

Implementation Strategy for the Lethbridge Destination Management Organization (LDMO)

IMPLEMENTATION AND TRANSITION STRATEGY

LDMO MANDATE:

To establish a destination management organization that provides direction and proactive leadership that encourages the private and public sectors to undertake programs and projects that will promote and foster growth related to the visitor experience in Lethbridge.

LDMO PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Board is to transition the Lethbridge visitor functions and services currently provided by Chinook Country Tourist Association (CCTA), Economic Development Lethbridge (EDL), and Lethbridge Sport Council (LSC) to a single destination development and management organization.

	Current Responsibilities	Visitor Functions and Services to LDMO
Chinook Country Tourist Association (CCTA)	Marketing tourism in Lethbridge, and marketing the surrounding region as well as the visitor services program	Marketing Lethbridge and the visitor services program for Lethbridge would transition to LDMO, while maintaining a strong connection to CCTA and regional marketing
Economic Development Lethbridge (EDL)	Investment Attraction, Business Development, Marketing and Advocacy, Meeting, Event and Partnership Development	Meeting, Event and Partnership Development would transition to LDMO. Strong ongoing collaboration continue to support related business development
Lethbridge Sport Council (LSC)	Sport Development and Sport Tourism	The Sport Tourism portion would transition to LDMO and the Sport Development mandate remains with the LSC, with strong collaboration

The new organization will champion the implementation of the Vision, Desired Outcomes, Strategies and Priority Initiatives as outlined in the Lethbridge Destination Management Plan.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Terms of Reference establishes the Board for the new entity, Lethbridge Destination Management Organization (LDMO). This Implementation Strategy outlines the process to move forward.

Year 1 (2017) Startup period. The Board will be established, the Executive Director hired and the process of forming the new entity will begin. Under the guidance of the Board, tasks to establish the new entity will include: the development of bylaws, governance and oversight committees, the transition plan and the first year work plan and budget.

Year 2 (2018) Transition period. The new entity is established and the transition plan is moving forward. The visitor functions and services currently provided by Chinook Country Tourist Association, Economic Development Lethbridge, and Lethbridge Sport Council are transitioning. This year will see the development of a four-year strategy, business plan, and key performance indicators that tie with the City of Lethbridge operating budget cycle.

Year 3 (2019) Post transition. Visitor functions and services are integrated into LDMO. The LDMO is operating, policies and procedures are in place. LDMO in partnership with the tourism industry and partners, is focused on collaboratively implementing the strategies outlined in the Lethbridge Destination Management Plan.

DETAILED TRANSITION PLAN

Year 1 (2017)—Start Up

<p>Governance</p>	<p>Establish Board of Directors.</p> <p>Board of Directors hire Executive Director of the new LDMO.</p> <p>Establish Executive & Governance Committee.</p> <p>Executive & Governance Committee work with Executive Director to establish by-laws, tenure, governance, oversight and board committees and provide recommendations for Board approval.</p> <p>Establish Transition Steering Committee to develop the Transition Plan and schedule.</p> <p>Approve the organization authority and working name.</p> <p>Develop objectives and key performance indicators for organization and Executive Director.</p> <p>Approve the first year work plan and budget (direct and partnered budget from current tourism based organizations) for transition and plan execution.</p>
<p>Management</p>	<p>Set up organization, office, budget, banking, and legal entity.</p> <p>Develop strategy to transition identified tourism mandates from current organizations to transition to new organization.</p> <p>Develop Transition Plan and schedule. The Plan should address contracts, leases, vendors of all transitioning organizations, and transfer of assets related to the delivery of the tourism services i.e. trade show booths, appropriate office equipment, etc.</p> <p>Develop organizational strategy to guide organizational structure, location of office, and marketing and sales execution plans in conjunction with Tourism Organizations.</p> <p>Following the Lethbridge Destination Management Plan (DMP), develop tourism strategy and plan in conjunction with Tourism Organizations.</p> <p>Develop the new LDMO’s objectives, organization charts, job descriptions, pay and benefits.</p>

