p><b>Continue to Welcome Back Past Residents and Visitors</b></p> <p>It's common for people to return to Inuvik to visit if they already have a connection to the town. Use these return guests as advocates, and gather testimonials from quick questionnaires or interviews on why they keep coming back to share on social media channels. Sample questions: "what do you miss about Inuvik when you're not here, what is your favourite memory from living here?"</p> <p>Post content that reminds them that we're always eager to welcome them back, and use social channels as a way to showcase elements of local life that those who have moved away might miss.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism</li> </ul>	Low	Short-term
<p><b>Target RV Travellers</b></p> <p>Provide more information at RV parks regarding outdoor and adventure activities and operators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism</li> <li>Work with Town of Inuvik</li> </ul>	Low	Medium-term
<p><b>Update Hotel Information</b></p> <p>Update the operator/activity information provided at the hotels in town. Would be beneficial for visitors of accommodations such as the Mackenzie Hotel to have up to date, compelling marketing materials so that there is more visibility of the exciting activities and attractions that Inuvik has to offer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism</li> <li>Work with tourism operators</li> </ul>	Low	Medium-term
<p><b>Refine Tourism Offerings</b></p> <p>Work with tourism operators to provide offerings that fit the needs of visitors. Particularly, find opportunities to offer shorter, less expensive tours since this seems to be a gap currently. Deploy a survey that elicits feedback from visitors and uncovers ways in which offerings could be improved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by tourism operators</li> <li>Supported by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium-term
<p><b>Target Yukon Road Trippers</b></p> <p>Look to co-marketing or partnerships with Yukon to encourage travel beyond Dawson through to the end of the Dempster.</p> <p>Alternatively, look to target road trippers by encouraging the continuation and completion of a Yukon Road trip to the Arctic Ocean via Inuvik.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>Collaborate with tourism stakeholders in the Yukon</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium-term
<p><b>Position Inuvik as a place for a transformational journey</b></p> <p>Aligning with NWTT's focus on transformational journeys will help them amplify the Inuvik story in their existing marketing.</p> <p>Transformational travel can fall under a few categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wellness: Inuvik is a place where one can recharge their spirit in nature. Under the midnight sun, time becomes relative as you explore the fascinating landscape around you.</li> <li>Culture: Learn about the history, perspectives and cultures of the region, broadening visitors' understanding of the world and creating more human connection by cultivating empathy.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>Collaboration with NWTT</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium-term
<p><b>Position Inuvik as a richer, deeper experience than traditional Aurora viewing locations</b></p> <p>Yellowknife is often at capacity for Aurora tourism. The "true north" represented by Inuvik can be presented as a place for more adventurous travellers who see the Aurora as one part of their journey, and would be willing to invest the extra travel time and money to have a more transformative and truly northern experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>Collaborate with Inuvik tourism operators</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium-term
<p><b>Promote climate change science and impacts being studied in Inuvik to travellers</b></p> <p>Scientists aren't the only people interested in science. Look into promoting citizen science programs to travellers that can aid in research, developing exclusive tours or programs where travellers can learn and see the effects of climate change themselves, and use these as ways to share both western and Indigenous perspectives on living more sustainably. Encourage visitors to take their learnings home with them and advocate within their community.</p> <p>Potentially establish a certificate for those who have come to learn and have taken certain required programs (similar to the Arctic Adventurer certificate).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>Collaborate with climate change research stakeholders in the region</li> </ul>	High	Medium-term



## Arctic & Indigenous Tourism

Arctic and Indigenous tourism is one of the most exciting areas for growth that aligns with the core values of the region. There appears to be a desire from community members to preserve Indigenous traditions and a desire from visitors to immerse themselves in authentic cultural experiences. Often, the safeguarding of Indigenous cultural heritage is only achieved through its practice, so providing the context for traditional practices to happen regularly, while also providing economic benefits would greatly benefit the community.

This opportunity represents a competitive advantage for the region since there are very few places in the world where there exists such a unique combination of cultures paired with the extraordinary arctic context. Indeed, Inuvik could be known as the premier hub for learning about and experiencing the arctic and Indigenous way of life.

*Objective: Become a preferred learning destination for Arctic and Indigenous Tourism (arts, education and training)*



