THE GAME PLAN FOR TRAILS

8.1 TRAIL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Trail classification is a fundamental foundation for all trail systems. Trail classification is a comprehensive approach to describing and documenting the intended characteristics of a trail. Trail classification provides direction to and supports decisions about trail siting and design, permitted trail activities, amenities, management, maintenance, land acquisition among others. Classifying trails also allows the Regional District to help residents and visitors find the trails that are right for them and provide them with accurate and consistent information about the trail's characteristics. Through this plan, the Regional District is establishing a renewed approach to trail classification.

There are two components to the trail classification system:

- Trail Type
- Trail Class

Trail Type

Trails can be categorized as one of two types:

- Regional Trail
- Local Trail

It is important to understand the distinction between these two trail types. Though both are designated as trails, regional and local trails intentionally differ in terms of the visitor experience, connectivity, uniqueness / significance, role in active transportation, the catchment they attract visitation from, contiguous length and who benefits most from the trail. Regional and local trails also differ in how acquisition, development and operations of the trail are paid for. Table 16, illustrates the fundamental differences between regional and local trails.

'Game Plans'

Outline the strategies and actions that will be taken to achieve the desired outcomes.

Strategies

What we will do!
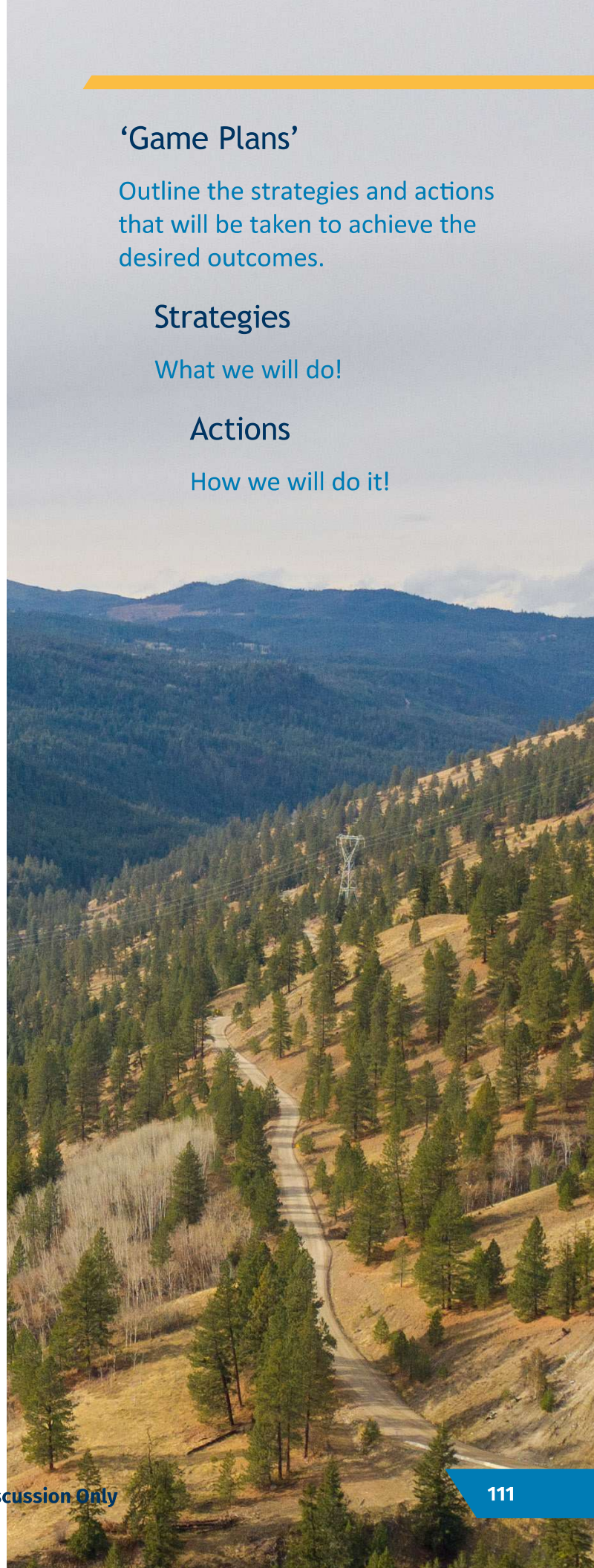
Actions

How we will do it!

