



Assessment Findings and Suggestions Report

Peace River, Alberta
July, 2025

Destination Development
Association



Destination Assessment

INTRODUCTION

In July of 2025, a Destination Assessment of Peace River, Alberta, was conducted, and the findings were presented in a two-and-a-half hour workshop. The assessment provides an unbiased overview of Peace River—how it is seen by a visitor. It includes a review of local marketing efforts, signage, attractions, critical mass, retail mix, ease of getting around, customer service, visitor amenities such as parking and public washrooms, overall appeal, and the community's ability to attract overnight visitors.

In performing the Destination Assessment, the DDA team looked at the area through the eyes of a first-time visitor. No prior research was facilitated, and no community representatives were contacted except to set up the project's public presentation. The town and surrounding area were "secretly shopped." Any person looking to relocate their business, industry, or residence will first come to your community as a visitor. Tourism is the front door to all your economic development efforts.

Once potential visitors find information about your area, are the marketing materials, websites and social media channels good enough to close the sale? In the Marketing Assessment, we reviewed your local websites and printed marketing materials.

A typical community has five opportunities to close the sale:

- 1) Personal contact (visitor information centers, trade shows, etc.)

- 2) Websites

- 3) Brochures and printed materials

- 4) Publicity (articles), social media

- 5) Word of mouth—the most effective means

We searched the internet for activities, requested and reviewed printed materials, and looked for articles and third-party information. As we prepared for travel to your community, we searched both commercial and organizational websites promoting the area, tourism websites, peer review sites such as TripAdvisor and Google reviews.

The marketing assessment determined how effective the marketing was in convincing a potential visitor that the area would be worth a special trip, a stop, or an overnight stay. The key to the marketing assessment is to see if you have a primary lure that makes you worth a special trip of a one-hour drive, or from further away. The question on most visitors' minds is: What do you have that I can't get closer to home? What makes you worth a special trip?

Where most communities falter is when they merely provide "lists" of what the community has, whether it's truly "unique" or not. Nearly every community in North America promotes the usual list of diversions: local museums, shops and restaurants, lodging, golf, outdoor recreation, historic downtowns, scenic vistas, etc. Of course, nearly every visitor can do these things closer to home. So, what makes Peace River worth the trip?

Always promote your primary lure first—what makes you worth that special trip. THEN, promote your diversionary, or "complementary" activities.

Would you go to Anaheim, California, if Disneyland wasn't there? Do you think that Universal Studios and Knott's Berry Farm mind that Disneyland gets all the glory? Of course not. Eighty percent of all tourism spending is with those secondary activities. Disney does the heavy lifting in terms of advertising and promotion, and the diversionary activities benefit as well.

In a nutshell, the marketing assessment looks for what makes your community worth a special trip, or a great place to live, or to do business. We look for details, details, details. Do you give a reason for visiting, and do you provide enough information to make it easy to plan a trip? Are the marketing materials good enough to close the sale?

The second part of the assessment process is the On-site Assessment. During this part of the assessment, we spent several days in the area, looking at enticements from the highways (signs, billboards, something that would get a visitor to stop), beautification and overall curb appeal, wayfinding (ease of getting around), visitor amenities (public washrooms, visitor information, parking), activities, overall appeal, retail mix (lodging, dining, shopping), critical mass, customer service, area attractions, pedestrian friendliness, gathering spaces, evening activities, and the availability of marketing materials and their effectiveness.

The area benefits from tourism when visitors spend money, and they do that in the local gift shops, restaurants, hotels, etc. Therefore, the On-site Assessment includes a candid look at private businesses as much as public spaces and amenities.

For every shortcoming or challenge we note during the assessment process, we provide a low-cost "suggestion," where possible, on how the challenge can be corrected or overcome. The suggestions are not termed "recommendations," as they were developed without consulting the community first about possible constraints, future plans, or reasons why the suggestions may not be appropriate. Hopefully this assessment process will open dialogue within the community, leading stakeholder organizations to adopt some or all of the suggestions, taking them from suggestions to recommendations.

It's important to note that to increase the town's tourism industry, fulfilling one or two of the suggestions may have little impact, but implementing a number of them, if not all, can have a profoundly successful impact on the town's ability to tap into the tourism industry.

Implementation of these suggestions must be a region-wide effort, involving both privately owned businesses as well as local, county, and state agencies, where appropriate. Every local organization plays a role in tourism, downtown revitalization, or economic development efforts. A Destination Marketing Organization (DMO, CVB, Chamber, TPA, etc.) will not be successful if the tourism effort is not region-wide.

In many cases, issues may come up that you are already aware of and are already working on. In that case, the assessment validates those efforts. But more often than not, the assessment will point out things that you are aware of but can't mention or bring up without paying a political price. Local



politics can be a killer of the tourism industry.

While marketing efforts are important, product development is the most important factor of a successful tourism industry. Visitors want activities, not just things to look at. How much time can a visitor spend enjoying activities—that cater to their interests—in your area? Does your community have truly unique attractions the visitor can't get closer to home? You must be able to deliver on your marketing promises, otherwise visitors might come once, but they won't come back. It's much more cost effective to bring people back, than to always go out and entice new visitors into town. "Been there, done that" communities eventually run out of visitors and find they don't have a sustainable tourism industry, or they simply become pit stops or gateways on the way to somewhere else.

After spending several days reviewing marketing materials and assessing the community, we have looked at all of these issues, and have developed some suggestions and ideas the community can discuss and possibly implement to help increase tourism spending locally.

SUCCESSFUL TOURISM TRANSLATES TO CASH

Tourism is successful when the community imports more cash than it exports. When residents spend their hard-earned money outside the community, the community is exporting cash—often referred to as "leakage." Tourism helps fill that gap, importing cash into the local economy without the necessity of having to provide extended social and other services. Visitors come, spend money, then go home. When you import more cash than you export, you have a positive "balance

of trade." Communities with successful tourism programs easily see that the industry subsidizes the community, whereas other communities find that they subsidize visitors—providing services visitors use without them leaving enough money behind to cover the cost of those services.

The primary goal of the tourism industry is to bring more cash into the local economy. This doesn't happen when visitors come into the community, get out of their cars, and take photographs. And it doesn't happen when visitors go swimming in the lake at your park all day, sunning, and eating the lunch they brought from home. And it doesn't happen when visitors hike down your trails, enjoy your interpretive centers, or stroll through your lovely arboreums. These are all great things to do, and, of course, you do want your visitors to do these—but, you also want to entice them into your shops, your cafes, espresso stands, restaurants, galleries, B&B's, and hotels, ultimately opening their wallets to make purchases. That is what helps your local economy, your small merchants, your hoteliers, and your tax coffers.

To entice visitors to spend money in your community, you need to have places for them to spend it—you need to have the right mix of shops, restaurants, entertainment, and lodging facilities, all in an attractive setting, as well as attractions that make them want to visit you in the first place.



THE THREE TYPES OF TOURISM

1. Visiting friends and family

The number one reason people travel is to visit friends and/or family. If you did nothing to promote tourism, you would still have tourism in your community. However, when friends and family come to visit, do your residents take them out to eat, shop, dine locally? Or do they head to a neighboring community? Do your locals even know what you have to offer? An effective tourism marketing effort also includes educating locals as to what you have and how to find it through effective wayfinding signage, gateways and advertising.

2. Business travel

The second most popular reason for travel is business. Included in this category is educational travel: colleges and universities, as well as conventions and meetings, corporate travel, vendor travel, etc. Like leisure travelers, this group is looking for things to do "after hours" while in the area. The most successful convention and trade show towns are the result of their secondary activities or "diversions," not simply because of their convention and exhibition facilities. Think Disneyworld, Disneyland, San Antonio's River Walk, Banff, to name a few.

3. Leisure travel

The third, and most lucrative of all types of visitors, is the leisure traveler. They have no personal connections to the community, but are coming purely to enjoy themselves. They stay in commercial lodging establishments, eat virtually all their meals in local restaurants, and their top diversionary

activity is shopping and dining in a pedestrian-friendly setting.

The average leisure visitor is active 14 hours a day, yet typically only spends four to six hours with the primary lure. They then spend eight to ten hours with diversionary activities—things they could do closer to home, but will do while in the area. A good example of this is Branson, Missouri, the "live music-theater capital of the world." This town of 6,500 residents hosts 7.5 million visitors a year. The primary "lure" is the 49 music theaters. The average visitor attends two shows a day over about





four hours. During the other hours of the day, the visitor will shop in local outlet malls, head to the water parks, theme parks, and other attractions, play a round of golf, hike, bike, fish, do some bird watching, and participate in any number of other activities they could do closer to home, but will do while visiting Branson.

THE THREE STAGES OF TOURISM

1. Status quo

If you take no action to develop the tourism industry, you will still have an element of tourism, simply because some travelers will pull off local highways or freeways for gas, food, or lodging, as well as the fact that the number one reason for travel is to visit friends or family. If you have residents, you will have some tourism.

2. Getting people to stop

The first priority of developing a successful tourism industry is getting people to stop. Imagine how successful businesses in the community would be if just 50% of the vehicles traveling through pulled off the highway and spent just 30 minutes in your community—buying gas, an ice cream cone, a sandwich, a gift or souvenir?

If there's a strong pull, imagine the money spent if visitors stayed two hours in the community, which nearly always translates to additional spending.

The first goal is to get those travelers to stop.

3. Becoming the destination

To become a destination community you must have attractions and supporting amenities that convince visitors to spend the night. And those attractions

must be different from what the visitor can get closer to home.

Overnight visitors spend four times that of day visitors, and nearly ten times that of visitors using your community as a pit stop on the way to somewhere else.

THE FOUR-TIMES RULE

Visitors will make a point of stopping or staying in a community if it has enough activities that appeal specifically to them and will keep them busy four times longer than it took them to get there.

In other words, if a person has to drive 15 minutes to visit you, do you have enough for them to do to keep them busy for an hour? (4 times 15 minutes) If a visitor has to drive an hour, do you have the activities and amenities to keep them busy for four hours?

The more you have to offer, collectively, the further visitors will come, and the longer they will stay, and of course, the more they will spend. This is why it is so important for communities to market more than just their immediate geographic areas. By marketing neighboring activities and attractions, you present much more for a visitor to do, and you make the visit worth the trip.

Visitors don't care about city limits or county lines – so market the broader package and you'll be able to keep people in the area long enough to translate to another meal, some more shopping, and hopefully, an overnight stay.

SELL THE EXPERIENCE, NOT GEOGRAPHY

Nearly every destination marketing organization is charged with promoting a geographic area, yet visitors couldn't care less about those boundaries. They are looking for activities that cater to their interests, and location is second to the experience. **ALWAYS** promote the primary lure first, then the location. People by the millions head to Disneyland, Disneyworld, Dollywood and other attractions. They are not going to Anaheim, Orlando or Pigeon Forge.

Always sell the activity - the experience - **THEN** the location.

LURES, DIVERSIONS AND AMBIANCE

Too often communities promote the list of diversions that nearly every community has. The primary lure is the activity that a visitor can't find closer to home.

Always promote your primary lure, then the diversions. Do not try to be all things to all people. Have you ever gone anywhere because they had "something for everyone?" Of course not—you go there because they have something specific for you. Find your niche and promote it like crazy.

Historic downtowns provide ambiance—they are not attractions, diversions, nor are they a primary lure. It's what's in the buildings that makes a downtown a destination.

The same can be said for scenery. Unless your vista is a world-class scene, such as Niagara Falls or the Grand Canyon, scenic vistas create wonderful ambiance, but don't translate to spending, and they only last a few minutes. Then what?

All too often communities promote their heritage as a primary draw. How far would you travel to visit a mining museum? A timber museum? An agricultural center? A county historical museum? Heritage must be outstanding and pervasive throughout the community to be a primary lure, such as Plimoth Plantation or Salem, Massachusetts.

Thousands of communities are the "capital" of something. For instance, in California, Borrego Springs is the grapefruit capital of the world. Gilroy is the garlic capital. Modesto is the tomato capital. Gridley is the kiwi capital. Oxnard is the strawberry capital. Fallbrook is the avocado capital. But here's the question: Have you ever gone anywhere because it was the capital of a fruit or vegetable?

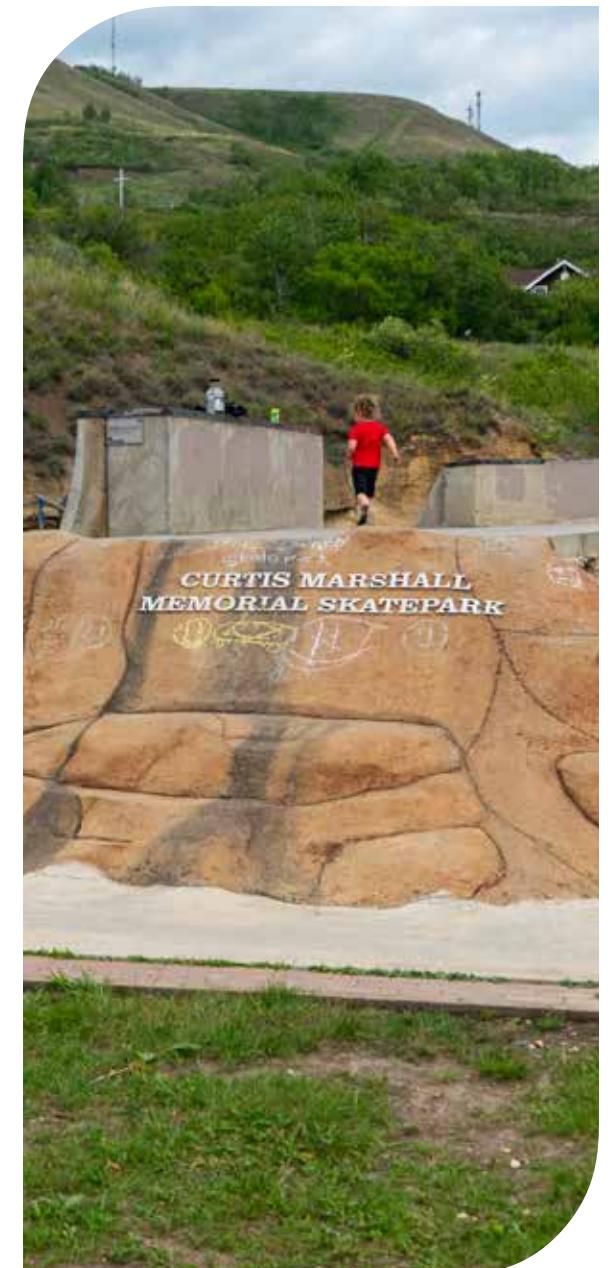
Your local heritage is important to the community and can set the ambiance, even becoming a diversionary activity. For local heritage to be a major attraction, it needs to combine activities with ambiance, and it needs to be pervasive throughout the area.

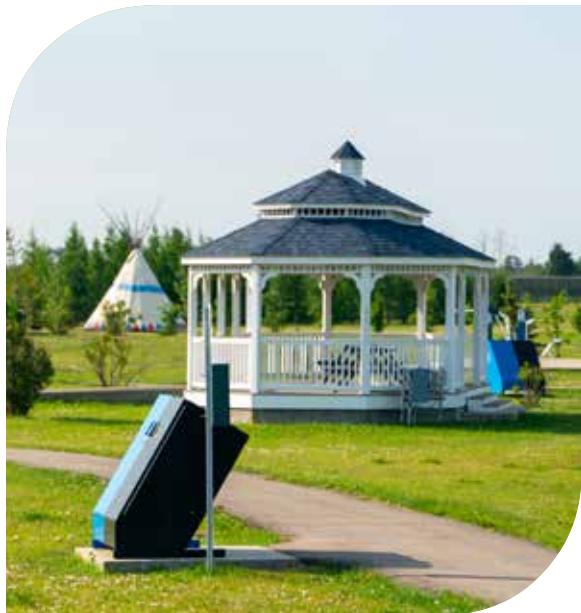
BE DIFFERENT OR THE BEST

Why should a visitor come to your community if they can enjoy the same activities closer to home? Too many communities promote "outdoor recreation" as their primary draw. Unfortunately, that is the same attraction promoted by nearly every community in North America.

If you are different, then you have a reason for travelers to choose to visit you. If you are the best, then visitors will generally flock to your doors.

If you have great hiking trails, then market their unique qualities. Be specific and paint the image





of how wonderful they are in the minds of your potential visitors. If you have one fantastic restaurant in town, let people know about it – a unique dining experience is something many people will travel far to enjoy.

Ashland, Oregon, previously a depressed timber town, began its Shakespeare Festival, which now runs nine months of the year and draws hundreds of thousands of visitors who spend an average of six nights in the community. The Shakespeare Festival made Ashland different from any other community.

Leavenworth, Washington, another dying timber town, adopted a Bavarian architectural theme and produces dozens of Bavarian events every year. Some now say the town looks more genuinely Bavarian than towns in Bavaria. It is now one of the primary tourist destinations in Washington state, hosting more than 2.5 million visitors annually. They offer a different experience, an experience that is pervasive throughout town.

Okanogan County, Washington is an outdoor recreational paradise—just like 37 of the 38 other counties in Washington. So why go to the Okanogan? Because they are the best. They researched guidebooks, newspaper and magazine articles, and pulled quotes they could use in their advertising efforts. Like, “Pinch yourself, you’re in Okanogan Country with perhaps the best cross country skiing on the continent.” This, and other quotes like it, make it worth the drive to visit Okanogan Country. The third-party endorsements show that they are the best.

Set yourself apart from everyone else, and you’ll see that by being unique, you’ll be a greater attraction.



CRITICAL MASS MEANS CASH

Although it may not be the primary reason why visitors come to your community, shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting is the number one activity of visitors. Besides lodging, it is also how visitors spend the most amount of money.

Do you have a pedestrian-friendly shopping district? If not, can you create one? Many communities have been highly successful with the development of a two or three block long pedestrian “village” including visitor-oriented retail shops, dining, visitor information, washrooms, etc., all in an attractive, landscaped setting.

The general rule of thumb in those two or three blocks (not spread out all over town) is 10+10+10: Ten destination retail shops, which includes galleries, antiques, collectibles, home accents and furnishings, artists in action, book stores, logo gear (clothing), souvenirs, outfitters, tour operators, activity shops such as kites, jewelry, wine or tobacco shops, and other specialties. The second ten is for food: ice cream, fudge and candy stores, soda fountains, sit-down dining, coffee shops, cafes, bistros, delis, etc. And the final ten are businesses open after 6:00 pm. This includes entertainment: bars, dance clubs, theaters (movies and performing arts), retail shops with activities (piano bar in a wine shop), etc.

The important point is to group these businesses together to create the “critical mass” in a pedestrian-friendly setting. This will attract visitors as well as locals, and make it worth their while to stop and shop. People are always drawn to the critical

mass—the opportunity to have multiple choices, multiple experiences, all in a convenient and attractive setting.

TOURISM IS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

The goal of successful tourism is for people to come into the community, spend money, and go home. Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries, and supports millions of jobs. Ninety percent of tourism industry businesses are small businesses of which 90% have less than 15 employees. Tourism provides the opportunity for entrepreneurs to get started, for small family-run businesses to thrive, for artisans and craftspeople to find a market, and creates a basis for unique niche-retail environment including wineries, artists, crafts, etc. Tourism provides a diverse market within the community, expanding its potential. Enhancing the community through beautification efforts creates an attractive setting for both locals and visitors, key in revitalizing a community's downtown. And a tourism-friendly town will attract non-tourism industries faster than others—new businesses will see the community as a visitor before they make a final determination about the community. Tourism is the front door to your economic development efforts.

The benefits of a healthy tourism industry can rejuvenate a town, foster community pride, encourage economic diversity, and lead the way to a vital, successful community.



NEXT STEPS

The findings and suggestions in this report will provide many ideas, strategies, and goals to reach for. We hope that it fosters dialogue and becomes a springboard for the community in enhancing the tourism industry and other economic development efforts, leading to greater prosperity, rejuvenation, and enjoyment by all the citizens.

This report offers a first step in reaching that goal. To fully realize the benefits of this assessment, the community should take these findings and suggestions, discuss them and evaluate them, and develop a plan for implementation.

Developing a detailed plan would help to build on the results of this assessment, adding in-depth research, evaluation, and local input to develop a unique implementation program. The assessment process essentially provides a look at where you are today.

When you create a written action plan using the suggestions in this assessment report as a foundation, you can develop the solutions and actionable steps to help your community become more economically vibrant and increase quality of life.

Your plan should be an “action plan” as opposed to a “strategic plan.” You want a to do list, by organization, not just general strategies, goals and objectives.

The recommendations should provide all the necessary steps for your town to be successful in attaining its goals of a more diverse economy with an enhanced tourism industry and to become

more attractive and enjoyable for both visitors and citizens.

A good plan will provide a program to get local residents and the business community pulling together, building the town’s unique image in the minds of visitors and residents alike. The result of your efforts will be a prosperous, enjoyable environment in which to live, work, and visit.





Findings & Suggestions



This assessment process has been an objective "secret-shopping" experience of Peace River, with the goal of discovering what else can be done to make the area an even better destination for visitors and locals.

To make this truly objective, we were given no "heads-up" advice about what to see, what to do, where to go, and what to look out for. This is an assessment of Peace River from a first-time visitor's perspective, looking at it from the viewpoints of a visitor, a prospective investor, a prospective business owner, and a prospective resident of the area. The entire focus is to determine what else can be done to increase Peace River's success.