<b>TACTIC DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES &amp; COLLABORATORS</b>	<b>LEVEL OF AMBITION</b>	<b>TIMING</b>
<p><b>Develop a partnership initiative w/ Bobbi Rose Koe</b></p> <p>Provide a larger platform for Bobbi Rose Koe to share her message about experiencing nature in a sustainable manner that is informed by her ancestors. Highlight Bobbi as an ambassador and protector of the traditional territory of the Gwich'in people to inspire others to learn more about the connection between land and culture.</p> <p>Example: <a href="#">An interview with Bobbi</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department and Bobbi Rose Koe</li> </ul>	Medium	Short-term
<p><b>Spotlight Stories</b></p> <p>Spotlight and tell stories of Indigenous tour operators or community members who have expertise in traditional practices, arts and crafts, etc.</p> <p>Example: <a href="#">Google Arts &amp; Culture</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>• Work with Indigenous tour operators and Indigenous community members</li> </ul>	Low	Medium-term
<p><b>Support a Taste of Inuvik</b></p> <p>Assist in supporting and expanding a Taste of Inuvik at the Sunrise festival. Engage with participants to better understand what they need to continue to participate and potentially grow in the future. Work with relevant stakeholders to encourage this important aspect of the festival that shares love and culture through food.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>• Engage with participants</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium-term
<p><b>Support Indigenous Crafts</b></p> <p>There is a strong interest in Indigenous crafts. Work to improve, build on and expand the workshops offered at the GNAF. Showcase artisans at work in their home environments. Develop more attractive storefront or centre to showcase crafts for sale, and to host craft workshops year-round. Promote Inuvik as a destination for artists, photographers, writers, painters, musicians by developing an artist residency program and promote Inuvik as a place for artistic reflection in the north.</p> <p>Example: <a href="#">Berton House Writers' Retreat</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led by GNAF</li> <li>• Supported by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium-term
<p><b>Support Cultural Centres</b></p> <p>Partner to help build Inuvialuit and Gwich'in cultural centres. Provide promotional support and engage with them to determine how they can be best supported. These types of centres have been hugely successful in the Yukon by contributing to the social and cultural health of Indigenous communities and as showcase vehicles for tourism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led by cultural centres</li> <li>• Supported by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium-term
<p><b>Improve Web Presence</b></p> <p>Create a strong coordinated web presence for all Indigenous tourism offerings in the region.</p> <p>Example: <a href="#">Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>• Supported by all participating Indigenous groups and operators</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium-term
<p><b>Indigenous Guardians Program</b></p> <p>Develop an initiative in collaboration with Indigenous leaders where individuals are selected to act as cultural and environmental guardians for the region. Tourism could help fund this initiative by providing activities such as guided tours or history lessons to visitors via these guardians.</p> <p>The purpose is to monitor, protect and restore the cultural and natural resources of the region, while educating visitors about the natural and cultural heritage. Also would ensure that visitors know how to tread lightly on the land and have a low impact. Benefits include protecting and nurturing the land, creating employment, and supporting and celebrating Indigenous wisdom.</p> <p>There are a number of existing groups that involve conservation, wildlife monitoring, trapping, and culture and there is an opportunity to integrate some of these activities and participants with a tourism lens. Engagement with these stakeholders could uncover ways to build off of systems and programs that already exist.</p> <p>Example: <a href="#">Haida Gwaii Watchmen Program</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department and Indigenous groups (Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Inuvik Community Corporation, Gwich'in Tribal Council, Nihtat Gwich'in Council, Inuvik Native Band)</li> <li>• Collaborate with Parks Canada (funding potential)</li> <li>• Could involve youth programs</li> </ul>	High	Medium-term



## Meetings, Conventions, & Incentive Travel

It is advantageous to continue to grow the meetings, conventions and incentive travel segment. This segment is attractive since it can secure revenue far in advance and act as a stabilizing force for the tourism industry. However, there are limits to the type and size of these kinds of gatherings based on the cost and distance to travel to Inuvik and the existing amenities. Growth in this market segment should target small to medium size conferences and focus on events where Inuvik's location represents a competitive advantage.

*Objective: Cultivate Inuvik as a preferred destination for relevant meetings, conventions, and incentive travel*





<b>TACTIC DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES &amp; COLLABORATORS</b>	<b>LEVEL OF AMBITION</b>	<b>TIMING</b>
<p><b>Local Sourcing</b></p> <p>Source as many inputs as possible from local vendors such as produce from the greenhouse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> </ul>	low	Short-term
<p><b>Cross Promote</b></p> <p>Provide information and direct participants of conventions and events to the local tourism operators. Work with local tourism operators to provide special packages that meet the needs and time constraints of business-leisure travellers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>Collaborate with tourism operators</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium-term
<p><b>Narrow Focus</b></p> <p>Focus on conferences and events that are related to activities particularly suited to the region such as the satellite industry and climate change research. Conferences and events will need a compelling reason to travel the distance and spend the extra money required to host in Inuvik.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>Collaborate with venues</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium-term
<p><b>Hybrid Virtual/In-person Events</b></p> <p>Conferences and events concerned with the GHG emissions of travel and/or the costs of traveling to Inuvik may require the facilitation of significant virtual participation. This is a growing trend, particularly in environmental related fields, and will require additional audio/video equipment and rethinking how events are structured to accommodate a compelling virtual experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>Collaborate with venues</li> </ul>	Medium	Long-term
<p><b>Renovate the Midnight Sun Complex</b></p> <p>Renovate the Complex to increase programming quality and its ability to deliver a wider range of meetings and conventions. This could include building additional break-out rooms with whiteboards and audio/visual equipment, a removable divider to split the main conference room into two when required, upgraded video conferencing equipment for remote participants, improved adaptable lighting equipment, and any other items that target conferences are requesting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Midnight Sun Complex</li> <li>Supported by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department and Town of Inuvik</li> <li>Possible grant from ITI</li> </ul>	High	Long-term
<p><b>Indigenous Facilitator Program</b></p> <p>Work with Aurora College to develop an Indigenous facilitator training program and offer Indigenous facilitation services to conference organizers. Indigenous facilitation offers a unique method for running meetings and gatherings. It often includes opening ceremonies, prayer, song, sharing circles, talking sticks, games and food. The fundamental premise of most Indigenous facilitation is consensus building. In addition to facilitation, on the land components could be integrated into conference activities. Other offerings that make use of existing services could also be integrated into conference packages as evening activities such as lectures or tours of the ARI.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Aurora College</li> <li>Supported by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department and Town of Inuvik</li> </ul>	High	Long-term