	<p>Develop policies, procedures and practices for new organization.</p> <p>Develop 2017-2018 tourism strategy and key performance indicators for approval.</p> <p>Begin transition as identified and corresponding respective budgets into the LDMO.</p> <p>Develop/identify budget for 2018.</p> <p>Work in partnership with current Tourism Organizations to execute programs, marketing and sales plans.</p>
Tourism Organizations (CCTA, EDL, LSC)	<p>Determine transition plan and timelines for transition of current tourism services to LDMO.</p> <p>Review mandate, budget, employees and organization viability post transition.</p> <p>If necessary, develop any applicable partnership/MOU.</p> <p>Support LDMO management in the development and execution of the strategic plan.</p>
City of Lethbridge	<p>City Council appoint Board Members, initially.</p> <p>Give notice to CCTA, EDL, LSC to change current fee for service agreement.</p> <p>Provide the LDMO with liaison and advisory services.</p>

Year 2 (2018)—Transition

Governance	<p>Approve 2018 Budget.</p> <p>Formalize permanent board of directors and governance structure.</p> <p>Progress Report on transition approved by Board.</p> <p>Approve the strategic direction through a four-year Business Plan aligned with the municipal funding cycle of 2019 to 2022.</p>
Management	<p>Begin transition of Tourism Organizations roles to LDMO as per schedules identified in Year 1.</p> <p>Continue to work in partnership with current Tourism Organizations to execute programs, marketing and sales plans.</p> <p>Continue to evaluate policies, procedures, processes for LDMO.</p> <p>Develop 2019 to 2022 budget, 4 year strategy and key performance indicators.</p> <p>Following the Lethbridge Destination Management Plan, develop the strategic direction through a four-year Business Plan aligned with the City’s operating budget cycle of 2019 to 2022.</p> <p>By end of year, complete transition of the Tourism Organizations roles and respective budgets into the LDMO.</p> <p>Prior to the end of the City’s operating budget cycle, submit for Council’s consideration the four-year Business Plan and request for funding support.</p> <p>Begin discussions on Fee for Service Agreement with City.</p>
Tourism Organizations (CCTA, EDL, LSC)	<p>Depending on organization transition timeline, all of Tourism Organizations roles transitioned by end of fiscal year.</p> <p>Collaborate with and support LDMO.</p>

Year 2 (2018)—Transition

City of Lethbridge	Approval of four-year Business Plan and 2019 – 2022 Budget for LDMO. Begin discussions on Fee for Service Agreement. Provide LDMO with liaison and advisory services.
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Year 3 (2019)—First Year Post Transition

Governance	Post transition governance model review. Approval of Fee for Service agreement. Approve Progress Report on year two of transition. Approve Annual Action Plan.
Management	Develop Annual Action Plan, based on four-year Business Plan, key performance indicators and 2019 to 2022 budget. Execute tourism marketing and sales strategy. Continue to evaluate policies, procedures, processes for LDMO.
Tourism Organizations (CCTA, EDL, LSC)	Tourism mandates are integrated into LDMO; applicable human resources, budget and other assets (trade show booths, appropriate office equipment, etc.).
City of Lethbridge	Fee for Service Agreement approved. Provide LDMO with liaison and advisory services.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Managing change will be fundamental to ensuring the transition to the LDMO runs smoothly. Key will be the community coming together to support LDMO and working collaboratively on tourism initiatives.

Guiding Principles:

- Consideration and discussions with the current Tourism Organizations (CCTA, EDL, LSC) be held to mitigate the impact on the tourism industry overall in Lethbridge.
- Potential impact on human resources in current Tourism Organizations is considered and minimized.
- The current Tourism Organizations' Executive Directors are active in the transition (Transition Steering Committee).
- Tourism services from CCTA, EDL and LSC include consideration for program materials, related capital investments and current assets, e.g. trade show booths, appropriate office equipment, etc.

Other:

- Liaison with City of Lethbridge Administration is through the City Manager's Office (including the role of advisory, non-voting member of the Board of Directors).
- The Executive Director oversees the LDMO's operations.
- Consideration be given to transferring the current Sport Tourism Committee to the LDMO to work with applicable agencies and groups to position and market Lethbridge as a preferred location for sport events.

- Ongoing cooperation between existing organizations to ensure alignment with tourism industry and marketing initiatives.

FUNDING

The following outlines the funding that will move to the new entity, Lethbridge Destination Management Organization (LDMO).