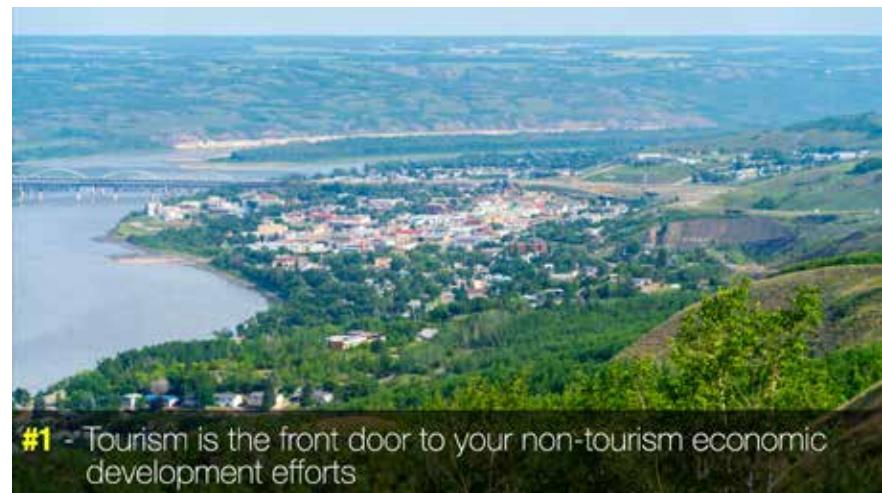
We have performed more than 2,700 assessments across the U.S., across Canada, and in Europe. We have enjoyed working in many communities in Alberta (top right), and we've often felt that Alberta is like a second home.

Our assessment process included reviewing the area's marketing materials, plus looking at your online presence, reviews on TripAdvisor and other sites, as well as performing the "secret-shopping" on-site assessment. We looked at signage and wayfinding (how easy was it to find your attractions and amenities?), appeal, critical mass, your attractions, amenities, customer service, and more. We have a list of 60 key elements we review.



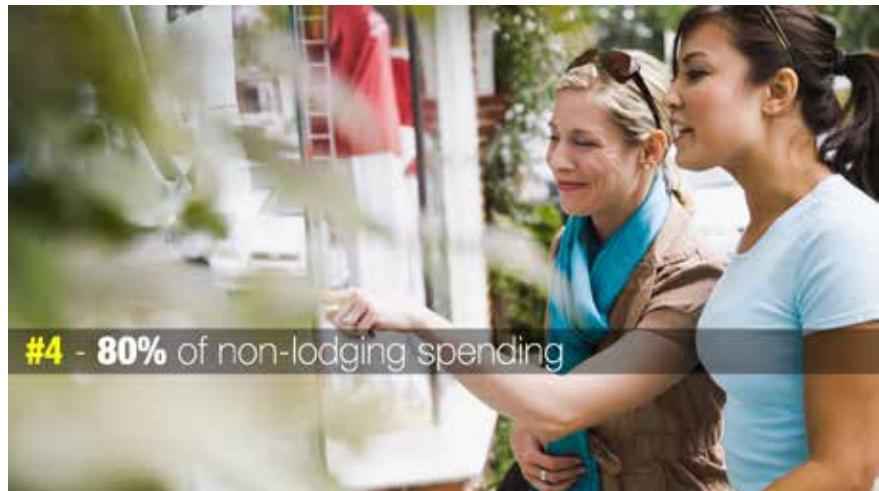
Why is tourism important? Of course, tourism shouldn't be the only economic development effort you engage in. But tourism is the front door to your non-tourism economic development efforts (top right). If anyone comes to Peace River to see about starting a business, investing, visiting friends and family, or as a potential new resident, they come as a visitor first.

We like visitors to come to our community because they come, they spend money, and they go home. We don't need to spend additional money on social services to enjoy the benefits of their visit.



The top activity of visitors in the world--not the primary reason for their visit, but still their top activity--is shopping, dining, and entertainment in a pedestrian-friendly setting. That is usually in a downtown. That is also where 80% of non-lodging visitor spending takes place. So it's important to have shops and restaurants that appeal to visitors--to get that spending.

Local retail shops and eateries/bars should be able to break even with local spending, and tourism should help make a profit.



Eighty percent of non-lodging visitor spending is for shopping, dining, and entertainment in a pedestrian-friendly setting. That is why downtowns are so important, and downtowns are most successful when they have great shops and restaurants.

The different stages and goals of tourism:

- Get people to stop. If you can get people to stop, chances are they'll spend money in your community. Perhaps for a snack, to fill up with gas, or to buy a souvenir.
- Get people to stay at least two hours. People who spend at least two hours

BEFORE THE TRIP CHECKING OUT PEACE RIVER

will usually spend at least twice as much as those who just stop. So give them something to do so they'll stay in town longer, then they might need a meal, another snack, or do more shopping.

- Overnight visitors spend at least three times that of day visitors, so if visitors have enough activities to make them want to spend the night, visitor spending increases dramatically.

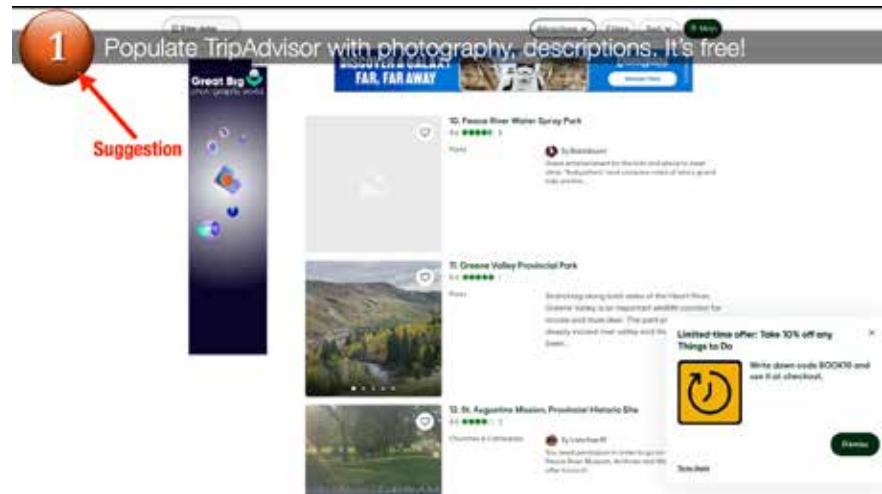
Before heading towards Peace River, we reviewed as much information as we could find about the town and the area.



Ninety percent of all travel research is done on the internet. First, we looked at Travel Alberta's website (top left). We weren't sure how to locate Peace River among the different regions, but we finally found the town in the Northern Rockies section.

The Province is enormous, so it's hard to highlight specifics for a small area on the Tourism Alberta site, making it essential to have more localized websites too--to provide the detailed information visitors need for specific areas.

So we dug deeper, and we found the Mighty Peace website (top right). It does focus on a smaller area, and we found Peace River. We watched the video, but



it didn't have any voice-over, so we couldn't really learn anything useful from it. People are looking for things to do, not just things to look at.

We found the Five Best Attractions, and they include "Eat & Drink," "Misery Mountain," "Boating & Paddling," "Parks," and "Shopping & Murals." There weren't any details, and those attractions didn't really set you apart from other communities, but the photography was great, and we listed those things to be sure to check them out.

We went on to check out TripAdvisor (bottom left and right). Suggestion 1: Populate TripAdvisor with photography and descriptions. It's free to do so.

Google search results for "things to do in Peace River Alberta". The results include links to Travel Alberta, The Mighty Peace, and various local tourism websites. A snippet from Travel Alberta highlights "Peace River Attractions - Things To Do In Peace River".

Google search results for "How is living in Peace River, Alberta?". The results include links to Travel Alberta, The Mighty Peace, and various local tourism websites. A snippet from Travel Alberta highlights "Moving to Peace River".

Google search results for "peace river alberta". The results include links to Travel Alberta, The Mighty Peace, and various local tourism websites. A snippet from Travel Alberta highlights "Peace River".

2. Town of Peace River website. The homepage features a large banner for the "PEACE RIVER NUCLEAR POWER PROJECT". It includes sections for "Living here", "Visiting", "Business", "Weather", "Roads", and "Town Hall". A "Fire Advisory" alert is displayed.

TripAdvisor is the second most used travel website, and we found pretty much the same list of things to see and do as we found on Travel Alberta and The Mighty Peace. We made a list so we would be sure to check everything out, and we included the Twelve Foot Davis burial site, Peace River, the Shaftesbury Trail, Peace River Museum, Under-bridge Walkway, Sagitawa Lookout, Twelve Foot Davis statue, and more.

We also googled "Things to do in Peace River" (top left), and we found pretty much the same list of things that we found on TripAdvisor. Google uses AI to pull information from other websites, so they are using the information you

provide to Travel Alberta, the Mighty Peace, and the town's websites.

We also searched, "How is living in Peace River, Alberta" (top right). We found that Peace River has a lot of great quality of life assets, and we didn't find anything really negative.

Looking at the town's website (bottom left and right), we thought it looked very good--more user-friendly and attractive than most municipal websites we've seen. Suggestion 2: Reorganize the town's website to have menus including "Living Here; Visiting; Business; Weather; Roads; Town Hall. That will make it easier for visitors and residents to find the information they need.



The town does a good job promoting quality of life assets, but not tourism.



3 Consider developing a stand-alone (or more robust) tourism site

Initiative 1

Branding suggestion:
Peace River:
"Base Camp to the Mighty Peace River Experience"

On the town's website, we had to look under "Parks" to find visitor information. For "things to do," the website lists these local parks and amenities (top left). These are mostly quality of life assets--meant for locals, but not really visitor attractions or activities. Visitors probably wouldn't drive to Peace River to go to your skateboard park; many other communities have skateboard parks too. You need to promote activities and attractions that people would want to drive a distance to visit. We also noticed that there were no activities or attractions outside of the town's boundaries.

Suggestion 3: In the future, we'd love to see the town either create a stand-

Why?

1. The river is 1,100 MILES long!
2. You are the namesake town of this entire region.
3. You and Fort St. John, BC "own" it
4. You are the **provisioning headquarters** for this entire region: Walmart, Canadian Tire, No Frills, Co-op, Freson Brothers, auto repairs, banks, drug stores, health care & emergency services, veterinary care, an abundance of hotels, RV resources...
5. Remember: Overnight visitors spend 3X that of day visitors

alone visitor website, or to make the town's visitor section more robust (top right). Include activities that are outside of town, but nearby. We didn't find these on the town's website at all. Be sure to promote the activity itself--not just the facility. People are looking for things to do.

Initiative 1: Branding Suggestion--Peace River: Your Base Camp to the Mighty Peace River Experience. Consider becoming a "base camp" for all the activities in the area. You have a lot of great things to do within a 45-minute drive, and that's perfect for you to be the "home-base" or "provisioning headquarters." Overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors (bottom right).



If Peace River focuses on the brand idea "The Base Camp to the Mighty Peace River Experience," can the town deliver on that promise? Our experience while in Peace River will show us.

As we drove towards Peace River, one of the first places we came across was Cecil Thompson Park (top right, bottom left and right). This is a beautiful county park, and it has activities, trails, and great scenery. This park was not included on Peace River's website, and yet it's just outside of town.

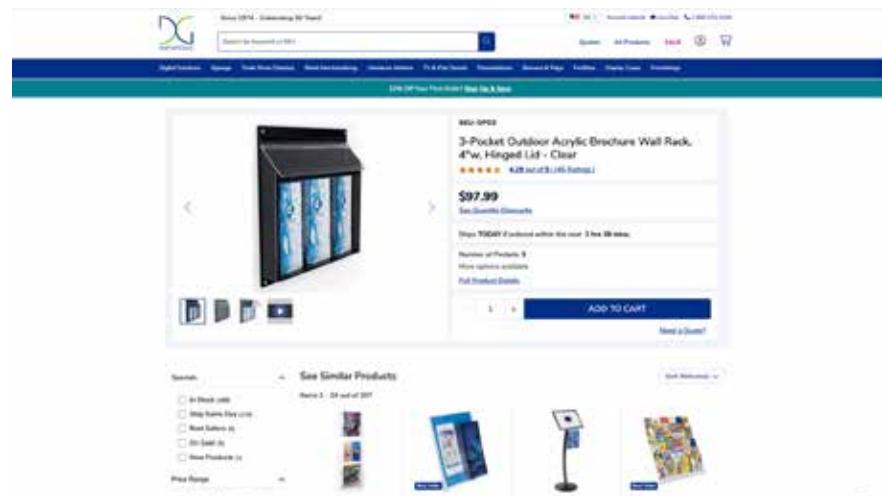
There was good information on the signs, the washrooms were open and clean, and we thought it was great.



We saw this unused sign board (top left), and we wondered if the county would allow a visitor information brochure holder to be installed there.

Suggestion 4: Adopt the readerboard for visitor information.

You could purchase a weather-proof brochure holder, perhaps like this one (top right). Or you could create a custom one, like this one crafted by a local in North Platte, Nebraska (bottom left). You could provide a Provincial visitor guide, and a local guide, and a Mighty Peace brochure.



Or perhaps purchase one like this (bottom right). Doing this not only promotes local services and businesses, but it also provides helpful information for the visitors.

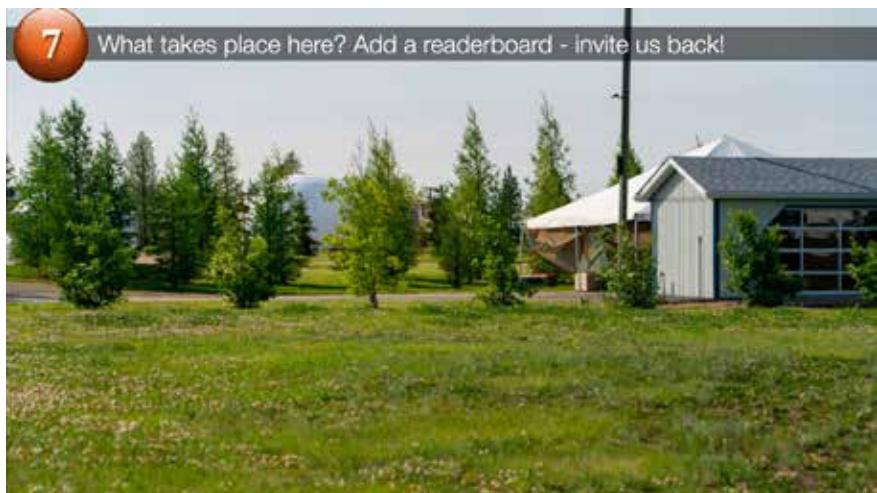
Once visitors arrive at their destination, they like to have a printed brochure--it gives them something they can look at and review with their fellow travelers while sitting in a restaurant or in their hotel room. Once visitors arrive at their destination, they like to have printed marketing materials--not just a website.



5 You need to promote the heck out of this park. A huge quality of life asset.



6 Add trail signage & map: Distance, time to walk it, accessibility, etc.



7 What takes place here? Add a readerboard - invite us back!

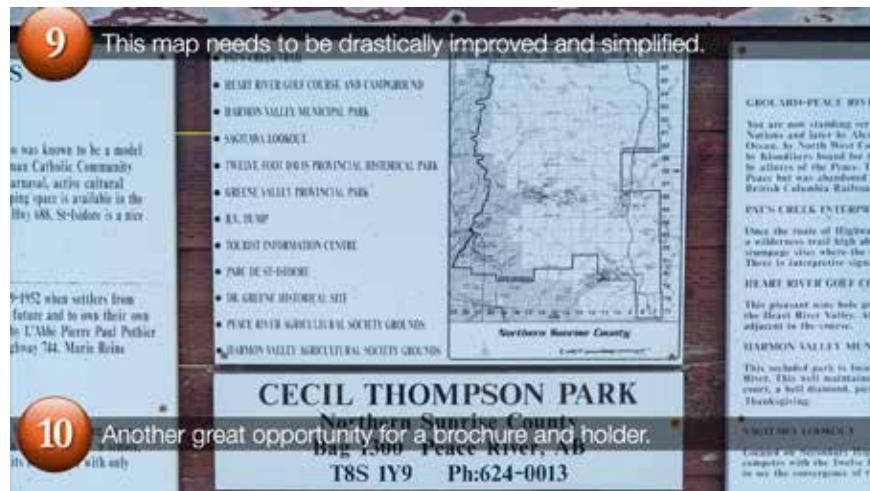


Cecil Thompson Park is a wonderful asset--for quality of life as well as for visitors. Suggestion 5: Peace River needs to promote this park. It doesn't matter if it's outside the town limits.

Suggestion 6: There are several trails going through the park, but we had no idea where they went or how long they were (top right). Add trail signage and a map of the trails. Show the distances, time to walk, and if they are handicap accessible. If the trails lead to a specific destination, mark that on the map.

Suggestion 7: We saw the tent and the building (bottom left), and we were curious if these ever have events or special activities. Add a readerboard with upcoming events. That is an invitation to come back.

Suggestion 8: Be sure to keep signs fresh, clean, and easy to read. This one could use a refresh (bottom right).



Suggestion 9: The map on this sign is very difficult to read because it encompasses such a huge area and is more for geology purposes (top left). There is a list of locations to the left of the map, but we weren't able to find any of them on the map. It would be great if the county considered redoing the map to make it easier to read.

Suggestion 10: This is another good spot for a visitor information brochure holder (top left).

We were thankful for the tourism-oriented-display signs (top right). We never would have found the Rendez Vous RV Park without this sign, because the only

other signs to indicate anything is there are the U Haul sign (bottom left) and the Moving Boxes signs.

Suggestion 11: Add signage for the RV park and the cabins.

We found the RV park to be fantastic! (bottom right) It looks very nice.



The cabins (top left) are also very nice. These are such great assets.

Again, thank goodness for the Tourism Oriented Display signs (top right). These helped us find more of your nearby assets.

We drove on (following the direction of the TOD sign) and found Pat's Creek Interpretive Trail (bottom left).

Suggestion 12: Provide a trail map and trail information here (bottom left).

We also found the Peace River Agricultural Society (bottom right), and it looks great. Thank you for the readerboard letting us know what events are coming up!

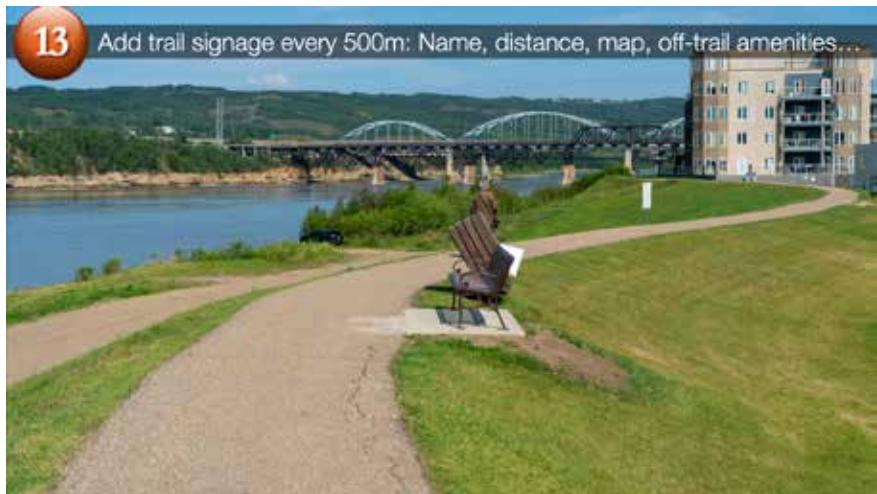


When we saw the view from the 12 foot Davis Gravesite (top left), we were amazed. We'd seen photos of this view, but seeing it in person was so much better.

The interpretive signs (top right) are excellent. You do a fantastic job of telling the stories, and we enjoyed and appreciated all of it. Helping visitors understand the history, geography, and personal life-stories of your people really makes us feel connected to Peace River.

These views are so gorgeous! We had been wondering if Peace River would be like most Alberta prairie towns, but no! This is beautiful!

We loved being able to see the ski slopes across the river (bottom right).

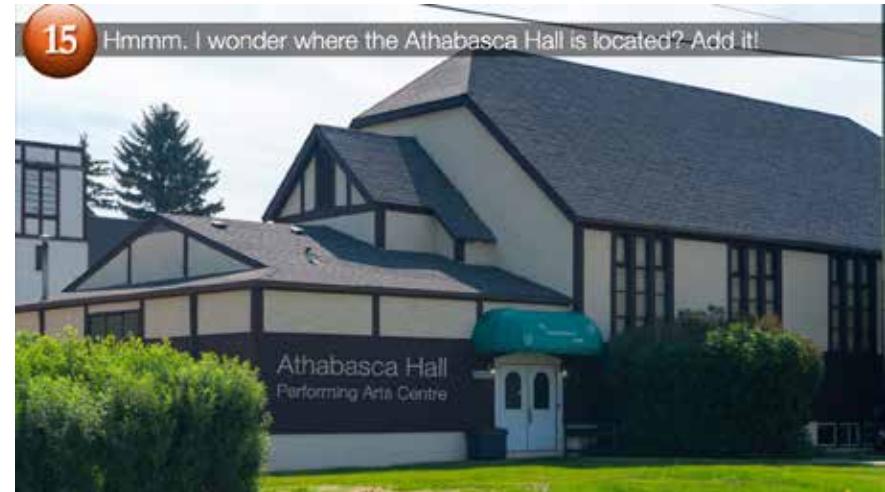
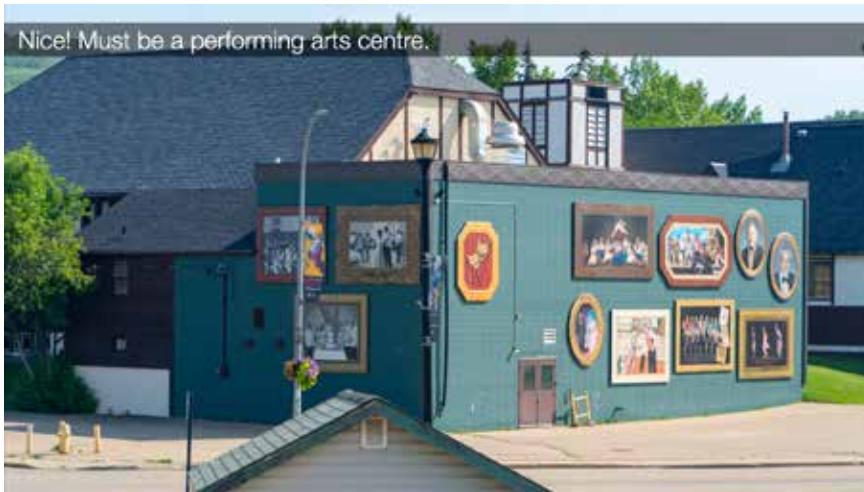


When we drove into downtown, one of the first things we saw was the beautiful downtown park (top left). It is stunning, and it gives an excellent first impression of the town.