## Scientific Research Hub

This market segment comprises an ecosystem made up of the tourism industry, the research industry and the Aurora College. While positioning Inuvik as a scientific research hub does not seem to represent a significant revenue opportunity in the short-term, it does align with the town's values and vision for the future. A small but important collection of employment opportunities are present within

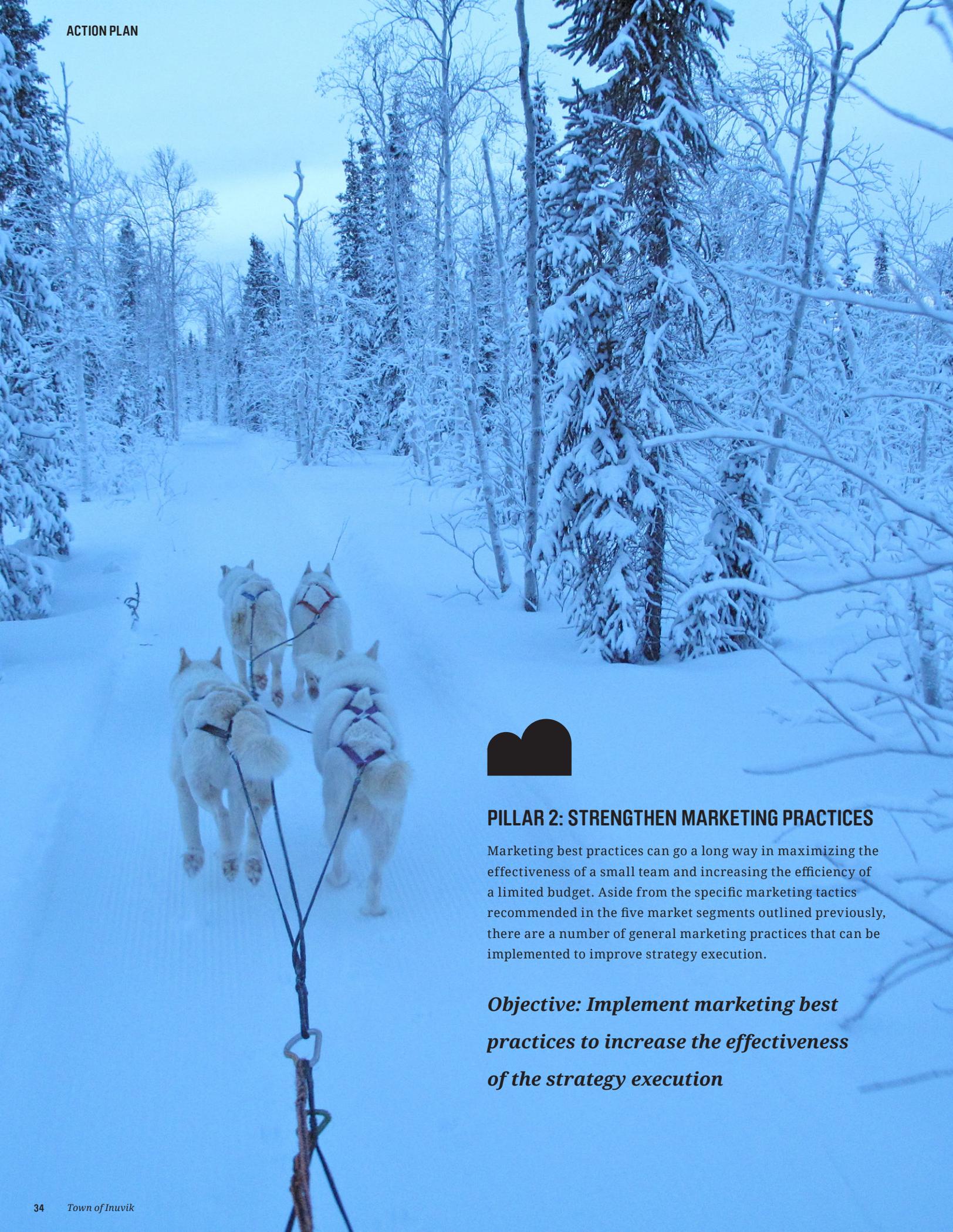
this pursuit. The development of this industry also has many synergies in strengthening Aurora College and providing a path from education to career development. Also, although the climate change tourism industry is nascent, there is a growing trend of travellers who are interested in learning about climate action solutions and research, so there is long-term potential for this industry in Inuvik.