Table 16. Characteristics of Regional and Local Trails

Characteristics	Regional Trail	Local Trail
Purpose	While the design characteristics and permitted uses vary, the purpose of a regional trail is to provide one or more of the following: • Exceptional and regionally significant trail-based recreation opportunities. • Safe off-road active transportation options, connections to multi-modal transportation linkages and connections between communities throughout the region and adjacent jurisdictions. • Connection to and appreciation of nature and education and celebration of regionally significant culture and heritage. • Grow the trail tourism sector throughout the region.	While the design characteristics and permitted uses vary, the purpose of a local trail is to provide one or more of the following: • Local trail-based recreation opportunities for individual neighbourhoods or communities. • Safe off-road active transportation options between neighbourhoods. • Connection to and appreciation of nature and education and celebration of locally important culture and heritage.
Connectivity	• Communities within region. • Neighbouring regions. • Major destinations.	• Neighbourhoods within Electoral Area.
Regional Uniqueness / Significance	• Provides a regionally unique trail-based recreation opportunity.	• Provides for local trail-based recreation.
Role in Active Transportation	• Inter & intra-regional active transportation.	• Local or no active transportation role.
Typical Visitation	• Majority of visitors are from across the region or abroad. • Strong trail tourism potential.	• Majority of visitors are local. • Low trail tourism potential.

Characteristics	Regional Trail	Local Trail
Length	• Longer – may provide the opportunity for a full day or even multi-day trail experience.	• Shorter – typically, but not exclusively, provides opportunity for a part day trail experience.
Beneficiaries	• For the benefit of the region as-a-whole (residents of electoral areas and municipalities).	• For the benefit of electoral area residents.
Requisition	• Funded through region-wide tax requisition	• Funded through Electoral Area tax requisition. *Trails located within local parks are considered local trails and are funded through the capital and operational budgets associated with the park service they are located within.*

Trail Classification

Trail stakeholders we clear that the Regional District needed to update its approach to classifying and documenting its trails and providing information about the characteristics of trails to visitors. Though a trail classification system was outlined in the 2011 Regional Trail Master Plan, this system does not provide the Regional District or visitors with clear direction on or understanding of the:

- Season of use.
- Activities permitted on the trail.
- Whether the trail is / will be optimized for any specific activity.
- Level of development.
- Level of preparation visitors require to travel the trail safely.

In addition, the part trail classification system does not use an approach that ensures the physical design of the trail is deliberately driven by the needs of permitted activities and the intended level of challenge.