*2018 Funding will move to LDMO and notice will be given to CCTA, EDL, LSC. LDMO in consultation with CCTA, EDL, and LSC determine transition timelines and corresponding funding for 2018.

City of Lethbridge Base Funding Model	
Initial Startup Funding 2017 (one-time)	\$56,000
*Funding 2018	
CCTA Base Funding	
Provision of Visitor Information Services	\$323,272
EDL Base Funding for Convention & Event	
Convention & Event	\$249,620
Lethbridge Sport Council	
Administration of Sports Bid Committee	\$ 8,000
Economic Development Department	
Marketing Support	\$50,000
Total Base Funding 2018	\$630,892

City of Lethbridge funding is considered base funding. The expectation is that all other possible funding sources are identified, evaluated, and solicited.

Examples of potential funding sources are:

- Partnership funding agreement with Lethbridge Lodging Association and other hotels collecting a Destination Marketing Fee (DMF) fee
- Travel Alberta / Alberta Culture & Tourism
- Membership fees
- Partnership dollars
- Grants

BACKGROUND

The Lethbridge Destination Management Plan provides direction to tourism development, management and marketing in Lethbridge for the next 10 years. It provides the framework in which tourism industry partners can work collaboratively towards achieving a shared future for tourism.

VISION

By 2026 Lethbridge will be...

Southern Alberta's premier destination for sport tourism and business event hosting. Visitors from across Canada and the world who come to Lethbridge, whether it be for sport, business or leisure travel, will

experience the city's authentic nature, arts, culture, heritage and Indigenous stories. In addition, the city will be an appealing regional gateway and accommodations hub serving visitors to the Canadian Badlands, Crowsnest Pass and Castle. The city's unified tourism brand is being consistently marketed to target markets and the tourism industry is strongly embraced by residents who recognize the positive economic, social and environmental benefits it provides. The city's tourism champions are unified and collaboratively focused on growing new visitation to the city, expanding tourism investment and effectively managing the destination.

The city's visitor experiences are categorized as follows:

Leisure Travel including: Festivals & Events, Nature-based, Adventure & Eco-Tourism,
Cultural, Heritage & Arts Tourism

Sport Tourism

Business Travel & Events

Leisure Travel...

Is travel for pleasure, people "traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment."

Sport Tourism...

Is the intersection between sport and tourism. Sport tourism is any activity in which people travel to a particular location, outside of their home town, as a sport event participant, an event spectator, or to attend sport attractions or business meetings.

Business Travel and Events...

Includes travel for the purpose of business, versus leisure, and whose travel expenses are paid by the business the person works for. A business event typically includes a formally scheduled program and specific business objective for all attendees. Typically categorized into the following segments: Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE).

DESIRED OUTCOMES

As outlined in the Lethbridge Destination Management Plan, the LDMO, together with the city's tourism industry and its partners, will focus on implementing the following strategies:

Unified Destination Governance & Management

- Establish a unified and effective destination leadership model
- Maximize the positive benefits tourism brings to the city while minimizing the negative social, cultural and environmental impacts

Experiences

- Be recognized as one of Alberta's premier sport and business event hosting destinations
- Grow its role as a regional gateway and hub for the Canadian Badlands and Crowsnest Pass and Castle destinations
- Increase leisure travel experiences featuring the city's history, arts, culture, nature, adventure and eco-tourism opportunities

Economic Growth and Diversification

- Increase year-round visitation by target markets
- Increase the length of time visitors stay in the city
- Increase the visitor spending and total economic impact to the city from tourism

- Increase private and public sector investment in tourism projects
- Increase community and stakeholder support for tourism in the city

STRATEGIES

To achieve the vision and the desired outcomes, the city's tourism industry and its partners will remain diligently focused on implementing ten clear strategies:

Destination Leadership

- Create a single, unified, Destination Management Organization

Destination Development

- Cultivate & diversify the city's business event sector
- Grow the city's sport tourism portfolio
- Enhance the diversity and quality of experiential leisure travel opportunities
- Provide the right mix of places to stay

Destination Management

- Easier access
- Strengthen the capacity of the tourism industry
- Maintain the competitiveness and enhance the sustainability of the city's tourism industry

Destination Marketing

- Build community and stakeholder support for tourism growth - internal marketing
- Build market awareness and inspire event organizers and visitors to experience Lethbridge