*Objective: Become a hub for scientific fields such as climate change research, arctic social and physical sciences, space and communications, GIS mapping*



<b>TACTIC DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES &amp; COLLABORATORS</b>	<b>LEVEL OF AMBITION</b>	<b>TIMING</b>
<p><b>Scientific Research Tours</b></p> <p>Work with existing research and satellite facilities to develop tours for their facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department and research industry participants</li> <li>• Collaborate with student/interns who may want to train to become tour guides within their areas of study</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium-term
<p><b>Exchange Programs</b></p> <p>Establish exchange programs with other universities that allow students from across Canada and the World to come to Inuvik to learn about relevant scientific fields in conjunction with Aurora College. This program could also have an internship component, partnering with scientific industries to provide work experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led by Aurora College</li> <li>• Supported by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>• Collaborate with industry players</li> </ul>	Medium	Long-term
<p><b>Combine Western and Indigenous Knowledge</b></p> <p>There is an opportunity to showcase the combined efforts of western and Indigenous knowledge to tackle climate change issues. Inuvik is a hub for a significant amount of scientific and cultural research including stakeholders such as the Aurora Research Institute, Western Arctic Research Centre, Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre, Parks Canada, and other industry players. This opportunity could create a strong position for Inuvik as a centre for climate change tourism that shares learnings beyond a euro-centric perspective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>• Collaborate with other stakeholders such as the Aurora Research Institute, Western Arctic Research Centre, Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre, Parks Canada, and other industry players.</li> </ul>	High	Long-term
<p><b>Pursue Research Institutes</b></p> <p>Work with the Town of Inuvik and the Mayor to identify research industries that would be a good fit for Inuvik. Engage industry to explore what they need to facilitate their research and which incentives would be necessary to attract their business. For example, Inuvik does not actively pursue the satellite industry but there has already been organic growth in the region. There appears to be opportunities to engage this industry and make Inuvik increasingly attractive for additional business.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led by Town of Inuvik</li> <li>• Supported by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> </ul>	High	Long-term
<p><b>Support Cultural Centres</b></p> <p>Partner to help build Inuvialuit and Gwich'in cultural centres. Provide promotional support and engage with them to determine how they can be best supported. These types of centres have been hugely successful in the Yukon by contributing to the social and cultural health of Indigenous communities and as showcase vehicles for tourism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led by cultural centres</li> <li>• Supported by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium-term
<p><b>Sustainability Demonstration Facility</b></p> <p>Build a sustainability demonstration facility that acts as a research hub and tourism attraction for the latest environmental/climate change science and best practices. This facility would integrate Indigenous and western knowledge to provide a unique perspective. Workshops and tours could be offered to both visitors and residents. The community could be involved in presenting their knowledge such as a session on living off the land sustainably and showcasing Indigenous foods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>• Collaborate with other stakeholders such as the Town of Inuvik, the Aurora Research Institute, Western Arctic Research Centre, Indigenous groups and climate scientist in the region</li> </ul>	High	Long-term



## PILLAR 2: STRENGTHEN MARKETING PRACTICES

Marketing best practices can go a long way in maximizing the effectiveness of a small team and increasing the efficiency of a limited budget. Aside from the specific marketing tactics recommended in the five market segments outlined previously, there are a number of general marketing practices that can be implemented to improve strategy execution.

*Objective: Implement marketing best practices to increase the effectiveness of the strategy execution*