We love the pole banners (top right).

We saw the trail running through the park, and we wondered if it had a name and where it went (bottom left). Suggestion 13: Add trail signage every 500 meters letting people know the name of the trail, how long it is, and provide a trail map.

Suggestion 14: The amphitheatre at the park is great (bottom right). If events and activities are held here, add a readerboard listing the upcoming events. This will invite us back.



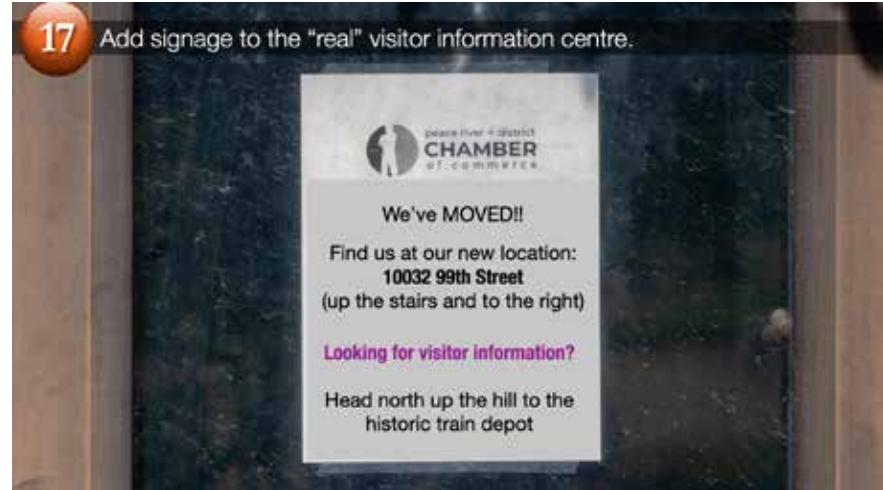
Across from the park we saw this building (top left), and we assumed that it must be a performing arts centre, but there was no signage.

Suggestion 15: When we looked through the marketing information for Peace River, we saw that the town does have a performing arts centre called Athabasca Hall. We never could find a building with that name on it. If this (top right) is Athabasca Hall, put up signage to let people know.

We had lunch at the Board'n'Barrel (bottom left), and it was excellent. It was nice to see a building that wasn't brown, beige, or gray--so many towns in Alberta are painted bland, boring colors, so it was nice to see the red and blue

on the Board'n'Barrel.

We wanted to find visitor information, and we had seen the sign on the highway before entering town. But we didn't want to go back out to the highway to try following that signage. Fortunately, we saw this wayfinding sign (bottom right), which showed "Tourist Information Centre" straight ahead.



When we arrived at this building (top left), we thought for sure that this was visitor information. It looks like a visitor information centre, but we were surprised that there wasn't any signage on the building.

Suggestion 16: The flagpole looks like it's in sad shape. It needs a new paint job. But the flowers are beautiful!

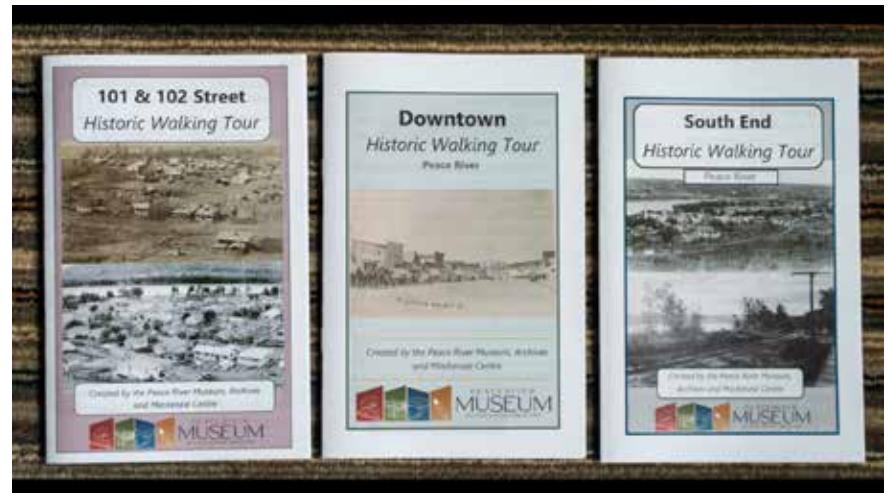
We walked up to the door, and we saw that this building used to be the Chamber of Commerce, but that they have moved, and the new address was provided. We assumed that visitor information must be at the chamber office. So we went to the chamber, but there was no visitor information there, and it was closed. We kept looking, and we learned that there is a fantastic visitor

information further up the hill from the old chamber office! It's really beautiful (bottom right). Even though you have signage downtown that points you in the direction of visitor info, be sure to continue the wayfinding signs to the actual visitor information centre.

Suggestion 17: Add signage on the old chamber office (top right) telling people how to find visitor information.

Suggestion 18: Add signage at the chamber office (bottom left) letting people know how to find the visitor information centre.

Suggestion 19: Add 24/7 visitor information at the chamber office.



Suggestion 20: We went into the great visitor information centre in the historic train depot. The entrance is through a door marked "Waiting Room." Consider adding "Visitor Information" there--we weren't quite sure which door to use.

Suggestion 21: Next to the door, on the outside of the building, add a weather-proof brochure holder to provide 24/7 visitor information. Visitors don't just travel during business hours, and visitors do like to have printed materials to look at while in the car, in a restaurant, or in their hotel.

The woman in the visitor information centre was fantastic. She was incredibly helpful and informative. She gave us lots of brochures and information that

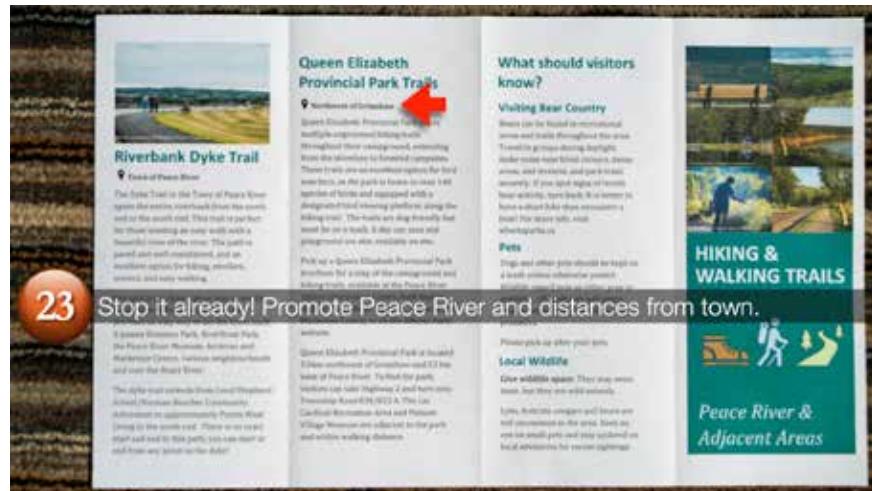


made our visit much more enjoyable.

We liked the Historic Walking Tour brochures (top right) of the different parts of town, although, as visitors, we didn't really know what 101 & 102 Street referred to, and we had to figure that out.

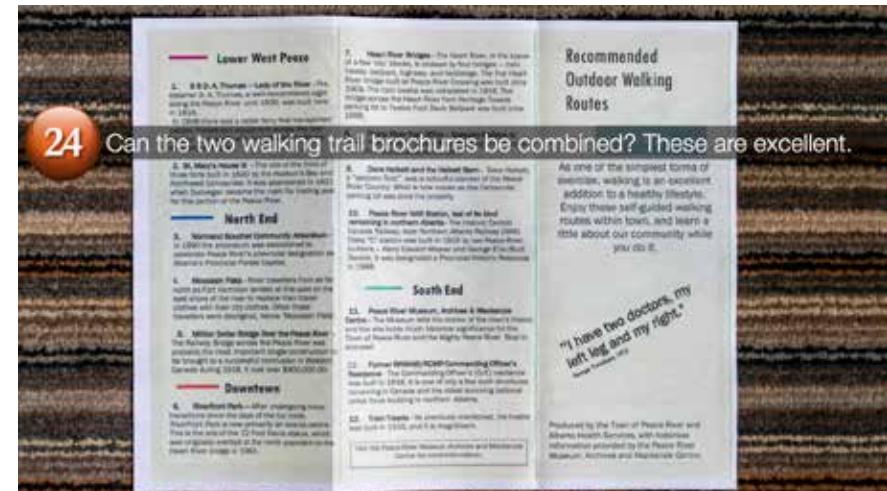
The other trail and walking brochures were very helpful too (bottom left).

Suggestion 22: The brochure with the various trails always gave directions in relation to Grimshaw (bottom right). Instead, give directions in relation to Peace River--don't send all your visitor's to Grimshaw first!



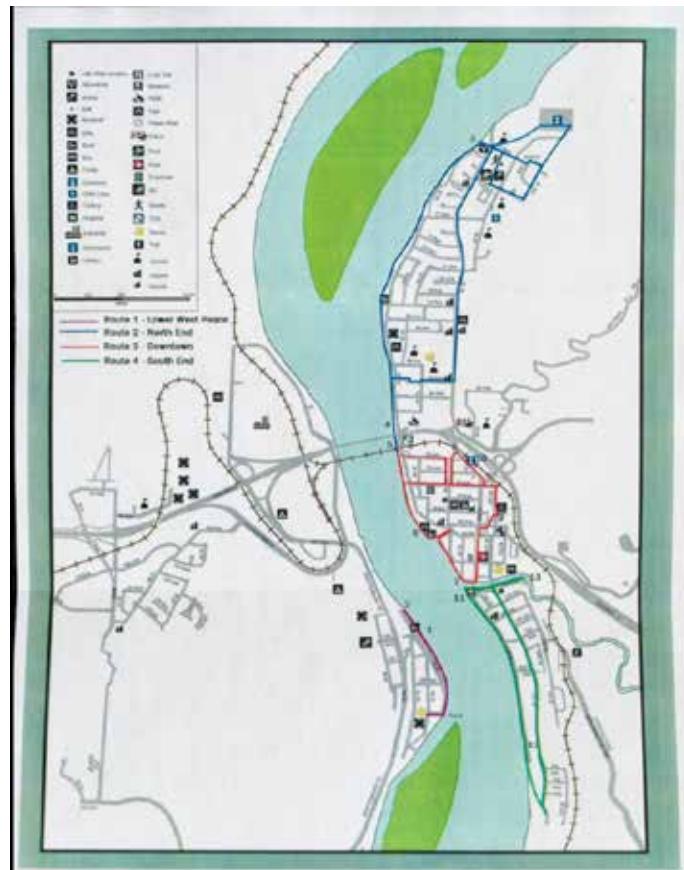
23

Stop it already! Promote Peace River and distances from town.



24

Can the two walking trail brochures be combined? These are excellent.



25

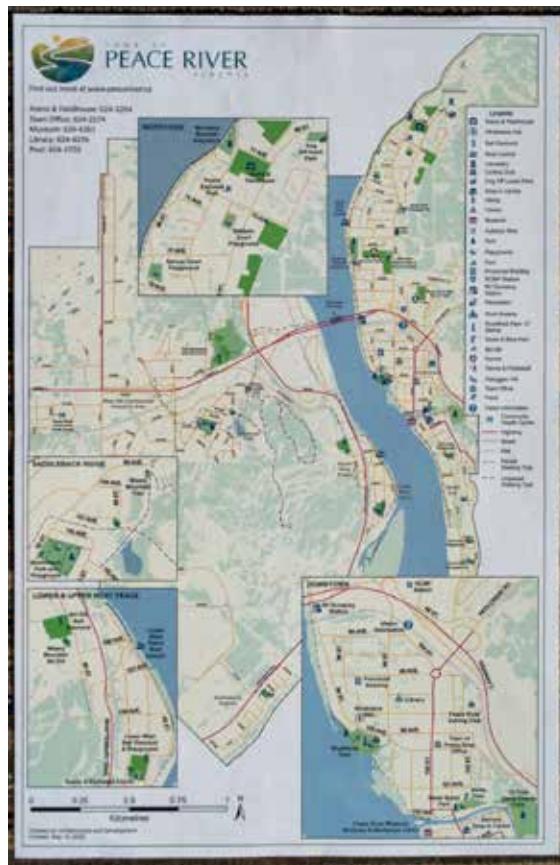
Add more info: Time to walk, difficulty level, what you'll see...

Try to promote Peace River as the "Basecamp" to the area, and that means giving directions for day trips from Peace River--not from Grimshaw.

Suggestion 23: Promote Peace River, and the distances from downtown Peace River--even to parks and attractions that might be closer to Grimshaw, such as Queen Elizabeth Provincial Park (top left).

Suggestion 24: Could the "Recommended Outdoor Walking Routes" and the "Hiking & Walking Trails" brochures be combined? They are both excellent, and we found the map to be very helpful (top right and bottom left).

Suggestion 25: The Misery Mountain Trails Map (bottom right) was very good. Add more information: The distances, time to walk, what you'll see, and the difficulty level.



26 To win in tourism you must promote day trips from Peace River

Day Trips from Peace River

A 45-minute drive, each way

We looked through the Mighty Peace brochure very carefully (top left). Since our focus was on Peace River, we really wanted to see the attractions noted for that town, but a lot of the attractions noted for Grimshaw were really just as close to Peace River.

We used the town of Peace River map in the brochure quite a bit (top right) and it was very helpful, but what was most helpful was the Town of Peace River's map (bottom left) that we picked up at

the Visitor Centre. It gave a great illustration of the different areas of the town, which is divided into so many different specific areas.

Suggestion 26: For Peace River to become even more successful with tourism, you want to become a "base camp" or hub for the attractions in the area. That means promoting day trips from Peace River. Day Trips are attractions that are, at most, a 45 minute drive away from town (bottom right).

What makes a base camp destination?

Lodging: Hotels and other options

Food, Shops: A wide variety of restaurants and shops

Provisioning: Walmart, Co-op, Canadian Tire, No Frills, RV services & supplies, auto repair, Freson Brothers, pet supplies, medical services, vet services, banks, laundry...

Local activities: Walking & hiking trails, performing arts, local parks, variety of churches



The big advantage of being a hub for day trips is that visitors spend the night in Peace River. Overnight visitors spend four times that of day visitors. Being the hub also gives visitors more reasons for staying multiple days--there are more things to do. And visitors will spend time in Peace River.

To become the hub or base camp for the Mighty Peace experience, there are a number of things a town needs (top left). Peace River already has plenty of very good lodging, as well as a great variety of good restaurants. The town has plenty of provisioning stores and services, and a lot of local activities as well.

So we decided to check out all the day trip options to see if there were enough



activities to make Peace River a base camp. We went out to Figure Eight Lake (top right). It is a little closer to Grimshaw, but it is still plenty close to Peace River to be a good day trip.

Suggestion 27: Refresh the sign--it's looking a little worn (top right). The park is very, very nice, with walking trails and a beautiful lake.

Suggestion 28: The sign with the map is helpful (bottom left), but add distances and walking times for the trails.

Suggestion 29: Always promote the activities first, then the lake. Promote kayaking, canoeing, stand-up paddle boarding, fishing.

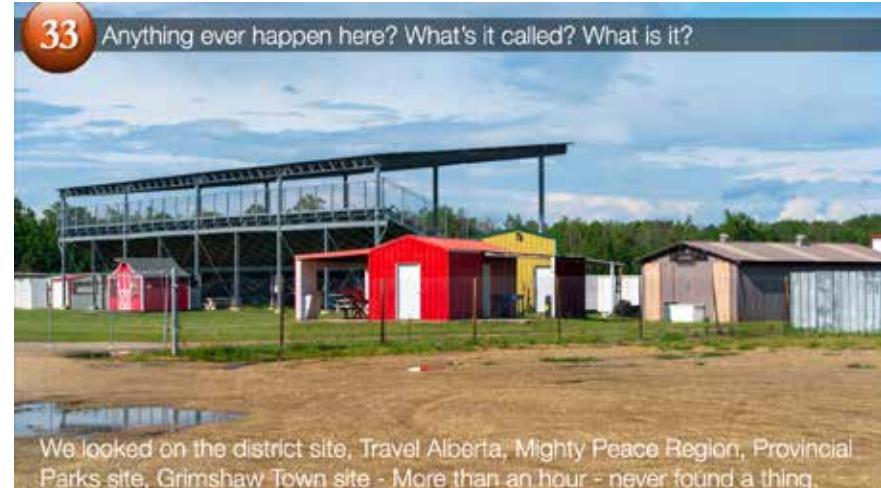


We also went to Queen Elizabeth Provincial Park and Lac Cardinal (top left and right, bottom left). This was stunning, and it's only about 20 minutes away from Peace River.

Suggestion 30: Peace River should promote this park as a day trip activity. It is beautiful and there are so many activities here.

Suggestion 31: Are there winter activities on this lake, such as ice sailing (bottom right)? Can people snowmobile through the park in the winter, and are there other winter activities that can be enjoyed here?

This could be a year-round winter attraction for day-trips from Peace River.



While we were at Queen Elizabeth Provincial Park, we came across the Pioneer Village Museum (top left). The online reviews for this museum are fantastic.

Suggestion 32: This museum would be worth a special trip by itself. Peace River should promote this in addition to the park as a day trip activity. Add signage with the open hours and days. Invite us back!

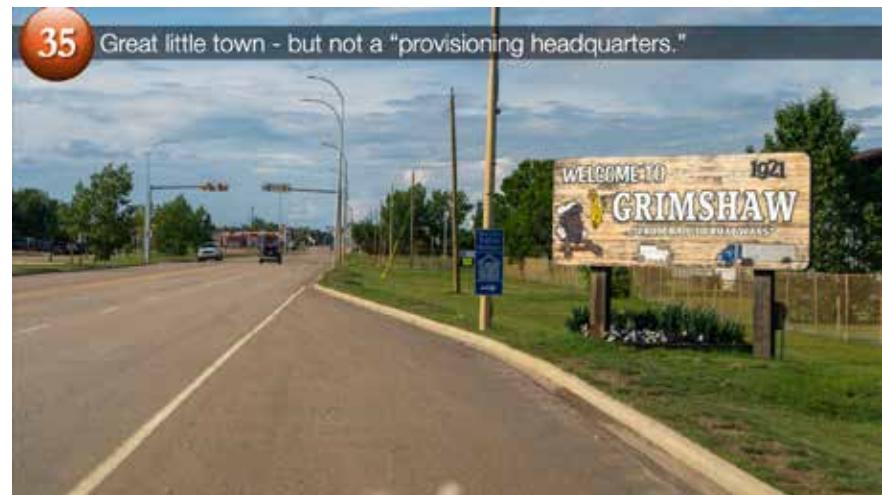
While in the Provincial Park, we came across this amazing facility (top right). There were no signs letting us know what activities ever take place here, or if there were any upcoming events. We even looked online to try to find more information, but we couldn't find anything!



Suggestion 33: Add signage letting visitors know what this facility is. If events are held here, add a readerboard to let people know. Make it easier to find information about it--both online and with signage.

We saw Lac Cardinal Hall (bottom left), and it looks like a wonderful facility, and we looked online to find out more about it, and we saw that it can be rented.

On our way back to Peace River, we came across the Mighty Peace Golf Club (bottom right) which was beautiful and very, very busy. We were blown away by the awesome things there are to do within just a half an hour of town!



Suggestion 34: The golf club is gorgeous. Peace River should definitely promote it! Add signage to let visitors know the number of holes, if there are cart and club rentals, and if there is a restaurant or snack bar.

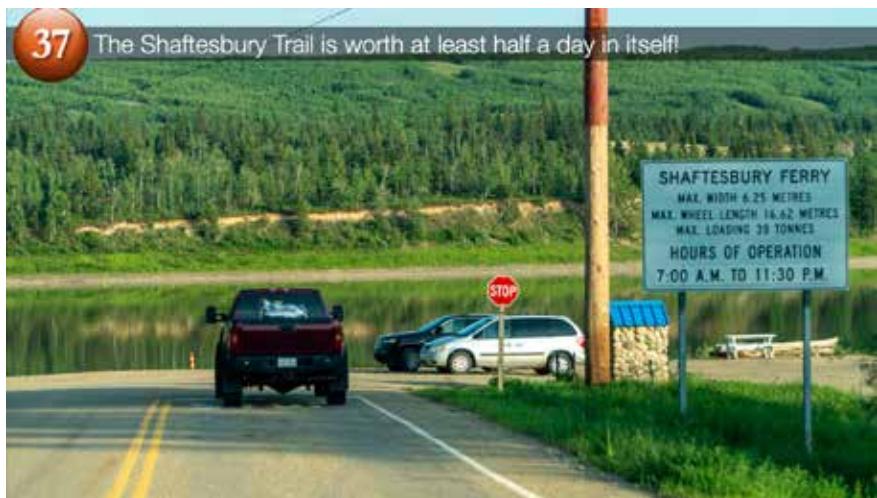
At this point, we had to take a look at Grimshaw to see what amenities it has, and if it would make a more competitive "base camp" for these attractions than Peace River.

Suggestion 35: Grimshaw is a very cute town (top right), but it doesn't have the amount of lodging, restaurants, or shopping that Peace River has. So it wouldn't make a better "base camp."

Suggestion 36: Grimshaw has Mile Marker Zero for the Mackenzie Highway (bottom left). Peace River should go ahead and promote that as well--it's fine to send people to another town for their attraction, as long as Peace River remains the "base camp."