Moving forward, and recognizing that the province may establish a provincial trail classification system, the Regional District may utilize the **National Guidelines for Classifying Multi-Use Trails in Canada** and associated design parameters (Figure 32) as its classification system. This innovative classification system allows the Regional District to comprehensively classify regional and local trails, determine the design parameters for these trails, and document these decisions for each trail in a Trail Management Objective form (Appendix A.2). The selected classification and design parameters for each trail will provide a basis on which the Regional District will monitor the condition and characteristics of each of its regional and local trails and prioritize maintenance initiatives to ensure the trails remain in line with the intended classification and design parameters.
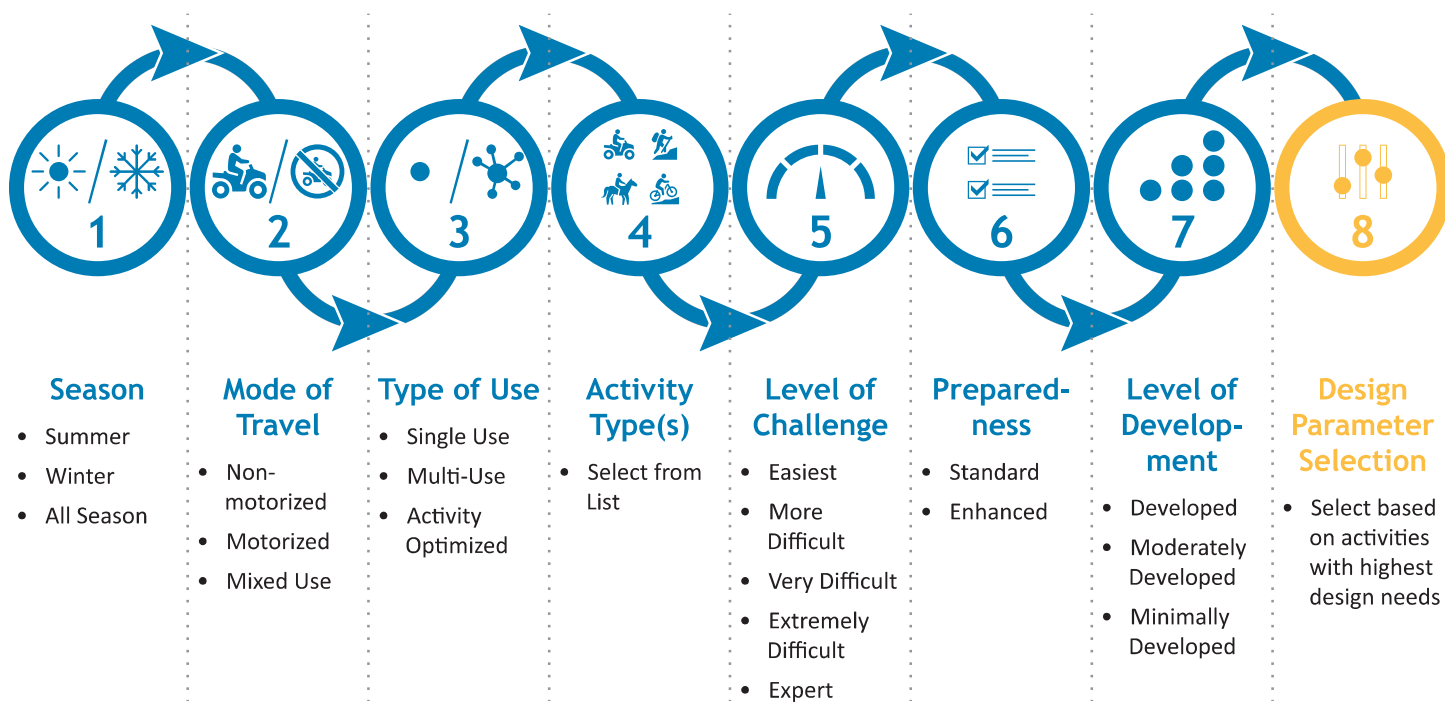

1 Season	2 Mode of Travel	3 Type of Use	4 Activity Type(s)	5 Level of Challenge	6 Prepared-ness	7 Level of Develop-ment	8 Design Parameter Selection
• Summer • Winter • All Season	• Non-motorized • Motorized • Mixed Use	• Single Use • Multi-Use • Activity Optimized	• Select from List	• Easiest • More Difficult • Very Difficult • Extremely Difficult • Expert	• Standard • Enhanced	• Developed • Moderately Developed • Minimally Developed	• Select based on activities with highest design needs

Figure 32   Trail Classification System

DRAFT – For Discussion Only

8.2   STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

8.2.1 Expand & Connect Trails

What We Heard

- 99% of participants indicated that being outside and enjoying the outdoors was important.
- 97% of participants indicated that enjoying trails was very important (88%) or somewhat important (9%).
- Participants support expanding and connecting the regional and local trail systems. 85% of participants strongly agreed (65%) or somewhat agreed (25%) that the Regional District should pursue the establishment of more trails in the region.
- Participants are supportive of establishing more natural surfaced hiking / walking trails, cycling trails, mountain bike optimized trails and ORV trails.