TACTIC DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBILITIES & COLLABORATORS	LEVEL OF AMBITION	TIMING
<p><b>Master Calender</b></p> <p>Create a master calendar for all conferences, events and other initiatives that the Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department is associated with along with all the strategy and tactics for each initiative. Tactics will include digital and traditional forms of marketing as well as outlining timelines and responsibilities for execution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> </ul>	Low	Short-term
<p><b>Local Communication</b></p> <p>Community members have expressed that they don't always know about the latest events and initiatives around town. Engage with residents to determine the most effective distribution channels and communicate activities and events regularly and with more lead time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>Engage with residents</li> </ul>	Low	Short-term
<p><b>Develop Niche Marketing</b></p> <p>Identify key niche groups (collection of individuals with a specific mix of values and interests). Develop detailed personas for each of these groups, and use their language to reach out and address their needs and interests for targeted marketing campaigns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> </ul>	Low	Medium-term
<p><b>Complementary Visitor Centers</b></p> <p>Develop complementary programs for both visitors centers by maintaining key distinctions between the two. For example, focusing the new center on Inuvik specific information and focusing the existing center on Western Arctic information. It would be beneficial to train staff at both centres to explain these differences and refer visitors to each other.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>Collaborate with the Western Arctic Regional Visitor Centre</li> </ul>	Low	Medium-term
<p><b>Budget Reallocation</b></p> <p>Currently a significant proportion of the budget is allocated towards traditional marketing tactics such as trade shows. There is an opportunity to redirect budget towards digital marketing tactics.</p> <p>More modern tactics that can still be affordable include social media advertising campaigns that are targeted to niche audiences in realistic geographic areas. These campaigns can help to raise awareness of the experiences available in Inuvik to a new, specially targeted audience, and can increase the chance of reaching the right type of traveller.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium-term
<p><b>Cultivating Community Advocates</b></p> <p>Harness the passions of locals to help gather stories and assets for social media. This can be in the form of a competition, a freelance engagement and/or an internship program for teenagers with an interest in photography, writing, or tourism. Leverage this community asset as contributors to stories on your online accounts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>Collaborate with community members and/or Aurora College</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium-term
<p><b>Pursue More Co-marketing</b></p> <p>Yellowknife has limitations as a hub to send visitors to Inuvik. There is an opportunity to engage in co-marketing partnerships with Whitehorse and other surrounding regions/towns to share visitors. Aim for an atmosphere of co-opetition where there is an exchange of value and incentives for each location to refer visitors to each other.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium-term
<p><b>Storytelling Focus</b></p> <p>There was a lot of feedback regarding the lack of consistent storytelling communicating the essence of the region. Focus less on broadcasting and promotion of Inuvik to visitors and more on spot-lighting the experiences that capture the authenticity of the destination and communicate the rich history of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of the region. Become storytellers instead of marketers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>Engage with community members and tourism industry</li> </ul>	Medium	Medium-term
<p><b>Improved Signage</b></p> <p>There is a need for directing visitors to what Inuvik has to offer. Build upon the highway sign initiative and create more wayfinding signs around town to highlight activities, attractions, arts and crafts, etc. There are many challenges and laws to navigate with signage so many stakeholders will have to be engaged and creative solutions will have to be developed to abide by these restrictions while achieving the overarching objective of directing visitors around town more effectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>Collaborate with Town of Inuvik</li> <li>Apply for funding from ITI</li> </ul>	High	Medium-term



### PILLAR 3: ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE

Community and industry stakeholders have made it clear that they want a tourism industry that has a positive impact economically, socially and environmentally. It is also recognized that while the tourism industry intersects with many other aspects of society, it only has so much power by itself to create positive change. Therefore, it is important that advocacy efforts include engagement and collaboration with other stakeholders to shape Inuvik with a collective vision.

**Objective: Represent the department’s perspective in relevant public affairs to help shape regional society in a manner that is in the best interest of residents and visitors.**

**TACTIC DESCRIPTION**

**Support Tourism Development**

It has been indicated that tourism development and grant programs through GNWT-ITI are consistently oversubscribed; therefore, there is a need to advocate for increased funding and an expansion of programs. There is a significant need for additional amenities and tourism related services for both residents and visitors so an increased emphasis on tourism development in general is necessary. This falls outside of the direct domain of the Economic Development & Tourism Department so collaboration with other stakeholders will be required.

**101 Development Program**

Collaborate with ITI to create a tourism development 101 program that would provide introductory guidance for tourism operators regarding the types of programs and funding available through GNWT-ITI. It could also outline any support that the Economic Development & Tourism Department could possibly provide such as the ongoing marketing initiatives. In general, community and industry feedback has indicated a need for more guidance and handholding for operators to reach their full potential and for the tourism industry as a whole to deliver the experiences expected by visitors. A 101 workshop could provide direction for a 102 workshop that would continue the journey of supporting tourism development in Inuvik.

**Hybrid Visitor Centre**

Many community members have expressed a need for additional amenities such as restaurants and especially a coffee shop. The new visitor centre could allocate some of its space to serve as a coffee shop, refreshing visitors after a long drive and residents alike. This additional communal space would be welcomed by a town that is eager for more gathering spaces to connect with each other.

**RESPONSIBILITIES & COLLABORATORS**

- Led by GNWT-ITI
- Supported by Economic Development & Tourism Department

- Led by GNWT-ITI
- Supported by Economic Development & Tourism Department

- Led by Economic Development & Tourism Department
- Engage community members
- Collaborate with Town of Inuvik