Then we drove down the Shaftesbury Trail, which was a great drive. What a nice road!

Along the way, we saw Strong Creek Park (bottom right), which was very nice.



We kept going, and we came to Fort Fork National Historic Site (top left), plus the cairn. We read about Alexander Mackenzie (top right), and it was so much fun to explore these beautiful, historic spots and learn about the area.

We came to the Shaftesbury Ferry (bottom left), and we stopped for a while to watch as it took people across the river. We didn't have time to go across ourselves, but it was fascinating to watch this historic ferry. We'd never seen a ferry pushed by a tug, and using pontoon boats to ferry cars across. What a great thing to see!

We also read the interpretive sign about the history of the Shaftesbury Ferry (bottom right). It was so interesting.

Suggestion 37: The Shaftesbury Trail is fascinating and gorgeous! Peace River should promote this as a great day trip drive. Highlight the ferry as a must-do experience!



We would definitely have taken the ferry if we'd had more time. We saw the sign (top right) about the maximum capacity for the "ice bridge." We didn't know if the river froze solid enough in the winter so that people could drive across at times.

Suggestion 38: Give us more information about the "ice bridge." Let us know if there are times people can actually drive on the river in the winter, or what this means.

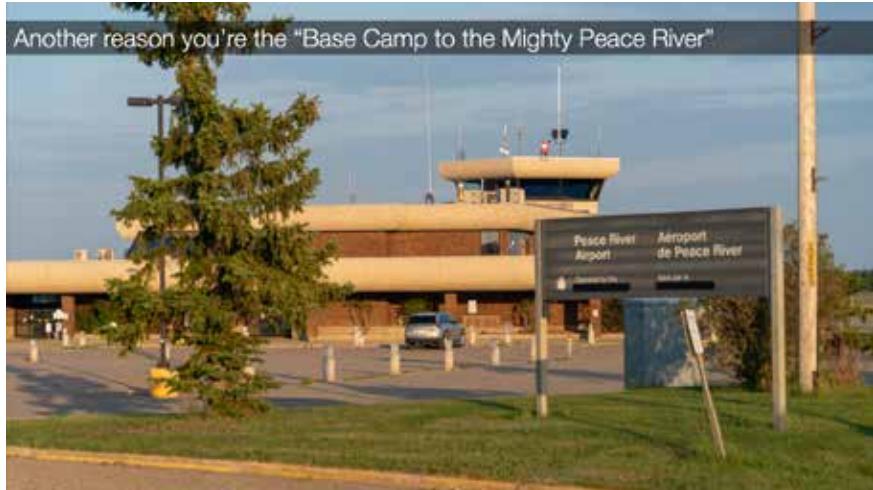
Suggestion 39: If the river does become covered with ice, is there an ice breakup in the spring? And what is that like? Add signage with that



information.

As we drove back towards town, we saw more interpretive history signs (bottom left).

Suggestion 40: We stopped at this spot (bottom right), which was the site of a historic church, and we really wished we could see it. The sign said that admission was only possible with permission at the main building. We weren't sure where that was. Turns out that the main building is at the correctional facility, and we didn't really want to do that. Clarify that on the signage. These interpretive signs were excellent.

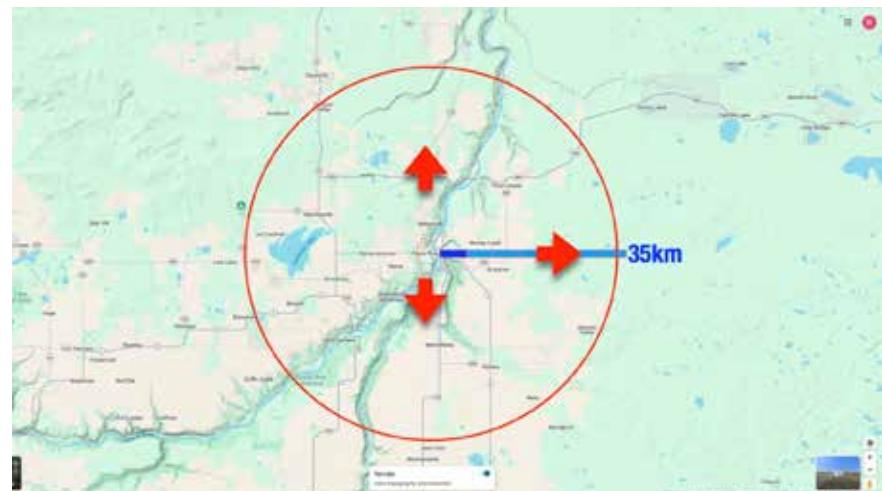
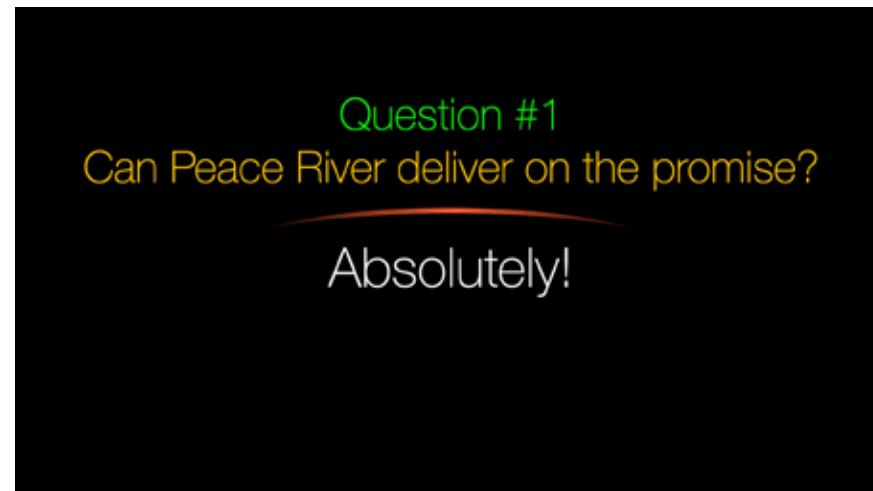


It is fascinating to read the excellent interpretive signs in the area about the fur trade and the agriculture (top left). These tell great stories that are both informative and endear us to your area.

We took a look at the Peace River Airport (top right). It looks great, and is one more reason why Peace River makes a perfect "base camp." There might be a small business opportunity for flight lessons or tours.

If visitors want to go out for day trips, stopping at Freson Bros. first is a great idea. Suggestion 41: Promote the fact that Peace River has all a visitor needs for provisioning when they want to go exploring the area (bottom left). "Your day trips start here."

Freson's deli (bottom right) is fantastic.



Question #1: Can Peace River deliver on the promise of being the base camp for exploring the area? Yes, it absolutely can. Peace River has everything a visitor would need: lots of good lodging, restaurants, shops, and plenty of supplies.

We looked at a map of the area (top right) to see if there are enough activities to keep visitors engaged for several days, and we just looked out to about 35 kilometres. We didn't even look very far north or east, but we found plenty of highlights, and there are probably a lot that we missed.

We also went out to St. Isadore (bottom left and right) to take a look at their Centre Culturel. We aren't sure if this is open to the public, but this is another attraction that is only about ten minutes away.

Lots of events seem to be taking place at Cecil Thompson Park.



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Attractions

Museums

- Peace River Museum, Archives & Mackenzie Centre: Located 30th Street and 53rd Avenue, the museum contains over 10,000 artifacts and contains a full trade gallery, aboriginal artifacts and the Peace River Gallery which documents the history of settlement in Peace River. The wheelshaft from the famous steamer D.A. Thomas is located on the grounds.^[20]
- Lac Cardinal Pioneer Village Museum: Located near the entrance to Queen Elizabeth Provincial Park, this museum represents life in the 1920s and 1940s.

Other museums in the area include [Nampa](#), [Mackenzie](#) in [Grassview](#), [Grassmead Agricultural Museum](#) in [Grassmead](#) and [Battle River Pioneer Museum](#) in [The Town of Manning](#).

Park and trails

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Riverfront Park: Located south of Peace River's downtown, Riverfront Park is equipped with picnic tables, a playground and a boat launch. A section of it designed with an amphitheatre-type topography facing a grassy area for hosting outdoor performances. The park also features a giant wooden statue of Twelve Foot Davis. The lights hung on the trees at Riverfront Park are lit up during Christmas period.

Peace River Lions Club Park: Located on the west bank of the Peace River across the bridge immediately south of Highway 2, Lions Club Park is equipped with campfires, sewage dumping station and trails.

12 Foot Davis Grave Site: Peace River Provincial Recreational Area and Cr. Greene camp site. These sites are accessible from 10th Avenue and are located within the [Grassmead Valley Provincial Park](#) on Grouse Hill overlooking the [Mackenzie](#), [Peace](#), and [Heart](#) Rivers.

Normand Boucher Community Arboretum: Located on 70 Avenue bridge on 9th Avenue, the arboretum holds 560 trees and 42 shrubs, 60 of which are different tree and plant species from

- Peace River Museum
- Lac Cardinal Pioneer Village Museum
- Queen Elizabeth Provincial Park
- Nampa Museum
- Brownvale Agricultural Museum
- Battle River Pioneer Museum
- Riverfront Park
- Peace River Lions Club Park
- 12 Foot Davis Grave Site
- Normand Boucher Arboretum

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Pat's Creek: Hiking trail. This is a 3-kilometre wilderness interpretive trail above the Pat's Creek just north of town starting at Highway 28/Highway 744 overpass between Kaufman Hill and George Hill and heading up to the Peace River Agricultural Society Grounds in northern Sunwapta County. It used to be the old Highway 2 route into town. Cross Country Skiing is also popular at this trail during the winter months.

Parks and recreational areas in close proximity to the Town of Peace River include [Wilderness Park](#), [Strong Creek Park](#), [Tangent Park](#), [Peace River Wildland Provincial Park](#), [Lac Cardinal Recreation Area](#), [Queen Elizabeth Provincial Park](#), [Figure Eight Lake Provincial Park](#) and [Laddo Lake Recreation Area](#). Other parks within 100 kilometers of the Town of Peace River include [Haig Lake Recreation Area](#), [Joker Lake](#), [Whispering Lake Provincial Park](#), [Sulphur Lake Provincial Recreation Area](#), [Montagueuse Lake Recreation Area](#) and [Kimiwan Lake Provincial Recreation Area](#).

There is an extensive multi-use trail system for pedestrians and bicycles throughout the town including the dykes within the river valley that

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Pat's Creek Trail

- Wilderness Park
- Strong Creek Park
- Tangent Park
- Peace River Wildland Provincial Park
- Lac Cardinal Recreation Area
- Figure Eight Lake Provincial Park
- Laddo Lake Recreation Area
- Haig Lake Recreation Area
- Winagami Lake Provincial Park
- Sulphur Lake Recreation Area
- Montagueuse Lake Recreation Area
- Kimiwan Lake Boardwalk
- Trans Canada Trail
- Baytex Energy Centre

Recreation facilities

There are facilities and activities for all seasons of the year:

- Athabasca Hall: Located on 8th Avenue in Peace River, the Athabasca Hall was built in 1958 and is a historical fixture. It features a 244-seat hall and an art gallery and a dance studio in the basement.
- Golf World on The Peace: Located in south of downtown adjacent to the mall, this is an 18-hole wheelchair accessible mini-golf facility.
- Baytex Energy Centre: Opened in 1978 on the Kenyon Avenue, the facility can hold up to 1,000 people with the ice. The arena is home to several minor, recreational and old-timer hockey leagues. It is located on 73 Avenue.
- Peace Regional Pool: This pool opened in 1997. The pool has programs for learning to swim for various ages and it is on 9th Street.
- Water Play Park: Peace River has an outdoor water park for kids located next door to the tennis courts and a playground. It is open during

Done en.wikipedia.org

Recreation facilities

There are facilities and activities for all seasons of the year:

- Misery Mountain: Located on 9th Avenue in Peace River, the Athabasca Hall was built in 1958 and is a historical fixture. It features a 244-seat hall and an art gallery and a dance studio in the basement.
- Golf World on The Peace: Located in south of downtown adjacent to the mall, this is an 18-hole wheelchair accessible mini-golf facility.
- Baytex Energy Centre: Opened in 1978 on the Kenyon Avenue, the facility can hold up to 1,000 people with the ice. The arena is home to several minor, recreational and old-timer hockey leagues. It is located on 73 Avenue.
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- Athabasca Hall
- Peace Regional Pool
- Water Play Park
- Misery Mountain
- Creek Golf Course
- Heart River Golf Course
- Mighty Peace Golf Course
- Peace View Golf Course
- Outfitting companies
- Trophy hunting
- Fishing

Wildlife in the Peace River region is very diverse and varied. Big game common in the area include moose, white-tailed deer, moose deer and elk, and attracts hunters from far and wide. There are dozens of outfitting companies in the area that cater to trophy hunters and back country adventure seekers. Migratory ducks and geese are hunted at nearby Lac Cardinal as well as surrounding green fields. Black bears, coyotes and wolves are also hunted in the area as are grouse, and to small infant beavers and hares.

There is a wide variety of fishing opportunities in

There seems to be a lot of events taking place at Cecil Thompson Park (top left). These are attractions to Peace River, and the town can promote them too.

We were surprised when we went to Wikipedia and found so many attractions and activities listed for Peace River (top right and bottom left and right). Wikipedia lists more attractions than any other website we looked at! We aren't sure that all of them are within a 45 minute drive of town, but we were astonished.

- Northbase Outdoor Ranch
- Peace Valley Guest Ranch
- Sandy Ridge Ranch & Stables
- Shaftesbury Ferry
- Northbase Outdoor Ranch

More than **40** attractions in the area

Attractions that have a wide draw

- Zip lines & adventure courses
- Zorb runs (the longer the better)
- Alpine coasters
- Team-building activities
- Mountain biking (extreme and diverse runs)

Wikipedia even lists a lot of tour companies and adventure companies (top left).

Question #2: How far will people drive to visit Peace River? If people have to drive one hour, do you have four hours of activities for them to do once they arrive? This is the 4X Rule (top right). For example, If you have to drive two hours to pick up a prescription, do you decide to combine that trip with other errands, to make it "worth the trip"?

Does Peace River have enough activities to attract people from Grand Prairie (2 hours), or from Edmonton (5 hours)?

Question #2

How far will people drive to visit?

The **4X Rule**:

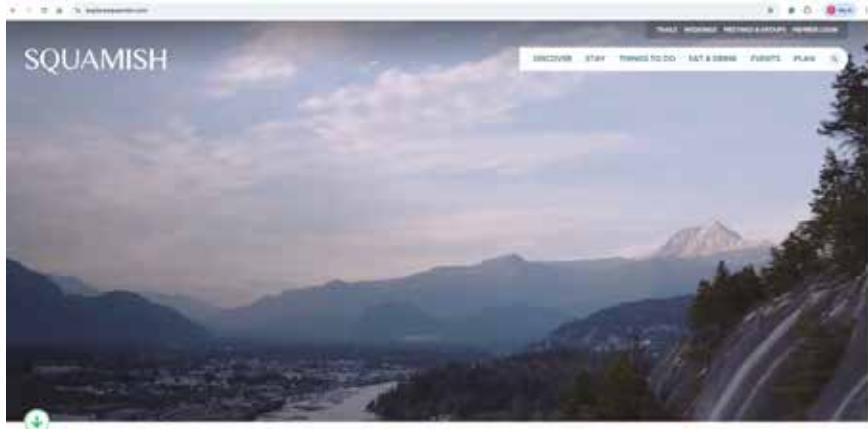
People will travel if there are activities that consume at least 4-times the drive time.

42 Develop a photo library, and emulate the Tourism Squamish website

Welcome to Squamish

These are some attractions and activities that many people would be willing to drive from Edmonton to do in Peace River (bottom left). If people have to drive that far, they're going to want to spend the night. The combination of activities that are in Peace River already offers enough things to do for people to drive at least two hours.

Suggestion 42: Develop a stand-alone Peace River website that narrows the focus to just this area--the Mighty Peace and provincial websites are good, but you need to narrow the focus for Peace River (bottom right). A good website example is Tourism Squamish. Develop a professional photo library so that your photography really stands out.



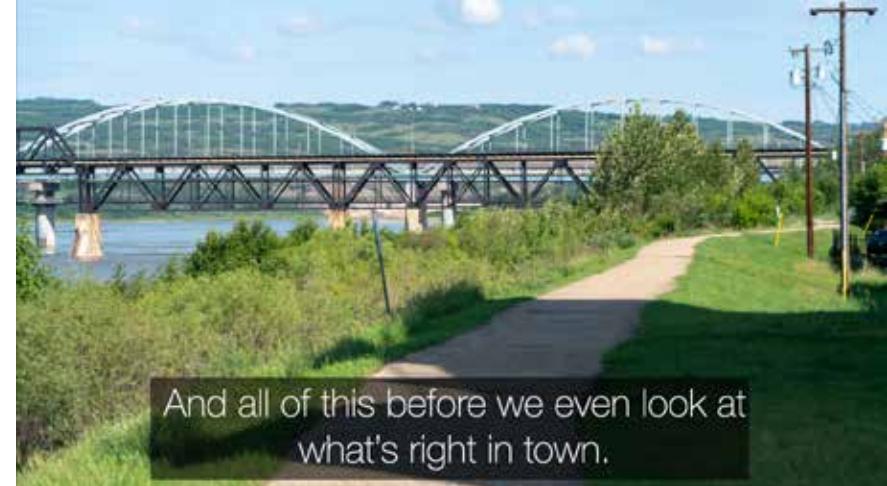
Welcome to Squamish

Halfway between Vancouver and Whistler, where the

Quick facts

1. The average visitor - active 14 hours
2. Primary draw & day trips: 4 to 6 hours
3. Complementary: 8 to 10 hours

"What else do you have for us while we're here?"
This is where **80%** of the non-lodging spending takes place.



And all of this before we even look at
what's right in town.

SPENDING TIME IN PEACE RIVER

What makes the Squamish tourism website so outstanding is the photography and videography (top left). And Peace River is every bit as gorgeous as Squamish. It wouldn't have to be expensive to produce--you can buy website templates and then populate them with your photography.

Quick facts:

- The average visitor is active about 14 hours a day.
- Visitors spend about 4 to 6 hours enjoying the primary draw and day trips.
- Visitors spend the rest of their time on complementary activities. And

that is where 80% of the non-lodging visitor spending takes place--doing complementary activities, such as shopping and dining.

After exploring all the attractions and activities surrounding Peace River, we were ready to spend a lot of time right in town.



IMPORTANT INITIATIVE: WAYFINDING

Why develop a system?

- It educates locals & visitors about what you have.
- It delivers a pleasant visitor experience.
- It helps mitigate traffic flow.
- It introduces your brand.
- It creates a "sense of place" and a sense of arrival.
- It eliminates sign clutter and "broken" systems.

Initiative 2: Wayfinding

A good wayfinding system is critical, especially in a town that is so divided into different sections as Peace River. If this is something you are already working on, your efforts are validated!

We saw just a few of these wayfinding signs (top right), and they look nice, but they don't complete the job. They just point us in a direction, and then we're on our own.

These are very nice, but don't complete the job.



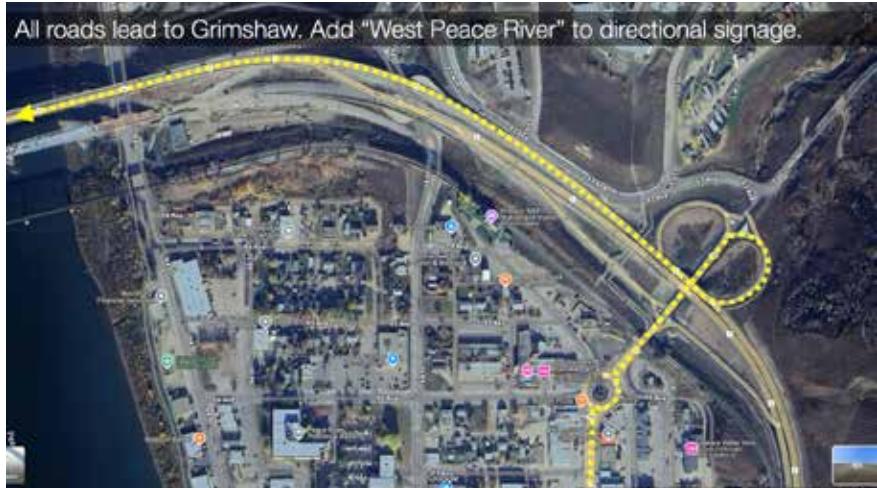
43

Don't send us to Grimshaw but add "West Peace River" to signage.



Why develop a wayfinding system? (bottom left)

Top reason is that it educates both locals and visitors about what you have. We spoke to one local restaurant worker who didn't even know about Misery Mountain or some other attractions. If they were on wayfinding signage, more locals would know about them.



A wayfinding system includes

- Vehicular wayfinding signage
- Pedestrian wayfinding (downtown & trails)
- Monument signs (at key attractions, gateways)
- Seasonal & district identifier pole banners
- Trail maps and trailhead identifiers
- Visitor information kiosks (free standing, wall mounted)

Instead of providing so much signage to Grimshaw, add signage to "West Peace River."