What We Found

- Gaps in the regional trail system exists. Not all communities and major destinations are connected to the regional trail system. Collaborative and strategic plans for each of the regional trails (trail segments) are needed to resolve these gaps and to identify trail specific improvements.
- Regional trails have not been clearly classified leading to visitor confusion, conflicts and uncertainty for trail mangers and visitors.
- There is opportunity to consider the creation of regional water trails on the region's major lakes.
- A prioritized and strategic approach to acquiring lands to address critical gaps in the regional and local trail systems is needed.

Actions:

1. Formally adopt and champion the implementation of the Kettle Valley Rail Trail (KVRT) Master Plan: Midway to Glenfir prepared collaboratively by Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) with involvement of the Regional District and trail stakeholders. Actively advocate the Government of BC to immediately adopt and support the implementation of the KVRT Master Plan.

2. Adopt and work with Recreation Sites & Trails BC (RSTBC) to apply the following classifications for each regional trail or trail segment. Work with the province to amend the 2011 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the Province and the Regional District to reflect the following trail classifications:

Trail	Segment	Season	Mode of Travel	Type of Use	Level of Challenge	Preparedness	Level of Development
Kettle Valley Rail Trail - East	Penticton to Little Tunnel	All	Non-motorized	Multi-use	🟢	Standard	Developed
	Little Tunnel to Glenfir	All	Mixed Use	Multi-Use	🟢	Standard	Developed
	Glenfir to RDOS Boundary	All	Non-Motorized	Multi-Use	🟦	Enhanced	Moderately Developed
Kettle Valley Rail Trail – West	Penticton to Faulder	All	Non-Motorized	Multi-Use	🟢	Standard	Developed
	Faulder to Brookmere	All	Mixed Use	Multi-Use Optimized for ORV	🟦	Enhanced	Minimally Developed
Kettle Valley Rail Trail – South Spur	Penticton to Osoyoos	All	Non-Motorized	Multi-Use	🟢	Standard	Developed
Similkameen Trail (VV&E)	LSIB Reserve to Cawston	All	Non-Motorized	Multi-Use	🟢	Standard	Developed

3. Prepare a long-term "Trail Development and Management Plan" for the South Spur (SS) of the KVRT between Penticton and Osoyoos to establish the corridor as a fully connected world class non-motorized trail, active transportation corridor, and signature trail tourism attraction. The development and management plan should address connectivity gaps, ongoing jurisdictional challenges, and ensure impacts of the trail's development/use will avoid or minimize potential impacts to species at risk particularly in the Vaseux Lake segment and Indigenous values. Work collaboratively with the Penticton Indian Band (PIB), Osoyoos Indian Band (OIB), Government of BC, and Government of Canada to establish an appropriate and respectful governance structure to lead the preparation of the master planning process.

4. Working in partnership with the Government of British Columbia, First Nations, local stakeholders, and the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA), prepare a "Trail Development and Management Plan" to establish the KVRT from Faulder to Brookmere as a year-round mixed-use trail that is optimized for off-road vehicle and snowmobile-based recreation and focused on becoming a major regional tourism attraction. Among other topics, the development and management plan should:

» Undertake a detailed condition assessment of the trail, amenities, and infrastructure (e.g., trestles).

» Identify strategies to address identified trail tread issues, aging infrastructure, and amenities.

» Identify suitable locations for the development of future major staging areas that will minimize conflicts with other trail users and nearby property owners.

» Identify a suitable location for the development of an Off-Road Vehicle adventure play park and campground that is connected to the trail.

» Address connectivity gaps through the Town of Princeton.

» Identify connections from the KVRT to adjacent trails and attractions.

A well designed, connected, signed, maintained, and activated trail network brings significant social, environmental, and economic value to the region.