**LEVEL OF AMBITION**

Medium

Medium

Medium

**TIMING**

Medium-term

Medium-term

Medium-term

<b>TACTIC DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES &amp; COLLABORATORS</b>	<b>LEVEL OF AMBITION</b>	<b>TIMING</b>
<p><b>Town Beautification Initiative</b></p> <p>Create a town cleanup and beautification competition to cultivate a culture of civic and environmental pride resulting in a town that is better for both residents and tourists. In addition to cleanup activities, beautification initiatives could also include mural/public art created by local artists that depict inspiring stories about the region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>Prizes can be provided by corporate partnerships</li> <li>Collaborate with an event such as the Muskrat Jamboree to announce annual winner (or winning team)</li> </ul>	High	Medium-term
<p><b>College Tourism Program</b></p> <p>Encourage Aurora College to develop a sustainable tourism program. This would encourage students to further develop Inuvik's tourism industry in a responsible manner and allow local students to pursue career opportunities in their hometown. Students in the program could also intern with local tourism operators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Aurora College</li> <li>Supported by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> </ul>	High	Long-term
<p><b>Building By-Laws</b></p> <p>Resident's repeatedly cited rundown buildings, particularly along the corridor leading to town, as a key issue. It would be beneficial to request a voice at the table when discussing by-laws for old buildings that should be torn down and land that should be reclaimed appropriately. The Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department and its initiatives are significantly impacted by these rundown buildings so they should be included in the decision making process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Town of Inuvik</li> <li>Supported by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> </ul>	High	Medium-term
<p><b>Resiliency Program</b></p> <p>As Inuvik continues to align with visitors who hold values of protecting the environment, culture and Inuvik's way of life, they will be likely to support a program that upholds these values for the region. A resiliency fee could be charged to each visitor which would fund programs vital to the Inuvik's sustainable vision. These programs could include environmental conservation efforts, Indigenous programs/groups, mental health programs, and other services for residents. If Universal Basic Income is deemed necessary for residents or a subsection of the most vulnerable residents then revenue could be allocated accordingly. Revenue sources include a fee on tourism activities, fee upon airport arrival, hotel tax, external grants/funding, etc.</p> <p>A similar program exists on the Galapagos Islands where an entrance fee of \$100 is charged upon arrival. In this case, funds are allocated to the local community, local government and environmental conservation efforts.</p> <p>Example: <a href="#">Galapagos Entrance Fee</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>Collaborate with Town of Inuvik, tourism industry, and Indigenous groups</li> </ul>	High	Long-term
<p><b>GHG Baseline Assessment</b></p> <p>Engage a consultancy to conduct a baseline GHG assessment for Inuvik. This is an important first step to understanding the town's impact on climate change and eventually developing a climate action plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Town of Inuvik</li> <li>Supported by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> </ul>	High	Long-term
<p><b>Develop Climate Action Plan</b></p> <p>Engage a consultancy to develop a climate action plan that sets GHG reduction targets and identifies adaptation measures. The Resiliency Program and GHG Baseline Assessment are important components of an overarching strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by Town of Inuvik</li> <li>Supported by Economic Development &amp; Tourism Department</li> <li>Supported by Indigenous groups</li> </ul>	High	Long-term

## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

In a system that is set up to gravitate towards traditional measures of success such as number of hotel beds filled and total revenue generated, it can be difficult to get to the core of how the tourism industry is performing. Visitors numbers can be vanity metrics that don't always reflect the true health of the tourism industry and the community. The goal is to track the quality of visitors and the impact on the region instead of the quantity of visitors. A resident based Net Promoter Score (NPS) can serve as a more effective measure. This strategy is centered around the health and wellbeing of the local community and gauges the sentiment of these community members. This can be delivered as a resident survey that uses a Net Promoter Score (NPS) as the key tool for measuring feedback and the associated success of the tourism industry. In general, regular community engagement creates the foundation for measuring success.

There are some instances where more conventional quantitative metrics can be supportive. Inuvik's annual festivals and events form the backbone of the visitor economy in the region and monitoring attendance is important. Maintaining a critical mass to keep the festivals thriving is crucial, so tracking attendance and participant feedback will be supportive in strategic planning for future events. Tracking quantitative metrics for individual initiatives and also be helpful. Tracking the progress of the beautification initiatives and the amount of money raised through a potential Resiliency Fee are examples of how success can be tracked to make sure that initiatives are executed to their full potential.