A wayfinding system should include:

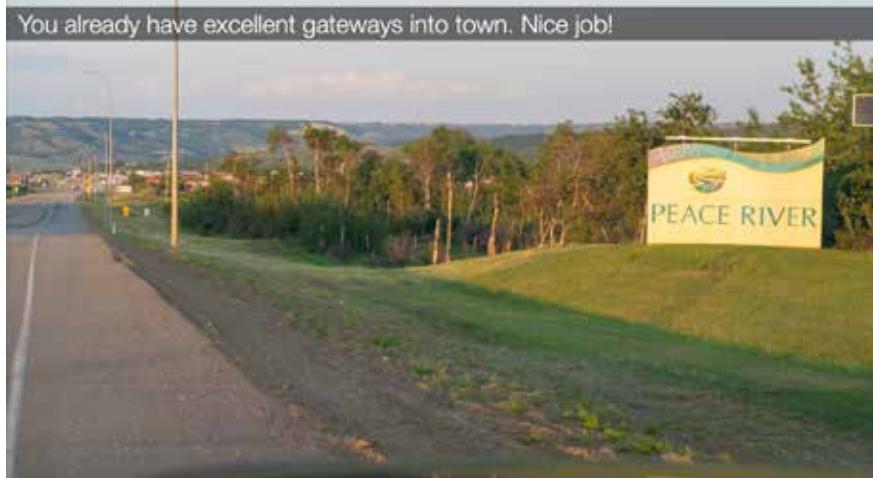
- Monument signs for gateways and key attractions
- Attractions and activities for vehicles
- Amenities (parking, washrooms)
- Pole banners for seasonal decor and district identification
- Trail markers and access points
- Visitor information kiosks (free standing and wall mounted)
- Pedestrian wayfinding in your downtown

Help us find:

- The hospital
- Lodging & restaurants (West side)
- Athabasca Hall
- Visitor Information
- Baytex Energy Center
- Peace River Museum
- 12 Foot Davis Event Park
- Peace River Airport
- Downtown
- Saginaw Lookout
- Misery Mountain ski area
- Northern Lakes College
- Local parks & ball fields
- Trailheads
- Cross river pedestrian bridge
- 12 Foot Davis gravesite
- Fairgrounds

Pretty much everything...

You already have excellent gateways into town. Nice job!



Peace River already has great gateway signs (bottom right).

Wayfinding signs should have no more than five items on a sign. Always make signage easy to read and avoid condensed text or script lettering.

It is also important that wayfinding signage "connect the dots" all the way to the end. That means that signs should not just point you once in the right direction, but also indicate each turn to make as well as the distance. The destination should be clearly marked, so that people know when they've arrived. A good wayfinding system will educate residents and visitors about what assets Peace River has.



General rules

Never more than five items per sign.

No more than six lines of text.

2.5cm to every 6m of viewing distance: 125cm tall letters on average.



Nakusp, British Columbia

The signage should be decorative to fit your ambiance and easy to read, such as these examples from Modesto, CA (top left), Appleton, WI (top right), Nakusp, BC (bottom left), and Cardston, AB (bottom right).





The city of Prosser, WA has excellent wayfinding signage throughout town (top left).

Suggestion 44: We found a lot of boat ramps promoted in the marketing literature, but we could only find one of them using our navigation system (top right). Include wayfinding to boat ramps as well.





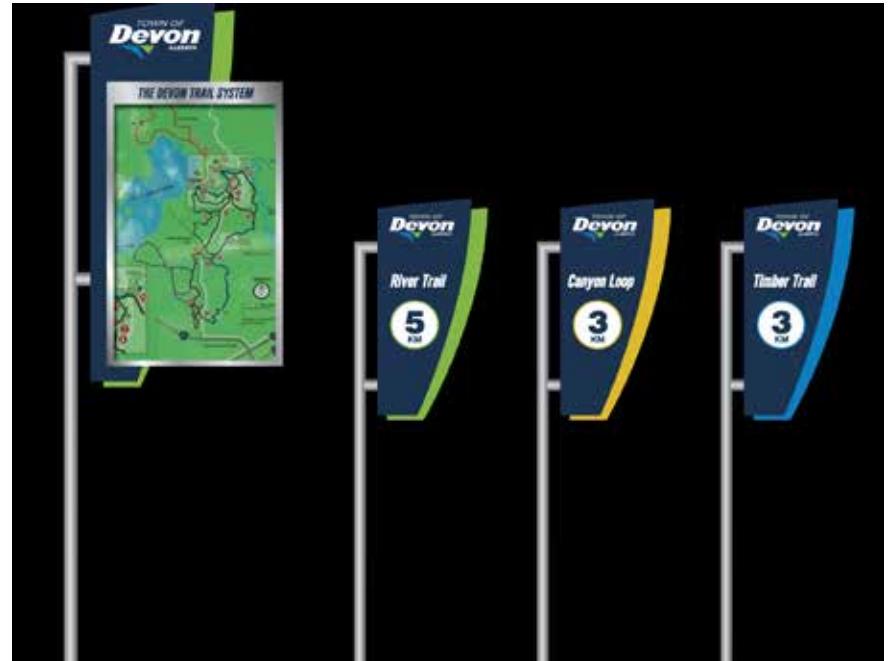
Banff, Alberta



French Lick, Indiana



Whistler Resort, British Columbia

Whistler Resort, BC (bottom left)
Devon, AB (bottom right)

Pedestrian wayfinding is important as well as vehicular wayfinding. It is smaller in scale. These are some excellent examples:

Banff, AB (top left)

French Lick, Indiana (top right)



Navigation systems are not a substitute for wayfinding signage. We use nav systems to find things that we know exist, but wayfinding systems can show us more--even things we might not yet know you have.

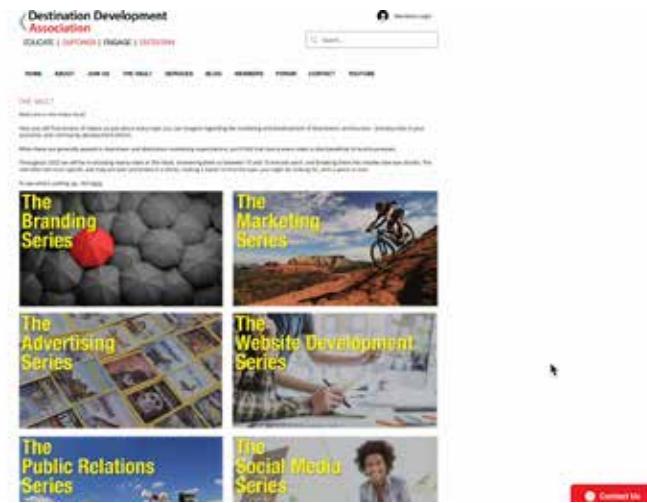
Wayfinding systems can increase retail sales and services by 18%.

This photo shows a wayfinding sign in Bracebridge, Ontario (top left). You can see how large these signs need to be. The lettering needs to be large enough for drivers to read from a distance, so that they have enough time to make a decision about the need to make a turn or continue straight.



We tried to find Greene Valley Provincial Park using our navigation system (top right), but we never could find it. We never found any signage directing us to its location. It is being marketed, but we couldn't find it.

When we were looking for Greene Valley Provincial Park, we found this gorgeous spot (bottom right). Suggestion 45: We couldn't help but think this looks like a great spot for a zip line.



For more information on wayfinding, go to destinationdevelopment.org, where we have many educational videos available for viewing in The Vault (top left). Many of the videos are available on YouTube as well.

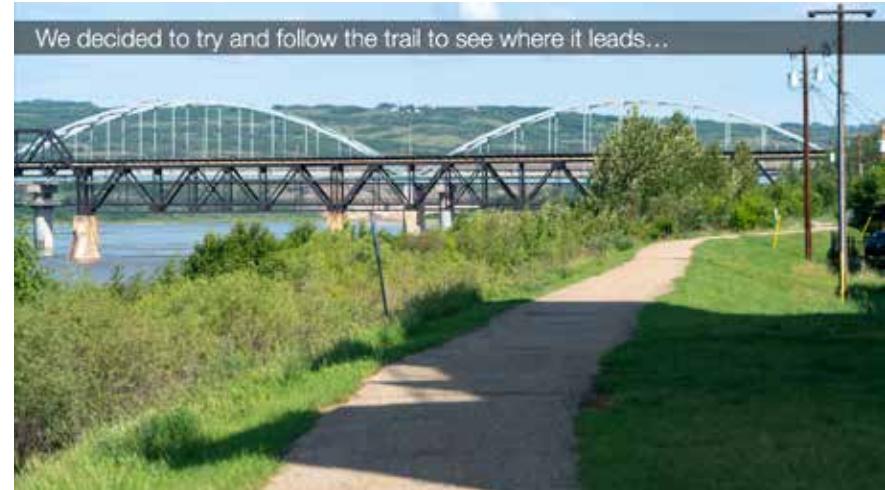
While on the subject of wayfinding, one of the most frustrating experiences was trying to get to downtown from our hotel. We were staying at the Best Western on the west side of Peace River, so we had to get on the highway heading east across the river to go downtown. But we could only turn right, heading towards Grimshaw, when we left the hotel (bottom right).



We tried going through several parking lots so that we could reach the traffic light and make a left turn to go downtown (top right), but one little section of the road (red rectangle, top right), is one-way only. We couldn't figure out why this is one-way--there's plenty of room for two lanes.

Suggestion 46: Try to change this little section of the road so that it isn't one-way (bottom left). This must be very frustrating for everyone who stays at any of the hotels here, or for shoppers who need to get back to the other side of the river.

DOWNTOWN'S NORTH END



We went back into downtown, and decided to follow the trail along the river to see where it went (top right). From the downtown park, we saw that it headed in both directions along the river, so, first, we followed it north (bottom left).

When we reached the bridge that crosses the river, we saw that you have a wonderful pedestrian bridge under the vehicular bridge (bottom right) crossing the river. That is a terrific asset.



Suggestion 47: This would be a great place to add some picnic tables, benches and trash receptacles (top left). People could bring a lunch or snack to this spot, and relax and enjoy the view of the river during their lunch breaks.

We were recently in Fort Benton, Montana, and they have a footbridge crossing the Missouri River (top right). They have benches and picnic tables, and many people use the bridge for little picnics or just to relax. It also gives a great exercise option--adding the length of the bridge to their daily walks.

We kept following the trail to the north end of town (bottom left), and it was

a beautiful walk. We found parks, and we discovered the very nice arboretum (bottom right). It was gorgeous, and we had had no clue this was there before we discovered it by following the trail.



Suggestion 48: Some of the signs at the arboretum need to be redone (top left) because they have become very worn.

We saw the BayTex Energy Centre (top right), and we were very impressed. This is a wonderful quality of life asset for the residents, and really adds to the appeal of living in Peace River.

Suggestion 49: We weren't sure if visitors were able to use the BayTex Centre (bottom left). If they are able to pay a daily fee to use it, then promote it in your marketing.

We also found the Peace Regional Pool (bottom right). It is another great quality of life asset.



We saw the Ecole des Quatre-Vent (top left), and it looks like a wonderful school (top left). All of your schools look very nice.

We also checked out your sledding hill (top right), and it looks like wonderful fun for residents in the winter.

All of your sports fields look great and very well-maintained (bottom left).

Seeing all of these great local amenities for residents showed us that Peace River offers a very good quality of life. That's so important if you want to attract more residents and businesses.

We also found the off-leash dog park (bottom right). It looks great. With so many dog owners, this is a wonderful local amenity.

Suggestion 50: Add the dog park to your wayfinding signage, and promote it in your marketing.



Peace River's North End

Very nice neighborhoods, great schools, gorgeous parks, awesome sporting facilities and local amenities.

We saw the cemetery across from the dog park (top left), and it looks beautiful.

We also saw the BMX park (top right), and it looks very nice, but it's been locked and closed all this last week. Is it permanently closed?

Suggestion 51: If the BMX park is permanently closed, remove it from your list of parks (bottom left).



Next, we drove to the south end of town, and first thing we did was to go into the museum (top right, bottom left and right).

We loved seeing the rotating displays (top right). Suggestion 52: Rotating displays are an excellent way to make sure visitors come back again and again. Also, be sure your displays tell stories. When people see the artifacts on display, always tell stories about how they were used and about the people who used them. That brings your artifacts to life.

The museum was very enjoyable.



We loved seeing the list of events that the museum produces (bottom right). That's fantastic. This list should be promoted on the new tourism website.

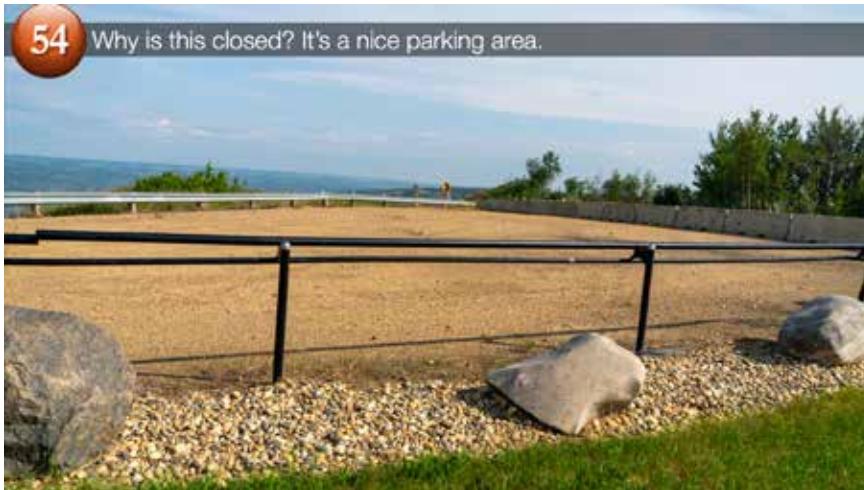


We saw the interpretive signage about the serviceberries and their importance for the First Nations people (top left). That was very interesting.

We saw that each neighborhood had their own sliding hill (top right), which we have never seen before, but they are awesome.

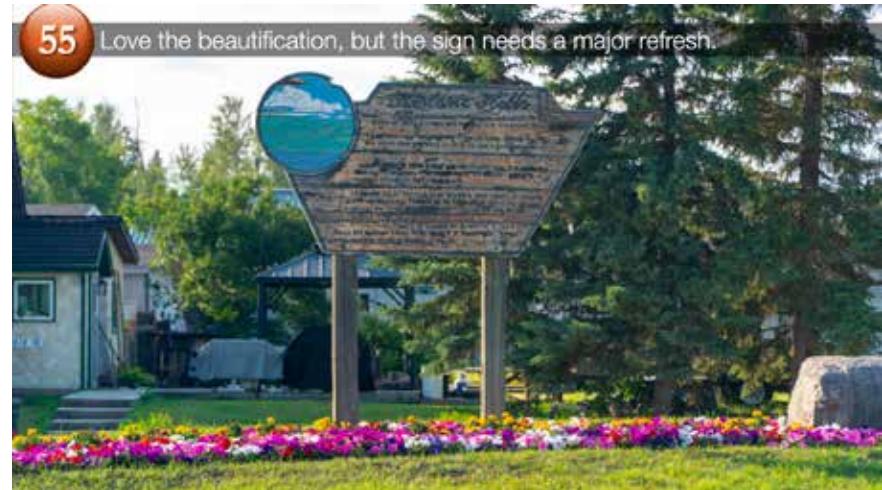
Suggestion 53: The local tennis courts were being used for pickleball (bottom left). Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in North America, so if you can, build more!

We found the Sagitawa Lookout (bottom right), which has incredible views. In fact, it seems like every spot in Peace River has amazing views! We loved being able to see downtown and the confluence of the rivers. Gorgeous.



54

Why is this closed? It's a nice parking area.



55

Love the beautification, but the sign needs a major refresh.



This is the only boat launch we could find.



56

Need info! Fishing license, PIT tag reader? Seasons, etc. Help!

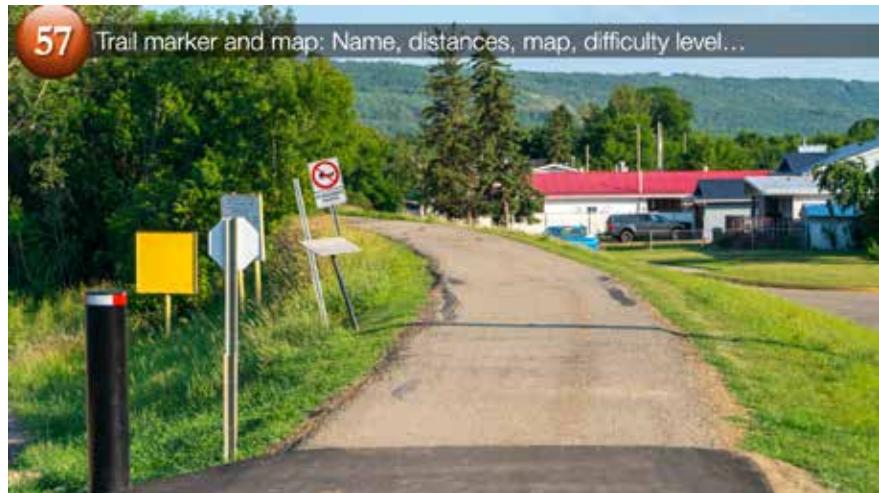
Suggestion 54: Next to the lookout was this nice parking lot (top left), which was closed. If it can be reopened, that would be great--it's a nice, convenient parking lot.

Suggestion 55: This is a very pretty spot (top right), but we couldn't read anything on this sign. Perhaps some group (maybe an Eagle Scout project?) could take on the project of redoing this sign.

We found the boat launch on the west side of the river (bottom left), but that was the only one we could find. If there are others, they need wayfinding to

help people find them.

Suggestion 56: At the boat launch, we saw this sign for fishermen (bottom right). Add more information about fishing, such as where to get a fishing license, what kind of fish, what is a PIT tag reader, what seasons are best, and more.



57

Trail marker and map: Name, distances, map, difficulty level...

Peace River's South End

More nice neighborhoods, nice parks, sporting facilities and neighborhood amenities.

PEACE RIVER'S WEST SIDE

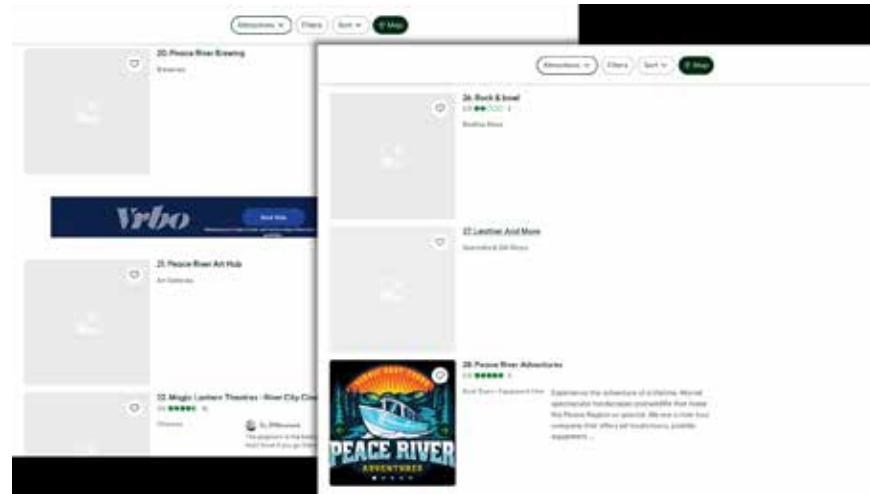
Suggestion 57: We saw the continuation of the trail here on the south end of town (top left). Add a trail market and map. Give the trail name, the distances of the trail, difficulty level, special sights people can see, and any other information.

Peace River's south end has more very nice neighborhoods, parks, and amenities. What a great town to live in!



Then we went over to the west side of town. We stayed at the Best Western Plus (bottom right), and it was very nice. Peace River has some very good lodging options!

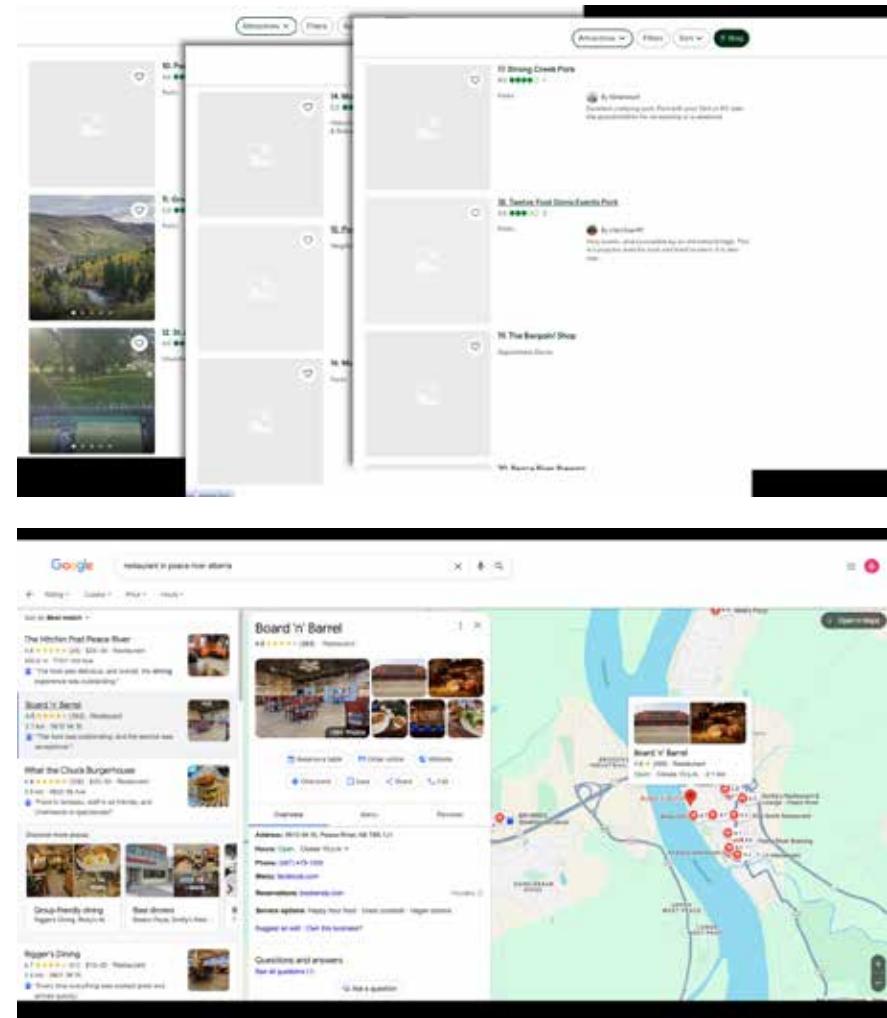
It was nice to stay so close to Mr. Mike's Steakhouse, which is one of the best places to eat in town.