5. Partner with RSTBC to explore a shared regional funding formula model for the upgrade, or replacement, of the trestles on the Faulder to Tulameen section of the KVRT to ensure the trail will remain a quality recreational asset and become an important tourism motivator for the region.

6. Undertake a trail connectivity feasibility study to explore the potential of establishing an off-road non-motorized multi-use trail connection of the KVR Trail from Penticton to Summerland using the KVR corridor. Work collaboratively with the Penticton Indian Band (PIB), Government of BC and others to establish an appropriate and respectful governance structure to lead the preparation of the study.

7. Work with the District of Summerland to formalize and sign the on-road KVRT connection between the Trout Creek Trestle and the Flume Trail.

8. Working in partnership with the Ministry of Transportation, Lower Similkameen Indian Band, and local governments, prepare a "Trail Development and Management Plan" to improve the connectivity and quality of the Similkameen Rail Trail (VVE) between the Lower Similkameen Indian Band's reserve lands in the west and Cawston in the east with consideration for establishing long-term connectivity to the proposed National Park Reserve and communities of the Similkameen Valley. The trail is to be developed as a safe non-motorized multi-use active transportation and recreation corridor

9. Encourage and support efforts to establish the Okanagan River Channel Trail as a major animated urban trail experience and visitor attraction in the region.

10. Work with stakeholders to identify a mixed-use trail connection from the Glenfir Staging Area to Midway. This mixed-use connection would provide Off-Road Vehicles with an alternate route that avoids the KVRT and would serve as an offset to the KVRT's non-motorized designation between Glenfir and Midway.

11. Work with stakeholders and Recreation Sites & Trails BC to establish a designated non-motorized mountain bike optimized trail connection between Campbell Mountain and Three Blind Mice Mountain Bike areas.

12. Explore the potential of creating paddling water trails on the region's major lakes with priority to Okanagan Lake, Skaha Lake and Osoyoos Lake.

13. Continue to acquire lands to connect and expand the trail system through the 5% dedication / cash in lieu and Development Cost Charges provisions in the Local Government Act.

14. Continue to support the development, promotion, and management of an interconnected network of safe on-Road Cycling Routes that connects all communities and major destinations in the region.

15. Continue to support the development, promotion, and operation of safe pedestrian corridors within higher density population centers of Electoral Areas.

16. Ensure Electoral Area and local government Official Community Plans are updated to reflect the future vision for each regional trail as established through the respective "Trail Development and Management Plans".

8.2.2 Enhance Trails

What We Heard

- Participants reported being generally satisfied with their trail experience on the KVR between Naramata and Penticton (93% very or somewhat satisfied. Satisfaction with the remainder of the KVR trail and the Similkameen Trail were reported to be much lower.

- 89% of participants strongly agreed (54%) or somewhat agreed (35%) that investments should be made to enhance existing trails.

- Improving the consistency and condition of on-trail comfort and convenience amenities is a priority. Waste receptacles, toilets, wayfinding / signage, washrooms, parking / staging areas and benches / picnic tables were highest priority.

- Elevating the visitor experience and sense of arrival at staging areas is a priority.

What We Found

- Clear expectations about the trail design parameters and trail characteristics have not been formally set. As such, it is unclear if current trail conditions are in line with desired conditions.

- The condition of trails and trail amenities varies by trail segment. In general, declining maintenance, aging signage, and a diminishing condition of amenities and infrastructure are evident on some segments of trail.

- The provision of signage, and visitor comfort and convenience amenities vary significantly across trails. Deliberate decisions should be made about the intended service levels for these trails.

- Greater maintenance attention and capital replacement planning is required to ensure trail treads, signage and amenities are appropriate for visitors.

Actions:

1. In accordance with the assigned trail classification, develop and maintain Trail Management Objectives (TMO) for all Regional and Local trails using the TMO form in Appendix A.2.

2. Undertake detailed trail condition assessments of all Regional and Local trails. Compare current trail conditions with the established Trail Management Objective and design parameters and, where current conditions deviate from intended conditions, prioritize upgrades and maintenance to bring the trail condition into compliance with the Trail Management Objective.