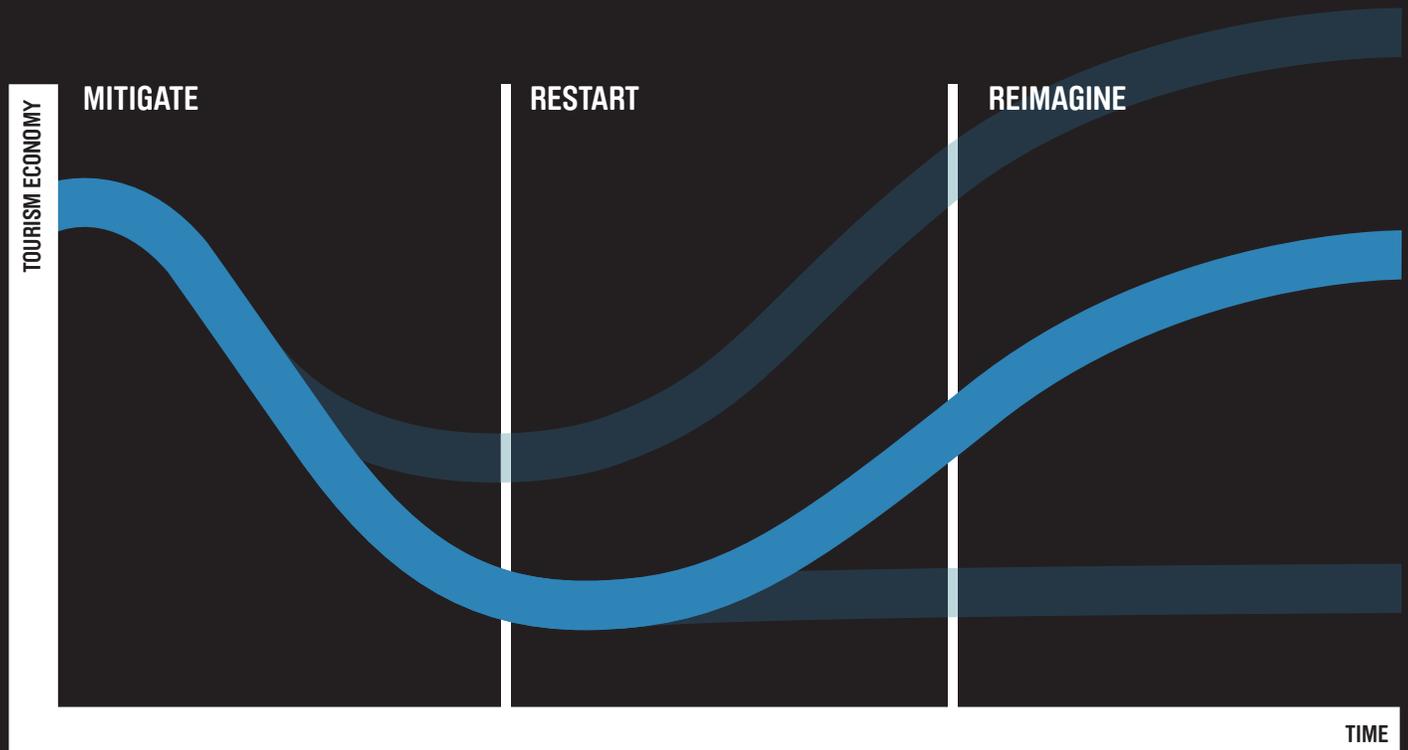
Finally, the tables of recommended initiatives can be seen as a checklist to track progress. While granular goals and metrics can be created for each initiative, completing an initiative itself is important to record. This can be facilitated by scoping an initiative realistically and determining beforehand what success looks like and therefore when an initiative is truly complete.