We looked at TripAdvisor and Google for recommendations for restaurants, and one of them was the Iron Bridge Restaurant. We couldn't find it, but it looked like it had been sold, and the new owners changed the name to The Hitchin' Post (top left).

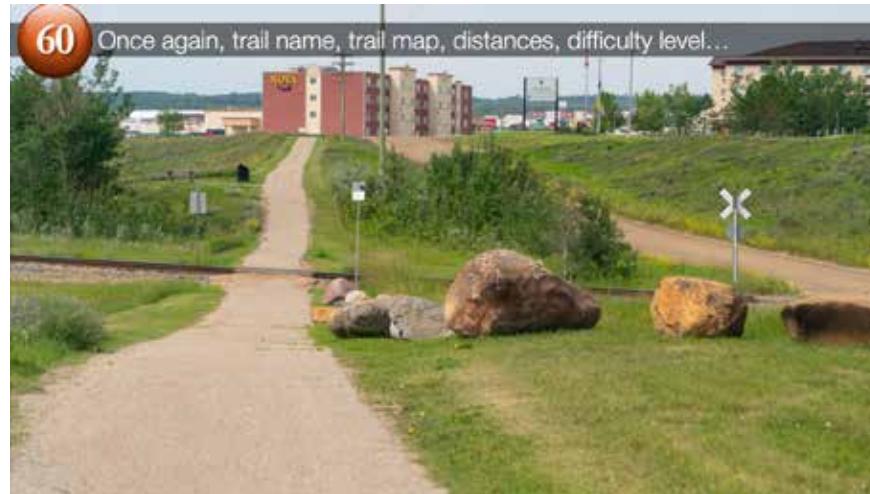
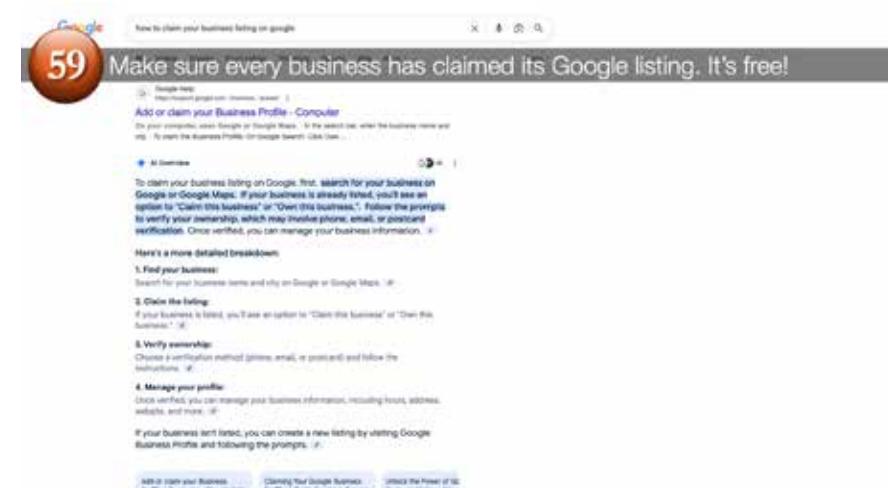
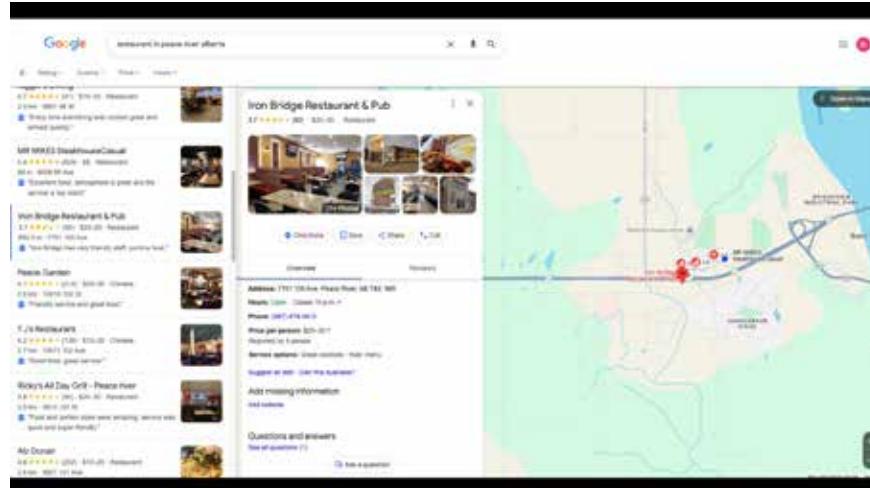
Suggestion 58: The owners of The Hitchin' Post should change their listings on TripAdvisor and Google. Update all the information online--it's free to update those listings.

Owners of all businesses should go to the online listings on both TripAdvisor



and Google My Business to claim their listings and to add information and photos (top right, bottom left and right).

Board 'n' Barrel (bottom right) has claimed their Google listing, and they have posted photos and added all the correct information. This is free--all it takes is a little effort.



The owners of the Iron Bridge Restaurant haven't removed their listing or updated it with new information (top left). This is frustrating for visitors who are looking for a good place to eat, and it doesn't help any of the businesses.

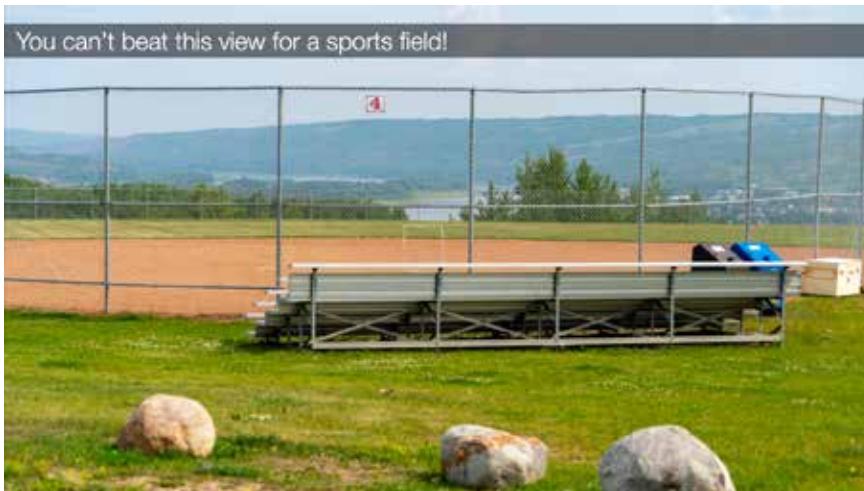
Suggestion 59: Make sure every business has claimed its Google listing (top right). This is a free service offered by Google, and it will only help your business and your community!

We found walking trails again on the west side of Peace River (bottom left). Suggestion 60: Add trail signage--give your trails a name--add a trail map,



distances, difficulty level, and more information.

The sports fields look great (bottom right).



When we're looking for highest and best use of properties, we usually don't think of sports fields for view properties, but it is certainly nice here (top left).

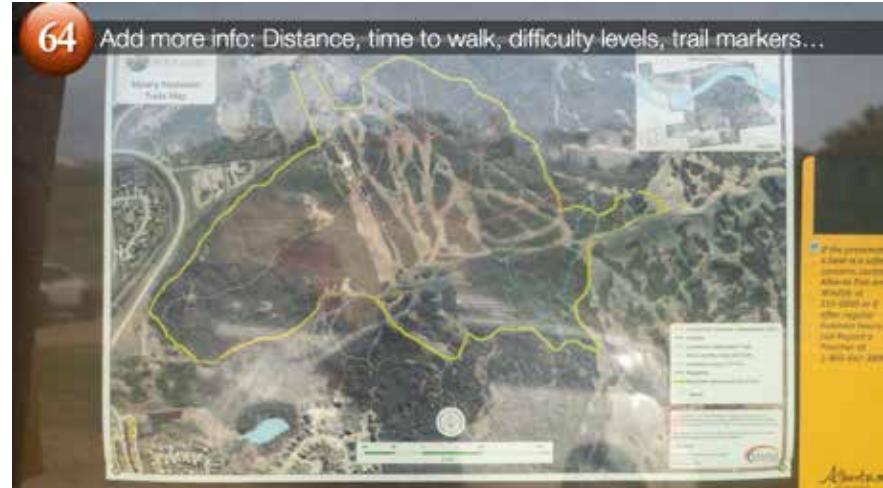
Suggestion 61: We were so surprised to discover Northern Lakes College right behind our hotel (top right)! We never found it before because there isn't wayfinding signage--but there will be when you do the new wayfinding system.

We checked out Misery Mountain's ski area (bottom left). It looks fantastic.

Suggestion 62: Add summer mountain biking to the uses at Misery Mountain!



Suggestion 63: Mountain biking is the fastest growing hobby sport in Canada. Many ski resorts do mountain biking in the summer--cyclists can ride up the hills on the lifts, and bike down the hills (bottom right). In fact, Whistler Resort in BC does more business in the summer than in the winter, and their biggest summer activity is mountain biking.



We saw the map posted at Misery Mountain (top left and right), and it is helpful. Misery Mountain is great.

Suggestion 64: Add more information to the trail map (top right). Let visitors know how long the trail is, how difficult, what you can see along the trail, etc.

Suggestion 65: More trails (bottom left), and another need for trail signage. We weren't sure if this trail connected to the Misery Mountain trails, or if it was different. Where does this go, and how long is it? Name the trails to differentiate them.

Peace River's West Side Story

All the major amenities: Hospital & medical, big box retail, industry, lodging, restaurants. When you need to get something done, this is where you go.

The west side of Peace River is the place that has everything people need, from big box retail, to medical facilities, to restaurants, to lodging, to industry.

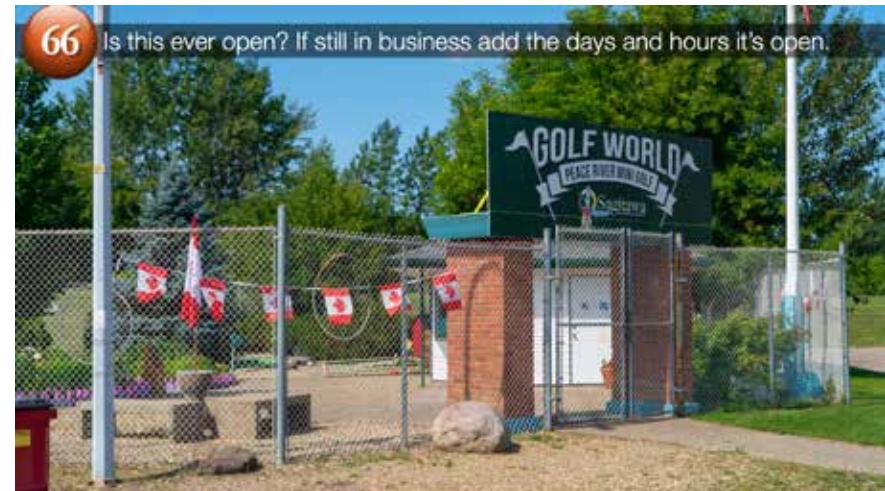
DOWNTOWN



Finally, we checked out all of downtown Peace River.

Suggestion 66: We spotted the miniature golf course, Golf World (top right), which looks amazing. But each day we drove past, it was closed. There are no signs telling people when they are open, so we thought they might be permanently closed, until one day they surprised us by being open. Add signage to let people know when you are open, including the hours and days.

We drove past the community garden (bottom left), and we love it. Besides being a great asset for the community, it's also very attractive--love the fence.



When we saw this building (bottom right), we had no idea what it was. There is a sign on it that says "Tapas Room Open," but it doesn't really look like it's still in business.

Suggestion 67: If this is still in business, make it obvious: add beautification, such as pots, planters, and some color. We later learned that it is no longer in business. Take down the signage about the Tapas Room being open. It's confusing.



We've noted that we see so many buildings all throughout Alberta that are brown, beige, and grey, and that we'd love to see some color. We were happy to see this building's bright green facade (top left). It looks fun. Although we were very surprised at the huge number of cannabis shops in Peace River.

Suggestion 68: Add some pots and planters--not just here, but all throughout downtown (top left).

We had to Google 12 Foot Davis Events Park in order to find it because there isn't wayfinding yet. Suggestion 69: Add a readerboard at the entrance to let

people know about any upcoming events (top right). Invite us back.

The park looks great, and it must be a wonderful place to hold events (bottom left).

Suggestion 70: We saw the terracing and structures on the hillside at 12 Foot Davis Events Park (bottom right), and we were very curious about their purpose. Add some interpretive signage to inform people about this. We later learned that it's to stabilize the hillside.

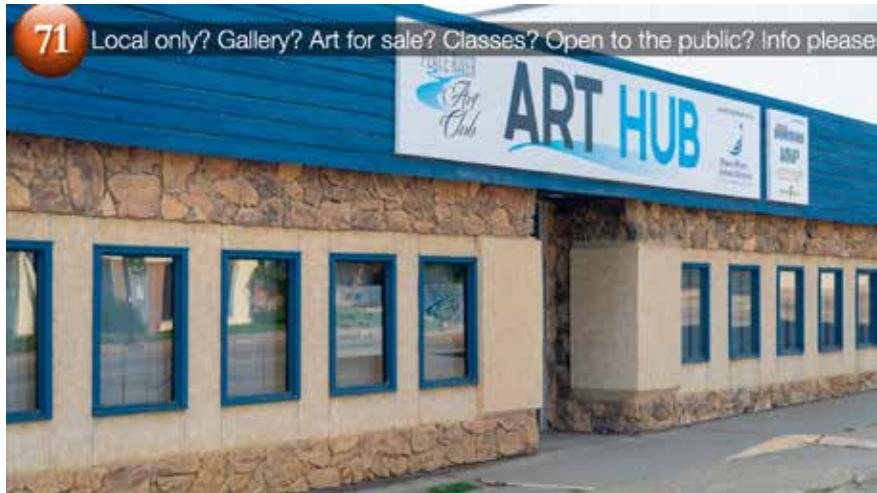


We saw the Water Play Park (top left), and it looks fantastic. It is a great quality of life asset for the community.

For the first time, jobs are going where the talent is or where the talent wants to live, and that means that quality of life is very important for attracting new business and new residents. People want to live where there is a great quality of life. So these quality of life assets are very important for economic development.



We found the great skate park (bottom left and right), and it looks amazing. Another excellent quality of life asset.



We saw the Art Hub (top left). The sign says that it is an art club, but doesn't indicate if there is a gallery or if it is open to the public. Suggestion 71: Add signage to let people know that there is a gallery that is open to the public. Invite us in!

Suggestion 72: We saw this post being used as a bulletin board downtown (top right). It's looking kind of ratty, and we suggest just taking it down.

We're sure this is part of the dike trail from the park that we saw earlier (bottom left). Suggestion 73: Add trail signage at this spot by the mall to let people

Downtown

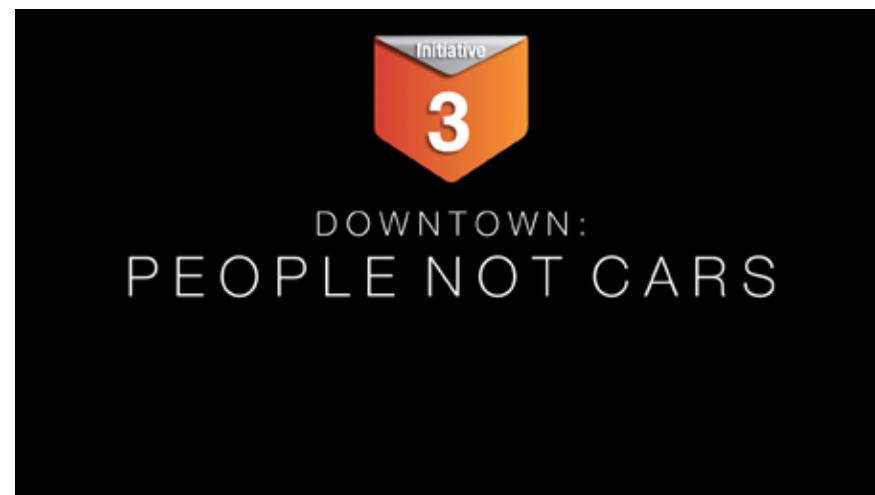
The town is doing everything imaginable to make downtown even better.

But the merchants and property owners need to step-up their efforts.

We're here to help with that.

know where the trail goes and how long it is. Provide a trail map.

We could tell the town is doing everything it can to improve downtown and make it more attractive and easier to get around. But we could see very little effort by the merchants and property owners to make store fronts and building fronts attractive. The town can do a lot to encourage people to come downtown, but it's up to the merchants to attract people into their stores and restaurants. We will give you some ideas that can help bring more people into your shops.



Initiative 3: Downtown needs to be about people, not just cars.

What the town is doing downtown, widening the sidewalks and narrowing the streets, is exactly the right thing to do (top right). We know it's difficult dealing with the construction, but it will be worth it.

Slowing traffic through downtown is the best thing to do--when people slow down, they can see what's in the shops.

Suggestion 72: In the future, consider adding a bike lane with a curb to your downtown streets (bottom left). Each vehicular lane could be 13 feet wide, and

there's still plenty of room to add a bike lane.

Suggestion 74: Add bike racks downtown (bottom right). It's great to encourage biking, but you need to have bike racks. Also, in the future, consider adding street trees to your downtown streets.



We encourage restaurants to offer sidewalk dining in downtowns. You can find a how-to video about downtown sidewalk dining at destinationdevelopment.org in The Vault (top left).

Suggestion 75: Peace River's downtown sidewalks are generally not wide enough to accommodate sidewalk dining, so we encourage you to allow the extension of patio cafes in parking spaces (top right). The photos on this page are in Barrie, Ontario. They actually reduced their downtown parking so that there would be more outdoor dining, and it made a tremendous difference in the number of people spending time downtown. People love it!

We know some businesses will be concerned that the loss of some parking spaces will prevent people from going into their business, but people are willing to walk a distance if their destination is "worth it."

The average shopper at Walmart parks 260 feet from the front door of the store. And those shoppers have no problem walking all the way to the back of the store to get what they need. That person has just walked at least two blocks. People are willing to do this, so if someone's business is worthwhile, people will be willing to walk a block or two to reach it.

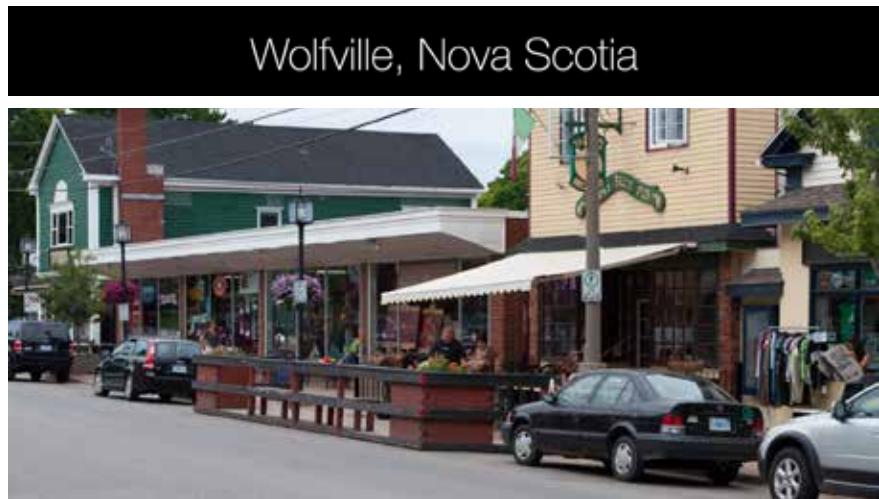


Nelson, British Columbia



These are simply ideas for Peace River to consider--if the sidewalks aren't wide enough, you can take a parking space or two to add to the outdoor seating. In Barrie, Ontario (top left) they take the outdoor dining spaces down in the winter and store them for the next season.

Nelson, BC (top right and bottom right and left), they do the same thing. There are many outdoor cafes in parking spaces there in the summer. It makes the downtown more vibrant and welcoming. You want to make downtown be about people.

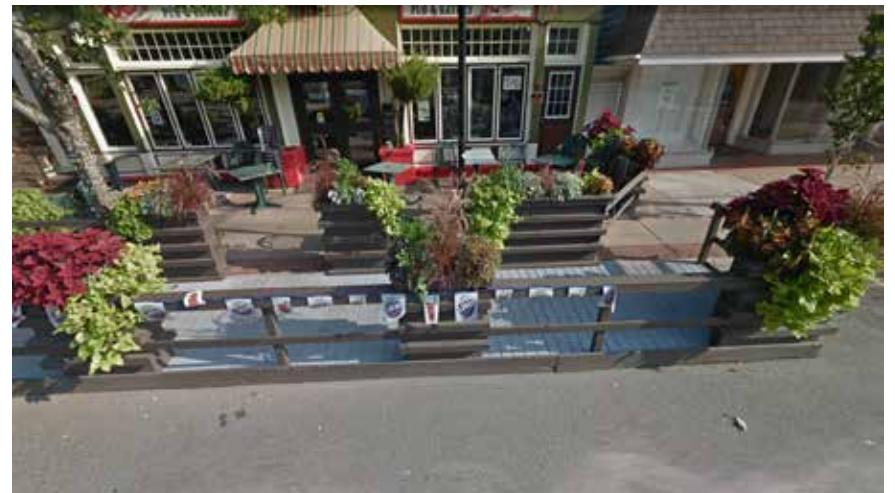


Here are more examples of outdoor dining spaces in Wolfville, NS (all photos this page). They are required to meet building codes, and there must be handicap accessible sidewalks.

Besides increasing the restaurant capacity, these patios make downtown much more fun.



Wolfville, Nova Scotia



More examples from Wolfville, NS (photos this page). These are some ideas of ways to activate downtown and make it more of a gathering place for your residents. And visitors love these too.