3. In keeping with established trail management objectives, continue efforts to improve the quality and consistency of trail treads on Regional and Local trails to be suitable for the intended activities.

4. In alignment with the *Kettle Valley Rail Trail Master Plan: Midway to Glenfir* segment, work with partners to identify an appropriate site to develop a major "gateway" experience to the KVRT in the Penticton / Naramata area.

5. Continue to support the development and approval of the *Kettle Valley Rail Trail: Glenfir to Midway Signage Strategy*. Adopt and implement the signage strategy guidelines that are currently under development on all segments of the KVR and adapt and apply them on the Similkameen Trail.

6. In accordance with the trail classification and TMO, ensure visitor amenities and services provided on regional trails align with the level of service guidance established in the Regional Trail Level of Service Matrix (Appendix A.2).

7. Utilize the Parking, Staging Area & Trailhead Level of Service Guidelines (Appendix A.3) to classify all parking / staging / trailhead areas that provide access into Regional and Local trails and work to ensure the services and amenities provided align with the level of service guidelines.

8. Continue efforts to beautify and enhance access points, viewpoints, and destinations along Regional and Local trails.

9. Identify and pursue opportunities to support and provide winter trail-based recreation opportunities on Regional and Local trails.

8.2.3 Proactively Manage Visitation on Trails

What We Heard

- Participants are concerned about growing volumes of use, littering, environmental damage and wildlife conflicts, theft, dog waste, visitor conflicts and crowding as well as invasive species control and wildfire management.

What We Found

- Visitation and the complexity of management challenges on Regional and Local trails continues to increase. A more proactive approach to visitor management planning and visitor management (e.g. education, enforcement) is needed.

Actions:

1. Undertake a spatial inventory and classification of all formal and informal trails within Local and Regional parks.

2. Accurately communicate the trail accessibility characteristics about each Regional and Local trail to visitors, including tread surfacing and widths, frequency & height of obstacles, grades and cross slopes, technical difficulty rating, level of preparedness rating, and whether amenities on the trail are universally accessible.

3. Work with partners and qualified environmental professionals to develop a green infrastructure and restoration strategy for each of the Regional District's regional trails to identify the location of and defines priority green infrastructure development projects, invasive species / weed control locations, habitat restoration projects and vegetation and fire management priorities.
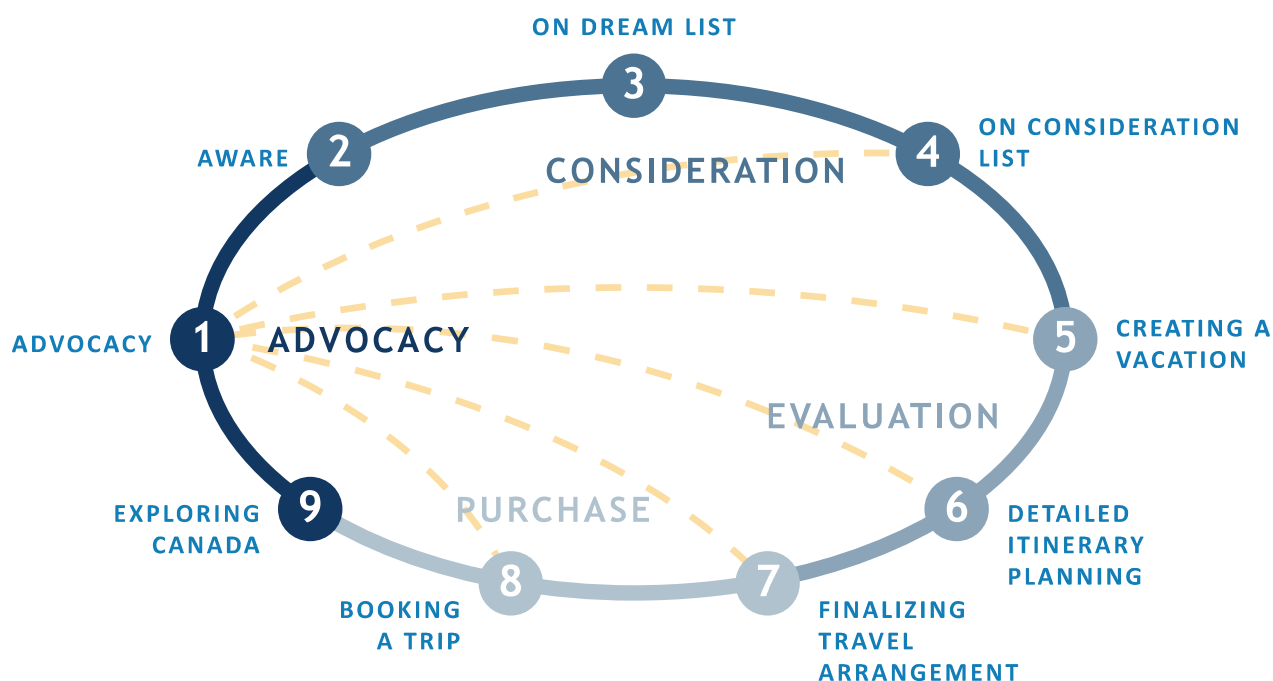