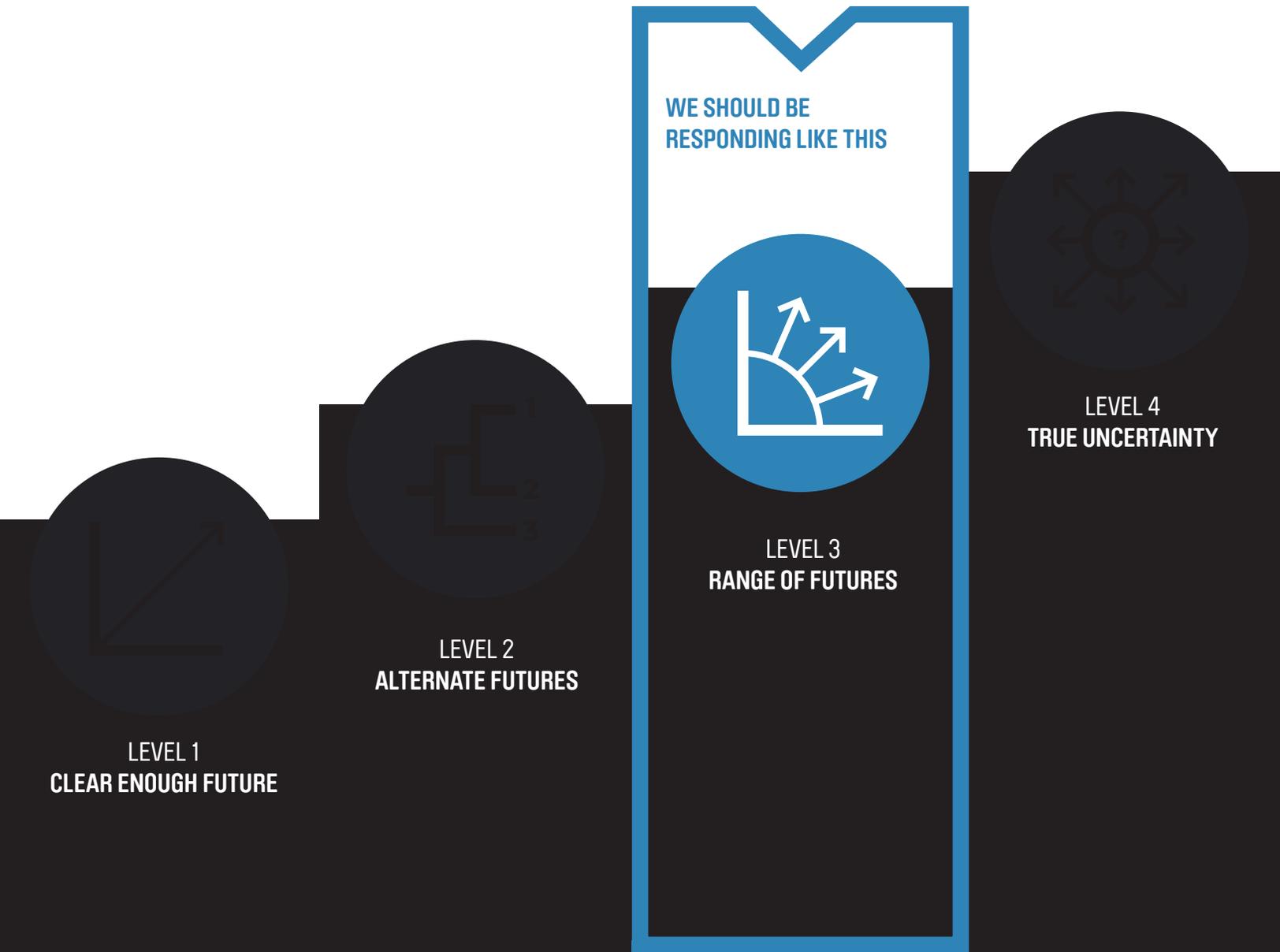
## COVID-19 PLANNING

While this strategy is long-term in nature, it is necessary to briefly address the biggest current challenge that the tourism industry and society at large faces. At the time of writing, the COVID-19 pandemic is having significant impacts in terms of a global medical emergency and economic slowdown. The closing of borders and restriction of travel is placing the tourism industry at the forefront of those affected so it is necessary to understand how to plan for an uncertain future and envision recovery when the time comes.

While it is uncertain what the future holds, we know that we are currently in the mitigation phase of this challenge. The situation will most likely get worse before it gets better and our job in the tourism industry in the short-term is to support our community, particularly the health workers that are putting their lives at risk to take care of us. This can be accomplished by reinforcing the recommendations of medical experts and government guidance. For example, using owned channels to encourage people to stay at home and only engage in tourism activities in the future when it is safe to do so.



The COVID-19 pandemic has created an environment that is very difficult to plan for because of the level of uncertainty. Under normal circumstances it is common to experience a level 1 degree of uncertainty; however, the most effective way to plan in the current environment is to expect a range of possible futures. Consequently, it is necessary to employ scenario analysis to be prepared to act under different circumstances. To achieve this, it is important to collect up to date information from credible sources and distill this data into a best case, medium case and worst case scenario. Each of these scenarios will vary in terms of characteristics such as how long travel is restricted, the level of economic impact, the amount of government support, the season and associated campaign that will be relevant for a restart and a number of other factors.



LEVEL 1  
CLEAR ENOUGH FUTURE

LEVEL 2  
ALTERNATE FUTURES

WE SHOULD BE  
RESPONDING LIKE THIS

LEVEL 3  
RANGE OF FUTURES

LEVEL 4  
TRUE UNCERTAINTY

During this phase of the crisis, it is difficult to know the best course of action to support the restart of the tourism industry. However, there are some general guidelines that could be helpful to consider as plans for the future begin to develop. Travel restrictions will most likely be alleviated in phases, starting with the allowance of local or regional travel. In this situation it will be necessary to lean on the local and regional visitor economy for the initial part of the recovery. Local festivals and events will be an important component of this early strategy. International travel will most likely take some time to recover so an emphasis on road trips to and around Inuvik could be an alternative.

Some industry stakeholders may place less emphasis on sustainable travel in the short-term but the long-term trend will remain. Brands and destinations that abandon sustainability now may suffer in the medium-long term. Also a more holistic and transformational form of travel will provide a means to differentiate offerings as many in the industry are predicted to engage in short-term price wars as a means of filling vacancies and gaining market share. There is a strong argument to be made that this crisis presents an opportunity to step back and reimagine what the tourism industry could look like if it were dedicated to the wellbeing of people and planet. There will certainly be significant negative impacts, especially on the most vulnerable segments of society, therefore our immediate effort should be to play our part in supporting these individuals and mitigating the social and economic consequences of the pandemic. However, there is a long-term opportunity to direct recovery efforts in a way that benefits a comprehensive set of stakeholders.

## NEXT STEPS

The implementation of this Tourism Marketing Strategy will be a significant undertaking for the Town of Inuvik. The strategy is ambitious and forges a new path forward with a unique vision for how the tourism industry should shape and be shaped by the region. However, this plan is not disconnected from the past. Instead, it is built on previous successes and the strengths and assets that make Inuvik Inuvik.

Just as it was a collaborative team effort to build this strategy, no single individual or organization will be able to implement the plan by themselves. From the public sector to the private sector and from visitors to local residents everyone has a vital role to play in developing the tourism industry in a way that improves the quality of life for all. Throughout this process there has been a strong intent to engage all stakeholders, and the participation has been encouraging; therefore, we are confident that the Town of Inuvik can successfully coordinate the execution of this strategy and the realization of the collective vision.

It is important to recognize that this strategy will take time to roll out and will require a phased approach to accomplish all the initiatives. Also, while this strategy is forward looking and accounts for global trends, the tourism landscape and regional context will most certainly evolve over time so it is important that the strategy be reviewed on an annual basis. This will provide an opportunity to reflect upon successes and failures and prioritize for the upcoming period of execution.





# TOWN OF INUVIK

Tourism Marketing Strategy