Notice the beautification for all these restaurants--the pots of flowers and shrubs, the umbrellas and hanging baskets. Doesn't this look like a beautiful place to spend time with family and friends?



We love what the city is doing downtown. The bulb-outs are excellent (top left) for creating spaces that can accommodate benches or chairs, giving people a place to relax and "hang-out" downtown.

Suggestion 76: This is a great spot for outdoor seating with raised planters, benches, tables and chairs (top right).

The bulb-outs slow traffic and make downtown more enjoyable and pedestrian-friendly (bottom right).

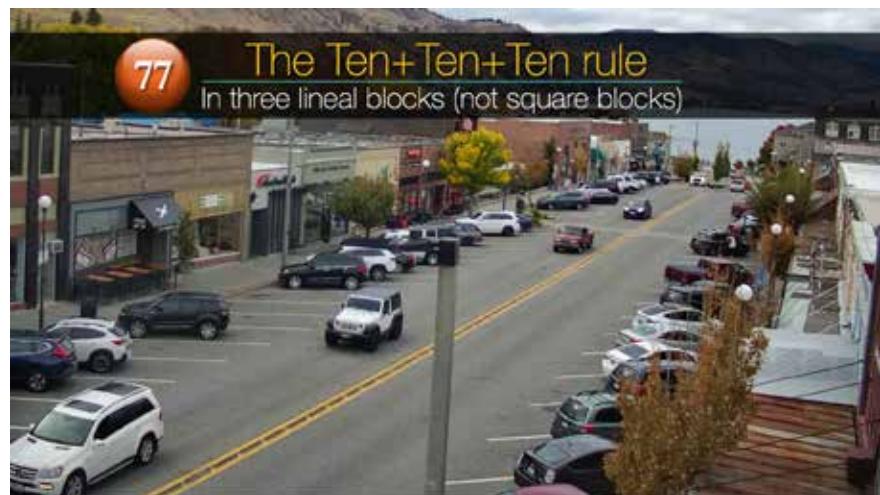




Initiative 4: Downtown business mix

If you want downtown Peace River to be a destination for residents and visitors, you need to have the business mix that attracts people.

Suggestion 77: The Ten + Ten + Ten rule. One critical component of a successful downtown is having the right business mix. This is called critical mass: the 10+10+10 Rule. In order to have enough of the right businesses to attract people to spend time downtown, within a three-lineal block area, you need to



have 10 places that sell food; 10 destination retail shops; and 10 places open after 6:00.



Think about how antique malls do 10 times the business when they are grouped together. How auto malls do seven times the sales when they are together. Restaurants do better when they are grouped together. Food courts do well because many restaurant options are available in close proximity. People are attracted to the convenient choices.

Sometimes the city has to orchestrate the efforts. We're not saying the existing businesses need to leave, but if the mentality of the downtown property owners was to create a place residents enjoyed spending time in--shopping, dining, and being entertained--property owners would seek out those tenants to bring that vision to life. It only takes one-third of property owners to buy

into the vision to start making a difference.

Although shopping malls are dying across America, businesses in a downtown need to adopt the “mall mentality,” which includes being open consistent hours and days; being open late into the evening hours; clustering like businesses together; having one or two anchor tenants, and promoting them; and having a central gathering place.

Downtown Peace River has several restaurants, but could use more. We also found that there weren't really any destination retail shops, and very few places open after 6:00 pm. So this is one area that needs recruitment efforts.



New reality

Many are now restricting the use of street-level businesses
Many also restricted chains & franchises



When the street floors of your downtown buildings are full of social services, offices, churches, or salons, you don't have the room for retail shops and restaurants. Therefore, many cities are now restricting the use of street-level businesses. You want to work with the property owners to help them catch the vision of downtown and to help accomplish that vision.



The future of successful downtowns is to be the place people go and spend time in after work and on weekends. Having plenty of restaurants (especially outdoor dining), shopping, and entertainment helps give people a reason to spend time downtown. Filling downtown with a variety of activities is critical.

The national retail federation has found that 70% of all brick and mortar retail spending takes place after 6:00 pm.



If you don't hang out in your downtown, neither will visitors. They go where you go.

A THRIVING DOWNTOWN – PART I: WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE PERFECT BUSINESS MIX

Presented by Roger Brooks



Destination Development
Association

In three lineal blocks (not square blocks)

- Two coffee shops
- Bakery & breakfast house
- Six sit-down restaurants
- Two burgers & shakes | takeout
- **Two** micro-brew or pub | sports bar
- Two casual clothing shops
- Shoe store
- Ice cream shop | confectionary | fudge
- Two home accents & decor
- Two delis | lunch spots
- Garden store
- **Five** specialty stores
- Antique store (not second hand)
- Gift shop | florist
- Outfitter | casual shoes | sports gear
- Pharmacy | gifts | cards
- Pet grooming | gifts | supplies
- Groceries: specialty foods
- Market fresh shop | deli | health & organic
- Home improvement | hardware
- Bookstore | cafe | gifts

Three blocks

- Two coffee shops
- Bakery & breakfast house
- Six sit-down restaurants
- Two burgers & shakes | takeout
- Two micro-brew or pub | sports bar
- Two casual clothing shops
- Shoe store
- Ice cream shop | confectionary | fudge
- **Three** home accents & decor
- **Three** delis | lunch spots
- Garden store
- **Six** specialty stores (fits your brand)
- Antique store (not second hand)
- Gift shop | florist
- Outfitter | casual shoes | sports gear
- Pharmacy | gifts | cards
- Pet grooming | gifts | supplies
- Groceries: specialty foods
- Market fresh shop | deli | health & organic
- Home improvement | hardware
- Bookstore | cafe | gifts
- Kids shop: clothing | gifts | decor | furnishings
- Jewellery store (local crafts | art | gifts)
- Co-op gallery

The DDA team wanted to find out what ingredients make a downtown successful, so we surveyed more than 2,000 downtowns and districts, and chose the 400 most successful examples.

One thing we found was that if locals don't spend leisure time in their downtown, neither will visitors. We also found that a successful business mix that attracts residents for a town of 3,500 to 5,000 residents includes all of the above shops and restaurants (bottom left).

For a town of about 1,500 to 10,000 residents, the most successful business

mix that attracts locals as well as visitors, even more retail is important. In just three lineal blocks, a downtown will be successful attracting visitors with these shops (bottom right).

The Destination Development Association has some very educational videos about how to create a thriving downtown at destinationdevelopment.org in The Vault.



Initiative 5: Downtown businesses and blade signs.

When we're driving or walking down a street, we tend to see the things right in front of us. A sign on the building facade is hard to see. Successful downtowns use blade signs, which are perpendicular to the street and sidewalks.

The way to let people know what's in the buildings is to use blade signs. Can you tell what's in any of these shops? (top right and bottom left)

Suggestion 78: Develop a blade-sign buying co-op for all the downtown businesses to use. The sign fabricator most likely will offer a bulk purchase discount.



DOWNTOWN Retail & Restaurant Signs

ddi The Five Blade Sign Rules That Will Increase Sales



General placement rules:

- No lower than 7' (2.1m)
- No higher than 9' (2.7m)
- No wider than 42" (1m)
- Approximately 18" from the facade (46cm)

Typical sign sizing:

- No taller than 24" (60cm)
- No wider than 42" (105cm)
- Consistent distance from the facade

Nantucket, Massachusetts

When there are no blade signs, people can't tell what's in any of the buildings, and so they don't have incentive to continue walking down the street (top left).

The Destination Development Association has an educational video about retail and restaurant signage at destinationdevelopment.org in The Vault.

Here are some excellent examples of blade signs: Canmore, Alberta (bottom left), and Nantucket, Massachusetts (bottom right).

Some guidelines for blade signs in an intimate downtown:

- No lower than 7 feet (2.1m)
- No higher than 9 feet (2.7m)
- No wider than 42 inches (1m)

Typical sign sizing:

- No taller than 24" (60cm)
- No wider than 42" (105cm)
- Consistent distance from the facade of the building



Carmel, California



El Dorado, Arkansas



El Dorado, Arkansas

Here are some more excellent examples of blade signs: Carmel, California (top left), El Dorado, Arkansas (top right and bottom left), and Leavenworth, Washington (bottom right).

Note how the Leavenworth signs indicate exactly what the store sells: chocolate, collectibles, trains, and

restaurant. Businesses should always promote what it is they are selling before the name of the store.





Typical standards:

- Withstand certain wind loads
- Size & placement
- Lighting (facade-placed spot lights only)
- Included in the tenants insurance



We were visiting Lethbridge, Alberta, when they were installing these new blade sign frames (top right and left). They are built to withstand 100 mph wind loads, and they are made to be easy to install each merchant's unique signage.

If there's a city ordinance preventing the use of blade signs, it needs to be changed.



Initiative 6: Downtown businesses - beautification.

The town is doing all it can to make downtown attractive. We love the pole banners and hanging baskets throughout downtown (bottom right). When the streetscapes are finished, they will be gorgeous too.



We also really like the electrical box wraps (top left). They turn something bland into something attractive. Great job!

Also, the "Find Your Peace of downtown" banners are gorgeous (top right).

Suggestion 79: This event banner for River Days is great (bottom left). Since River Days is already over for this year, invite us back for the event next year too!

The median planters (bottom right) are gorgeous.

As we said, the town is making a tremendous effort to make downtown beautiful.



80

The town is doing a fantastic job. Time for the businesses to follow suit.



81

The mural is gorgeous. Now add a bench, flanked with pots on each side.



Suggestion 80: The town is doing a fantastic job with beautification. The businesses need to step up and follow suit (top left).

We loved the murals throughout town (top right, bottom left and right). They are gorgeous.

Suggestion 81: What a beautiful mural (bottom right) Add two benches flanked with pots on either side of the entrance, and that will be a wonderful touch.



Suggestion 82: This mural is gorgeous--add a bed of flowers at the base of the building, and it will look even more spectacular (top left).

One of the murals we enjoyed most was the firehouse mural (top right).

This mural is another great one (bottom left). When people sit at the picnic tables, the mural probably helps it feel like they are right by the river. Nice job!

Suggestion 83: Except for the stonework, the Town's building looks drab (bottom right). It would benefit from a mural!



This page shows several great examples of another type of mural called *trompe l'oeil*. *Trompe L'oeil* means “fool the eye.” It refers to these amazing murals that transform blank

walls into beautiful art.

Here is one example--(top left). The artist working, and the finished wall (top right). This is all painted.

And here is another example (bottom left). The blank brick wall; the wall in progress; and the finished work of art.

Winslow, Arizona has a mural of the famous song by the Eagles (bottom right). Everything on this brick wall is painted--including the windows and the reflections in the windows. It's not even a real building; it's just a wall. This mural attracts 1.5 million visitors to Winslow each year.



These storefronts are as drab as can be. Zero curb appeal. Sorry!



We thought the insurance company did a very nice job with the pots they put outside (top left).

Downtown beautification is critical. Seventy percent of first-time sales can come from curb appeal. Have you ever been traveling, looking for a place to have lunch, and said, "That looks like a nice place to eat"? We all do it--we "judge the book by the cover."

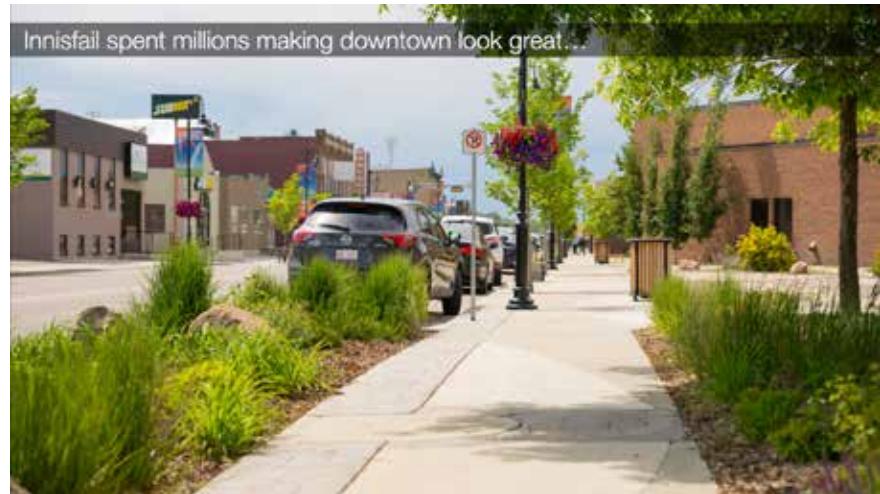
These storefronts are drab (bottom left). The businesses are doing nothing to try to attract customers and make them want to come into their stores. They



RULE #1

70%

of first-time sales can come from curb appeal



don't have any curb appeal.

It's important to keep in mind though, that beautification isn't the only thing that makes a downtown successful. The town of Innisfail spent millions of dollars to make their downtown look gorgeous (bottom right).



But, downtown Innisfail was still as dead as a doornail (top left). That's because it's what's IN the buildings that makes a downtown a draw. The business mix is still critical! An economic development recruitment effort is very important to bring in the businesses that locals and visitors will want to spend time in.

Suggestion 84: Add street trees every 10 meters. Street trees help increase retail sales!

In Blaine, Washington (bottom left), they planted street trees along one block of their downtown, and then monitored the retail sales in that block compared to the rest of downtown. In that one block with street trees, retail sales increased 28% over the sales in the rest of the downtown.



Suggestion 85: Add benches downtown. On either side of each bench, add pots.

Notice all the men sitting in the benches (top left)? Benches make it easier for people to spend a relaxing time downtown.

Ever notice how many people put



85

Add benches flanked with pots in front of every retail store.



Downtown merchants need to take care of their facade beautification. Think of the sidewalk outside your shop as your entry hall—you want it beautiful, clean, and welcoming for your customers. Entice them inside!

Benches should always be against the facade facing out. They should be flanked with pots. Benches should

never be at the curb—no one likes to sit facing a parked car. People like to sit back from traffic where they can watch pedestrians walk by.

The 7•8•7 Rule: 70% of first time sales come from curb appeal. Women account for 80% of all consumer spending. And 70% of all bricks and mortar retail spending takes place after 6:00 p.m.

Women account for 80% of all consumer spending. That means merchants need to appeal to women by making their shops or restaurants attractive and safe. And it helps to add comfort—add benches.



StreetPrint
DuraTherm process



Benches don't all have to look the same, but they do need to be comfortable. Look at the benches in Wickford, Rhode Island (top left).

Suggestion 86: Consider using StreetPrint, a DuraTherm process, to create crosswalks downtown. This example of a StreetPrint crosswalk (bottom left) looks like paver stones, but it is not--the design is embossed into the asphalt. It's incredibly durable and inexpensive. This could give a historic look to the crosswalk.

Any design you like can be used with StreetPrint (bottom right). You could use the town's logo on a crosswalk if you like.



88 Refresh the signs, add benches & additional pots, open the drapes!



You can find StreetPrint and Duratherm online (top left). They can do many kinds of designs, and you can find a great deal of information about their process on their website.

Suggestion 87: We saw this restaurant (top right), but we couldn't tell if it was in business. There were no open signs or signs giving the hours. It

looks like the entrance is around the side of the building. If this is still operating, add signage and add some pots and planters. Make it obvious you're still in business.



Suggestion 88: We saw the men's wear store (bottom left), and it has an open sign, but we couldn't figure out why the blinds and curtains were always closed. Take advantage of your windows to show off your merchandise! Add pots and benches, and refresh the signage.

Suggestion 89: We like the pots near the entrance of the Value Drug Mart (bottom right). Continue the beautification, and add benches flanked with pots in front of the windows.

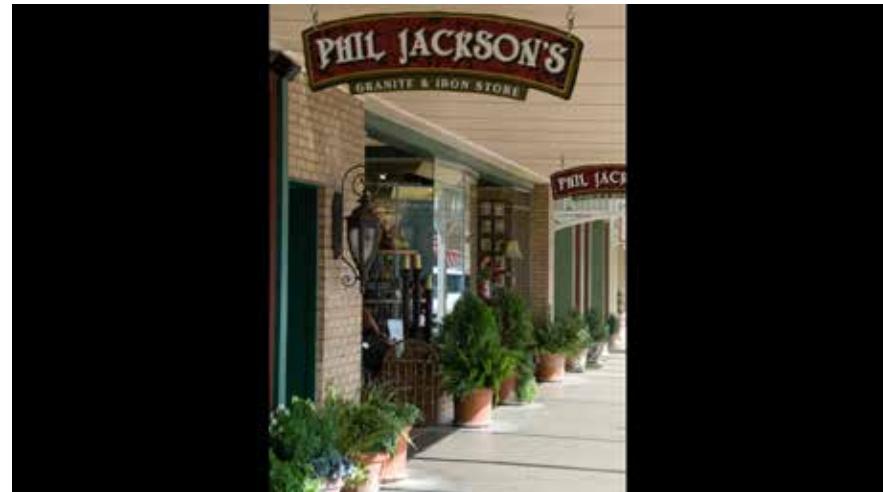


Suggestion 90: We noticed this sign downtown had been knocked over, and it was this way for several days. Pick up the sign and fasten it to its base. If this is caused by vandalism, the best thing to do is to fix it as soon and as often as you can.

Downtowns look best when the city takes care of curbside beautification, and the merchants or a downtown organization takes care of facade side beautification. It's a public/private partnership (top right).

These are photos of Neenah, Wisconsin before beautification (bottom left) and after shop-front

beautification (bottom right). After they added the beautification, retail sales went up 40%. Beautification makes a huge difference.



Suggestion 91: Create a BIA for downtown with a focus on beautification and gathering places. Beautification is a great investment, and one way to help merchants make it more affordable is to organize a buying co-op. You could implement a beautification program similar to that of Fredericksburg, Texas (all

photos this page). Their merchants combined forces and funds to purchase pots, planters, planting soil, and shrubs for everyone, then had students and youth clubs do the planting as fundraisers. Notice that most of the pots are filled with evergreen shrubs—that makes them low maintenance.



DOWNTOWN: GATHERING PLACES



Initiative 7: Downtown--Gathering places

The most important factor in revitalizing a downtown is that you need to bring people there on a consistent basis. Where people go, retail follows and will be successful.

The key ingredient to reviving downtown is to give people a reason

to come there and spend time there. Then the retailers and restaurants will have a reason to locate downtown as well. So how do you get more people to spend time downtown? Give them things to do that appeal to them. Change the activities so people don't get bored.

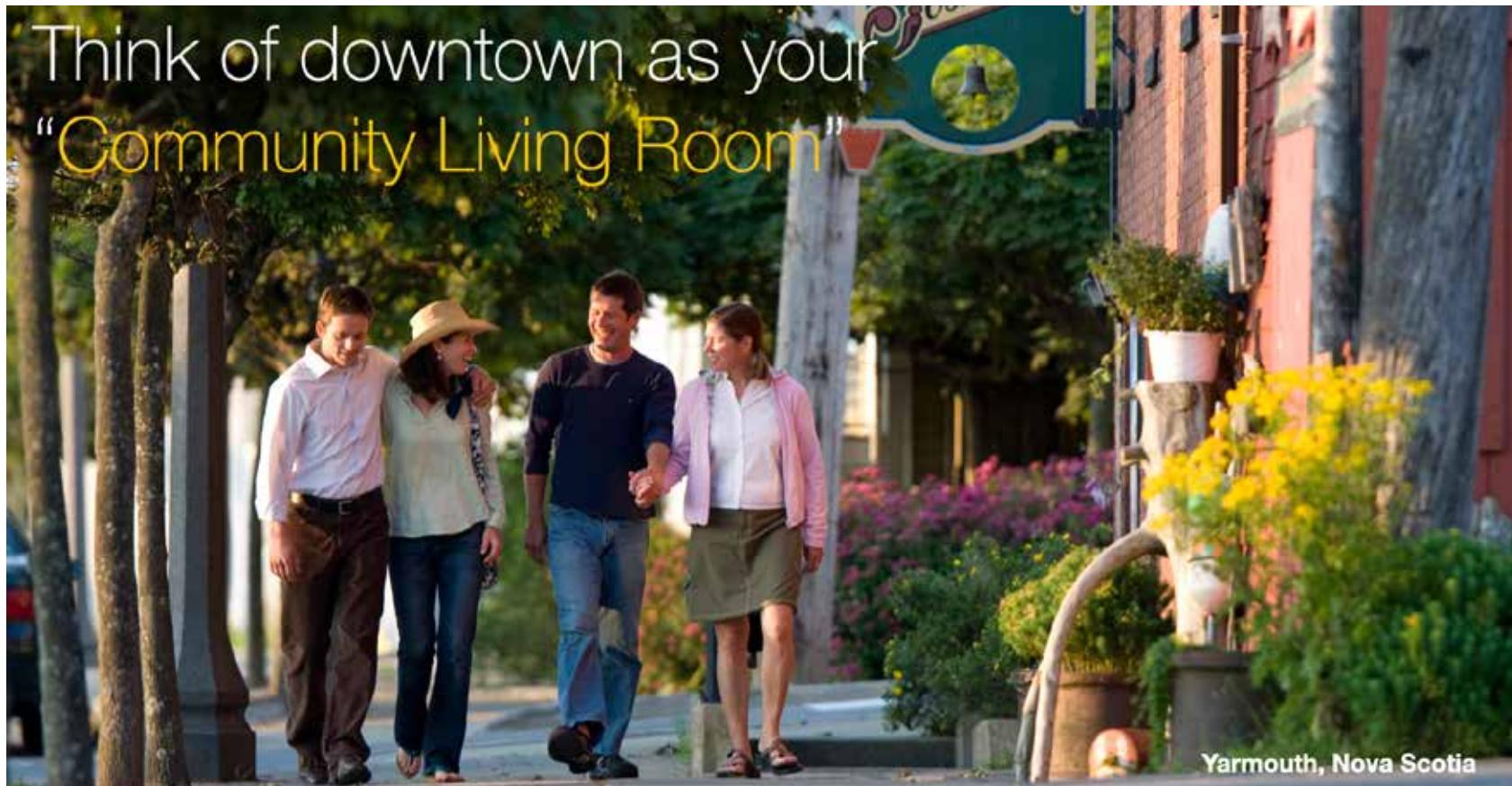


You need to be able to get people to spend time downtown for at least 250 days each year to succeed, so short events are not the way to do it.