Figure 33   Visitor Trip Process & Pathway Adapted from Destination Canada

4. On trails with increasing volumes of visitation, increasing visitor impacts and growing visitor conflicts, utilize the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council's Visitor Management Framework (**https://visitorusemanagement.nps. gov/**) and prepare visitor management plans to resolve management concerns.

5. Adopt "Leave No Trace" (**www.leavenotrace. ca**) as the Regional District's visitor education program. Integrate Leave No Trace principles into signage, web-materials, and trip planning information as part of a comprehensive visitor education program. Work to reach visitors with Leave No Trace messaging at all steps of the visitor trip process and pathway (Figure 33).

6. Work with bylaw and enforcement officers to identify issues and locations of recurring non-compliance and undertake targeted compliance patrols during known problem periods.

7. Improve data collection to better understand visitors and visitation on Regional and Local trails. Design and implement a visitor counting program to estimate visitation to and understand visitation patterns within parks. Consider Big Data. Undertake a visitor intercept study every 3 years to understand visitor motivations, origins, composition, and satisfaction.

8. Develop a "Good Neighbours Education Program" to help strengthen relationships with adjacent landowners and educate adjacent landowners on the value regional trails and ways to mitigate the impacts of adjacent land use on regional trails. Continue to consider how management actions taken on trails might impact adjacent landowners and take appropriate action to minimize these impacts.

8.2.4 Activate Trails

What We Heard

- Enriching visitor experiences available on Regional and Local trails is a priority. This activation will inspire more people to experience trails, enhance the benefits trails provide to visitors while also elevating the economic benefits of trails.

What We Found

- Visitor experiences are passively provided on Regional and Local trails. Interpretation and education and public art is limited. Active programming and special events that bring the trail to life and enrich the visitor experience are also limited and largely occur during the warm season.

Actions:

1. Create, or support the creation, of attractions and visitor experiences along regional trails to celebrate the region's nature, Indigenous peoples, and heritage.

2. Work with partners to provide creative and interactive interpretation and story telling experiences along Regional and Local trails to deepen visitor's understanding and appreciation of the lands through which the trail passes.

3. Develop and provide visitor programming on Regional and Local trails with a focus on building outdoor recreation literacy and / or education about nature, Indigenous peoples, and heritage. Build the programming in collaboration with partners where and as appropriate (e.g. Indigenous programming).

4. Develop a Regional and Local Trails Public Art Program to celebrate Indigenous and non-indigenous visual and performing artists. Identify suitable locations on Regional and Local trails for public art installations and events and a process to solicit, select and commission public art installations.

5. Work with partners to establish a year-round calendar of special events (e.g. races, celebrations etc.) focused on, or integrating, regional trails.

8.2.5 Make it Easier to Find and Enjoy Trails

👥 What We Heard

- Friends, family, and word-of-mouth is the most common source of information about trails in the region (72%). Social media (58%) and the Regional District website (46%) were the next most important sources reported by engagement participants.

- Access to information about trails in the region emerged as an important theme in the engagement. Participants are seeking better, more timely and easier to access information about trails in the Regional District.

- Many residents and visitors do not understand or distinguish between Regional District provided trails and those provided by others (e.g. municipalities, BC Parks, stewardship groups).

🔍 What We Found

- Residents and visitors require timely, accurate and easy to access information about trails, trail characteristics, rules, amenities etc.

- There is opportunity to improve the Regional District website, social media and communication channels to help residents and visitors find and enjoy trails and to provide information that helps them enjoy trails responsibly.

- Marketing through social media and online platforms together with on-site marketing such as banners, posters and signs can greatly increase visitation to parks and increase physical activity levels in parks.[19]

Actions:

1. Update and re-orient the Regional District's trails webpage be more client and user experience focused. The website should serve more as an invitation to residents to visit the Regional District's trails and a tool to help visitors search for and find trails that provide for their desired activity, amenity, event / program and/ or by general geographic area of the region they wish to recreate in. The website should also help residents and visitors learn about the Regional District trail system, its value to the region, Indigenous peoples, and promote responsible recreation.

2. Work with other crowdsourced trail platforms that are relevant and widely used by specific trail enthusiasts to ensure data and information on the Regional District's trails is accurate (e.g. TrailForks, AccessNow etc.). Do not attempt to compete with these services through the Regional District's website.

3. Review the need for the "click, hike, bike" web page given the emergence and quality of other open-source trail trip planning tools such as TrailForks, AllTrails, Gaia, Fat Maps etc. If the website is to be retained, the functionality should be expanded to incorporate all trail experiences that occur on Regional District trails (e.g. ORV).

4. Working with partners, develop and utilize modern communication channels, tools, and promotion strategies to:

   » Raise the awareness of Regional District's trails and their value to the region,

   » Encourage and assist visitors with accessing and enjoying trails,

   » Make residents and visitors aware of the recreation, learning and appreciation opportunities available on trails, and

   » Promote responsible use of trails.

5. Establish relationships with recognized community influencers (groups and individuals) to cross promote visitation to and responsible use of the Regional District's trails.

6. Work with Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) and local Destination Marketing Organizations to integrate Regional District Regional trails that are market and export ready (see criteria here) into regional and local tourism marketing campaigns.

8.2.6 Enhance Collaboration & Coordination

👥 What We Heard

- Trails in the region are provided by multiple levels of government across multiple jurisdictions. The trail systems are highly integrated and strong collaboration, coordination and communication across the entire trail system is needed between all governments and other partners.
- There are many different trail stewardship groups in region who are working to advance trail development.

🔍 What We Found

- Regional coordination and collaboration for trail planning and development is occurring but usually on a project-by-project basis. Strategic coordination and collaboration can be strengthened through a more formal approach and governance structure for both governments and trail user / stewardship groups as well as trail-based tourism operations.

Actions:

1. Work collaboratively with trail stewardship groups and Recreation Sites and Trails BC to Lead and / or support trail planning initiatives on Crown Lands where such initiatives will provide regionally unique trails and trail-based recreation opportunities and / or active transportation for residents and / or result in growing the region's trail tourism economy.

2. Establish a "Trails Enhancement Grant" to provide funding support to trail stewardship organizations for the building, maintenance, management, and operations of trails that provide regionally unique trails and trail opportunities but are not funded as a "Regional Trail".

3. Continue to enhance relationships and coordination with BC Parks, Recreation Sites & Trails BC, Parks Canada, Municipal Parks and Trail providers and neighbouring jurisdictions to coordinate acquisition priorities, connection priorities and capital improvements where appropriate.