A programmed plaza is one of the best ways to get people to spend time downtown. The plaza needs to be right in the heart of the spending district.

Suggestion 92: There are several empty spaces downtown that could be converted into active plazas (bottom left). A private empty lot could be leased by the city for \$1 a month, with a 90-day out in case the property is sold.

Suggestion 93: Create a paver-stone surface that can drain easily and be removed if necessary (bottom right).





Suggestion 94: Or consider removing the parking from this area (opposite page, top left), and setting out some tables and chairs, perhaps some giant chess sets that could be moved in case of an emergency. Give people things to do, places to sit, activities--create gathering spaces. Retail sales will increase.

Suggestion 95: This area (opposite

page, top right) would be great for a downtown hotel or a large year-round plaza.

You want your downtown to become your community living room--a place where residents and visitors want to come, relax, and spend their leisure time.



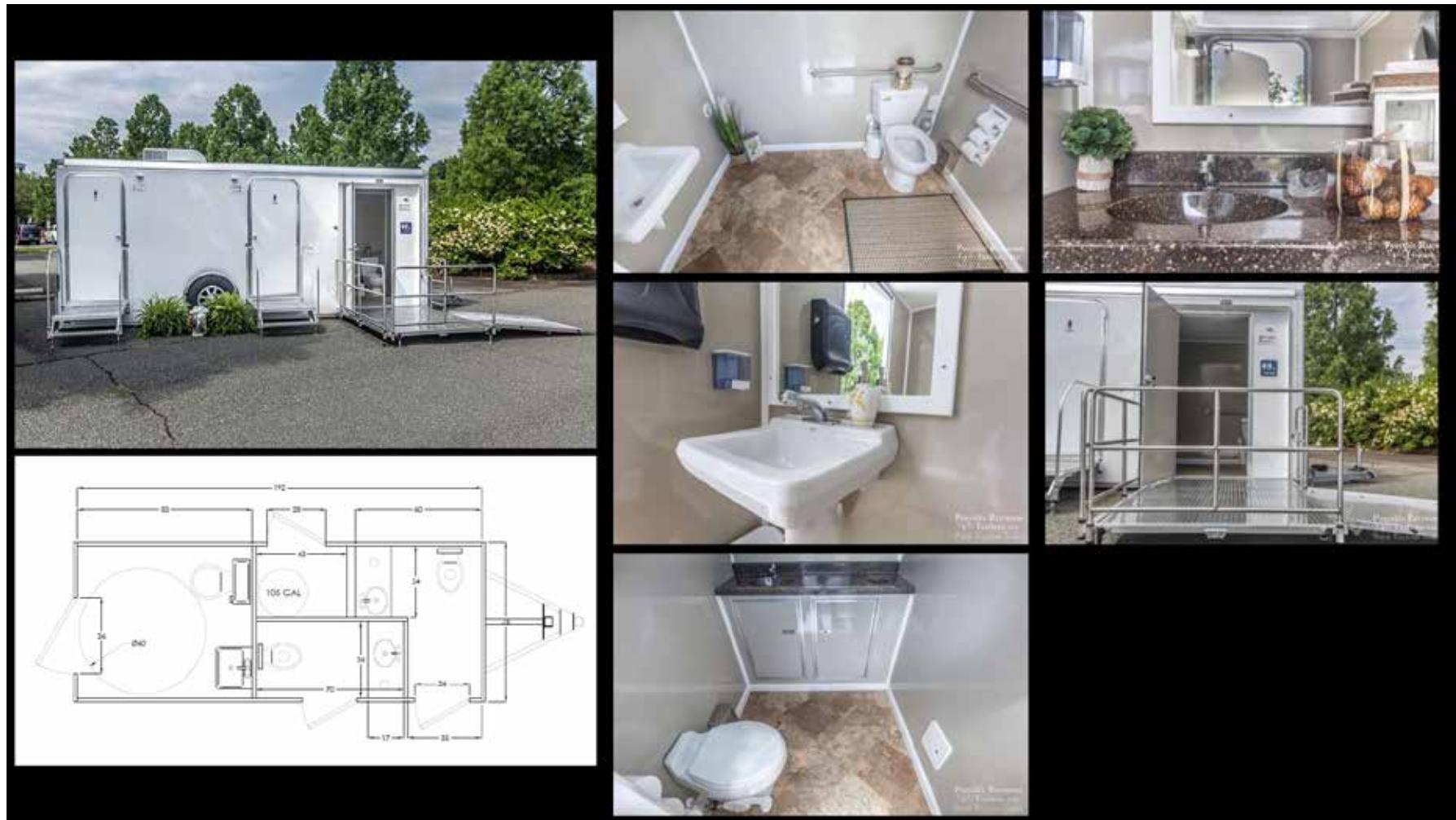
Nova Scotia (top left) created this little plaza in a couple of parking spaces--it gives people a place to gather and spend time together downtown.

These are the ingredients that will make for a successful, enjoyable downtown plaza (top right).

These are portable trees (bottom

left), which can be moved around with a forklift so that your space can be adjusted for different uses. They are great for forming a safety barrier around a gathering space.

We love the lighting (bottom right) used in this plaza. It's LED, and is great for lighting up an area.



You can also use portable washrooms, such as these examples (all photos this page). We've seen these used in many places--they are practical and attractive.

Plaza sponsor menu



Six ECR4Kids 4-to-score giant game set @ \$200 each.

Six Giant Jenga sets @ \$70 each.

Total investment: \$1,250



Four MegaChess w/25" tall King @ \$750 each.

Total investment: \$1,800

Option: 37" tall King \$1,100 each.

Total investment: \$3,500



Four Playcraft Extera Outdoor Foosball tables @ \$1,200 each
And four Joola Nova Outdoor table tennis tables, paddles, and covers, bag of balls @ \$700 each.

Total investment: \$7,600

You can bring in games and activities for your plaza, such as the items on this page and the following pages. You should change up the activities every couple of weeks, so that people are always curious about what new activity is available.

Think about how fun it would be to have some 4-to-score games or giant Jenga sets.

We added prices, because you could consider asking various local businesses to sponsor the purchase of different items. You could acknowledge their contributions with a small plaque.

It's important to have a storage facility for the games that aren't in use, as well as having volunteers to help set things out.

Plaza sponsor menu



48 qty. US Games standard hula hoops, 36": \$164
48 qty. Hoop bundle pack 32": \$200
Three racks @ \$190 each: \$570
Total investment: \$950



Six Magis Spun Armchairs @ \$400 each
Total investment: \$2,400



1 harp, 1 Pagoda bells, 1 Melody
From Freenotes Harmony Park
or Ensemble Collection (5 instruments)
Total investment: \$7,000 to \$20,000

Hoola hoops, Magis spun chairs,
outdoor musical instruments.

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HOME ABOUT US PRODUCTS TECHNICAL INFO CONTACT US OUR DISTRIBUTORS RESEARCH F955

Introducing Our **NEW** Inclusive Mallets

Now available for any instrument by request only
(for a small upcharge)



Outdoor Musical Instruments For All Ages And Abilities



Harmony Park is the leading manufacturer of outdoor musical instruments. Founded by Grammy Award-winning musician Michael Levine more than 20 years ago, these innovative, designed instruments are durable, sustainable, unique, finely-tuned sound sculptures that enhance any outdoor space. From the first outdoor musical instrument installed in a park in 1993, to the thousands of instruments we have now, musical instruments make music on 5 continents including North and South America, Europe, Australia and Asia. In the United States, we have installations in all 50 states. We design and manufacture Harmony Parks in sunny Durango, CO.


Download Product Catalog


Download CAD details files


World Map Of Installed Instruments


Guide to Creating a Music Park


Download Product Catalog


Download CAD details files

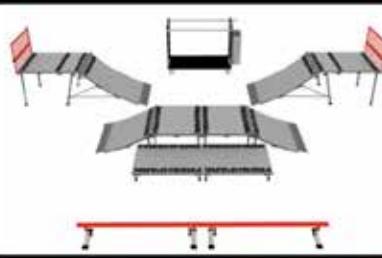

World Map Of Installed Instruments

More outdoor musical instruments.

Plaza sponsor menu



8 qty. 10'x10' Ez Pop-up Canopy Tent with removable end side walls, roller bag, four sand bags with each: \$290 each
Total investment: \$2,500



Park In A Cart Portable Skatepark w/cart
Total investment: \$4,500 or \$9,000 for two



4 quantity Driveway Games all-weather corn hole set: \$120 each
Total investment: \$500

Pop-up tents for little vendor booths--these would give local artisans space for selling their handmade goods.

Perhaps for a farmers market downtown?

Portable skate park (which you really don't need, because your skate park is awesome), and corn hole sets.

Plaza sponsor menu



8 qty. Tacklife Gas Fire Table, 28", 50,000 BTU
Auto-ignition, propane tank, one fill: \$220 each

Total investment: \$1,800



3 qty. (1 for parts) Zume Games portable badminton set w/freestanding base: \$40
Extra rackets, shuttlecocks

Total investment: \$150



1 Stamina outdoor fitness multi-station: \$240
3 qty. Stamina outdoor fitness striders: \$440
Total investment: \$1,600

Imagine these gas fire tables in the winter, surrounded by chairs, with a hot chocolate vendor nearby.

Portable badminton, outdoor fitness equipment.

Plaza sponsor menu



200 qty. Value Series gray rattan indoor-outdoor stack chairs @ \$26 each: \$5,200
50 qty. Round Coral steel patio table 32.5" @ \$60 ea: \$3,000
50 qty. Jordan Mfg. 9' Market umbrella @ \$52 ea: \$2,600
Total investment: \$10,800



4 qty. MegaChess Giant Checkers Set - 10" @ \$200
This uses the same mats as the chess sets.
Four separate mats @ \$65 each.
Total investment: \$1,060



4 full Imagination Playground 105-piece sets \$4,975 ea.
4 storage carts @ \$1,200 ea.
Total investment: \$24,700

Chairs, tables, umbrellas.

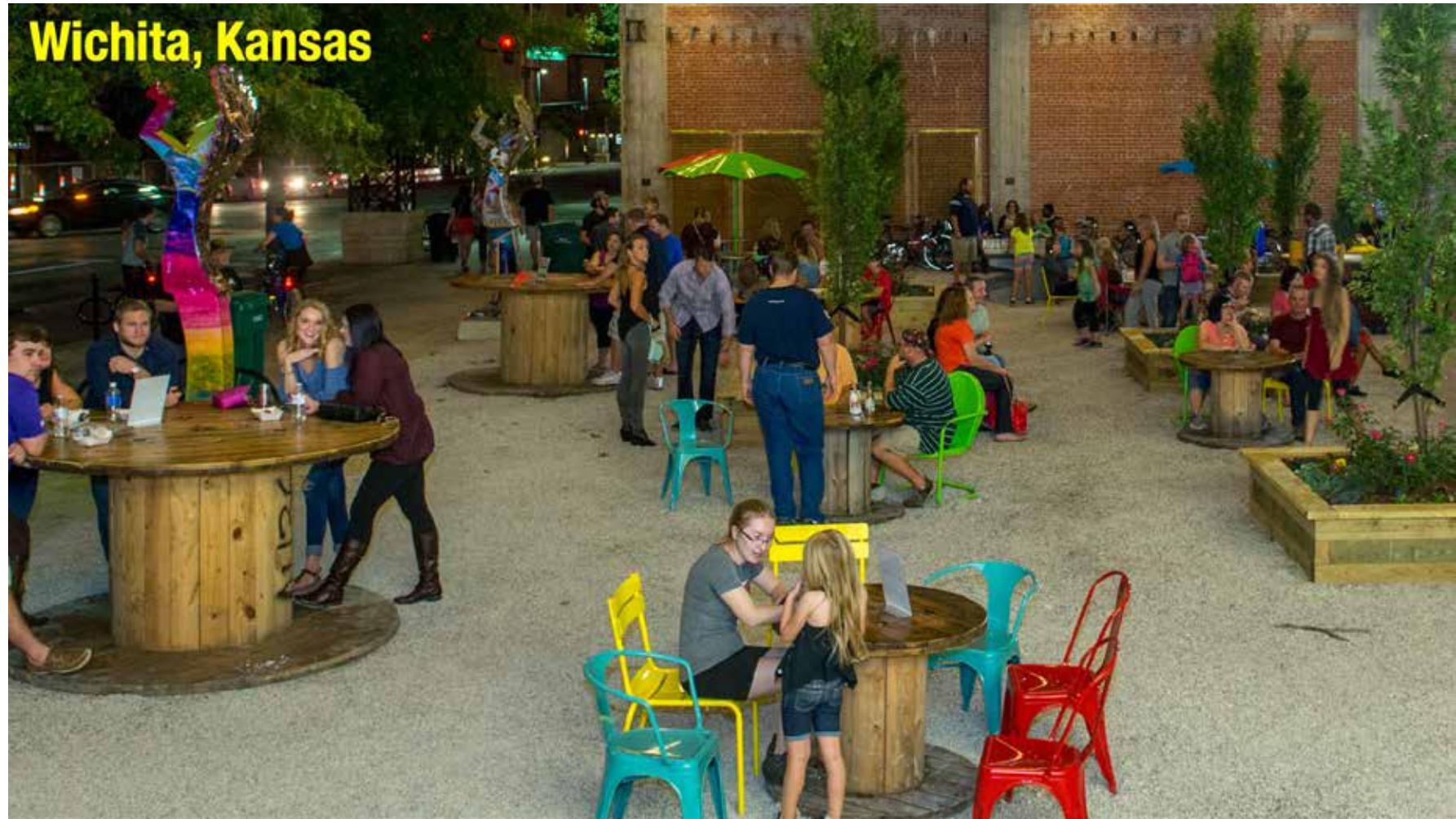
Giant chess and checkers.

Imagination Playground sets.



This plaza (above) was done on a small budget. The used wire reels for the tables and chairs, and the trees and plants are borrowed from a local nursery. They are for sale, and the nursery has a cash register on hand. They bring in several different food trucks, and this plaza is a great place for people to spend their lunch hour or their afternoons.

Where people hang out consistently, retail will follow and be successful.



Here's another example of an economical plaza in Wichita, Kansas (above). It's just on a gravel base, and they used wire reels for tables with inexpensive chairs.

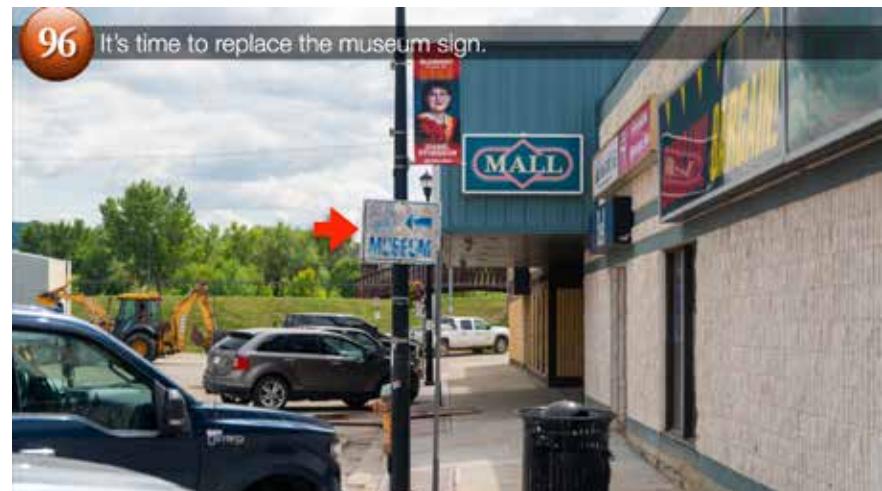
You want to make downtown be a place people enjoy spending time in. You want to create a "community living room."



Initiative 8: Downtown--The Mall

Suggestion 96: Just outside the downtown mall is a worn-out sign for the museum (top right). It's hard to read and should be replaced.

Three quarters of all suburban malls across the US and Canada are closed down. Malls are in a state of decline everywhere.

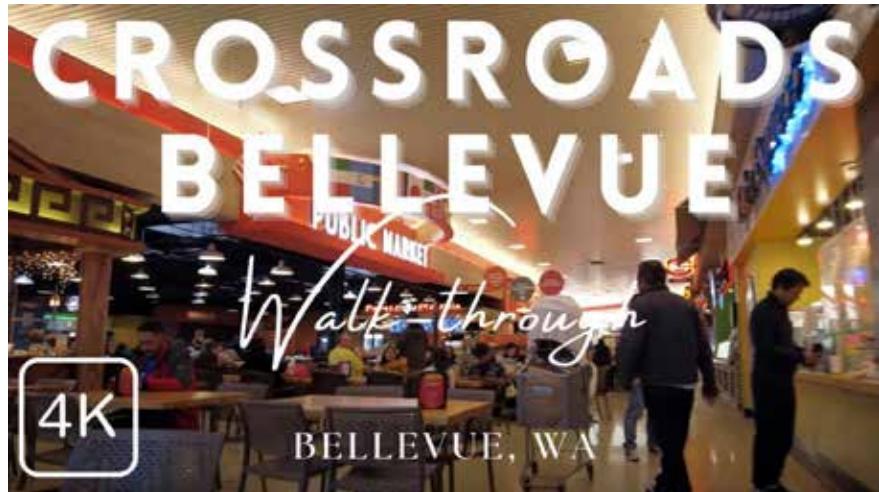


Peace River's mall (top right and bottom left) is not thriving--there are still some businesses there, but it isn't busy.

Malls can be re-purposed to become successful, busy places that people like to spend time in. But they need to change their focus.

This mall (bottom right) is in Bellevue, Washington. It was built in the 1960s, and it fell into disuse, and was fairly empty, until the owners gave it a new life. They turned it into, essentially, a public market, filled with ethnic

restaurants and tables and chairs in the middle, which were shared by all the restaurants. There are about 30 restaurants, and there are still several shops, as well as permanent vendors, and many people come to hang out and eat.



The mall put up a stage (top left), and they bring in live entertainment regularly--all different kinds.

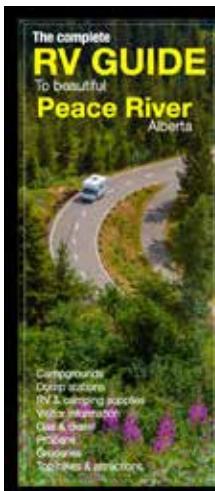
They have a large chess set in the mall, which is always busy (top right).

They bring in buskers and entertainers (bottom left), and families love to go there in the evenings for the inexpensive food

and the entertainment.

The mall has essentially become the community living room. It works. This is a great asset to the community.

We were surprised that your farmers market wasn't located in the mall--that would be a great location. And imagine if your mall were like a big indoor public market with activities and a wide variety of food--wouldn't that be great in the winter?



Suggestion 97: Outside the mall, we saw the stairs going up to the trail (top left). Time to clean them up!

Initiative 9: RV Guide

Suggestion 98: Create the RV Guide to Peace River

We saw so many RVers driving through the area, and this is precisely

the type of place that RVers like to stay. RVers love the rural areas. And the Peace River area has a lot of nice campgrounds.

Although RVers don't stay in your hotels, they still spend money. They frequently dine in restaurants, plus they need to shop at grocery stores and hardware stores and get propane and gas. Many RVers travel with their



CREATE THE: RV GUIDE TO PEACE RIVER

98

99

Distribute the RVers Guide to all campgrounds, VIC, retailers, etc.



pets, so they need pet supplies. There are more than 2.1 million people with RVs in Canada, and there are 40 million people with RVs in the USA, so they are a good market. In the brochure, include all the information an RVer might need, such as campgrounds, dump stations, grocery stores, where to buy propane and gas/diesel, hardware stores, camping supplies, auto parts, pet supplies, auto parts, as well as recreational facilities, such as hiking and biking trails, and your museums.

Suggestion 99: Distribute the RVers Guide to all campgrounds, visitor information centres, appropriate retailers, etc.



100

This would be a great activity for the mall - to get people there.

Potpourri

We felt very lucky to be in town when the Farmers Market was open. Thank you for putting up all the sandwich boards that led us to the right spot! (top right)

Suggestion 100: We would love to see the Farmers Market be held in the mall, if possible. It seems like it would

be a win/win--encouraging people to go downtown, and being an easier spot for many of the residents to access.



We ate at the Peace Garden Restaurant (bottom right), and it was great. It was over the weekend, and we were very surprised at how empty downtown and the restaurants were over the weekend.



We saw the cinema, which looked great, and we looked at the high school (top right). Very nice.

We found the Northern Lakes College behind the high school (bottom left). It's so good to have a couple higher education options in town.



Suggestion 101: We thought the high school's sign "It's worth the climb" was wonderful (bottom right). The sign needs to be refreshed.



102

Where do you go from here?

Create a "Destination Peace River Team"
Go through these suggestions and turn many,
or most or all into recommendations!

This effort is 100% about making something happen!

We went to Peace River Brewing (top left and right), and we were happy to see that they hold a lot of events.

What you have in Peace River is amazing. You have a gorgeous setting on the river, a wonderful town, a fantastic quality of life, and a lot of great people.



Suggestion 102: Where do you go from here? Start by creating a "Destination Peace River Team." By "Destination" we don't mean just tourism--also economic development. Anyone coming here to start a business, invest, or live here, comes as a visitor first.

Your team could include tourism, city, county, chamber of commerce, some merchants, some residents. Go through the suggestions, and turn many, or all, into recommendations.

This effort is about making things happen to make Peace River even better.



Here's to making Peace River an even better, thriving place to live, work, invest in, and visit!



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 **Destination Development
Association**

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