

# Attachment to City of Grande Prairie Community Group Funding Report, 2024

## Submitted by the Grande Prairie Regional Tourism Association

### Section I: Funding Information

What key results did your organization achieve in 2024 that contributed to Council's Strategic Priorities?

Destination development is part of a chain reaction of economic development so GPRTA strives to align with and amplify the priorities and efforts of our municipal and community partners. Like Council, GPRTA's overall contribution enhances the quality of life in Grande Prairie. We do this by showcasing innovative efficiencies and economic readiness and forging and nurturing engaging relationships.

#### Priority: Innovative Efficiencies and Economic Readiness

With support from Tourism Alberta, GPRTA developed an agri-culinary tourism subcommittee and spearheaded an initiative to enhance connectivity and collaboration among operators in the region with the goal of building out the tourism experiences offered in the region. GPRTA developed an inventory of over 200 existing culinary and agricultural tourism experiences/products (including distilleries, breweries, wineries, manufactured agricultural products and guest experiences) that are or can be market ready – 70 (31%) of which are in the city. GPRTA is now positioned to move into the next phase of planning: developing and offering operator business support, developing itineraries to expose their products and bring in residents/visitors, and providing targeted marketing expertise and services.

Destination Canada identified the corridor linking Yellowknife and Edmonton as 1 of only a handful of projects their investing in across Canada. GPRTA became a key stakeholder in this research to ensure regional operators influence the design of this project to reap future benefits. In December, GPRTA hosted both an industry mixer with representatives from all agencies in attendance as well as a stakeholder engagement to promote the assets in the region. We will continue to work with the project leads throughout the research and design phase of the project in 2025.

#### Priority: Engaging Relationships

In 2024, operation of the Visitor Information Centre remained a primary focus of GPRTA. As part of bolstering awareness of regional tourism operators and assets to ensure positive guest experiences, GPRTA designed, printed and distributed over 15,000 Visitor Guides through Alberta, NE BC, and the NWT.

Post-COVID, peoples comfort with and reliance on technology to connect with information has increased. GPRTA's website is a significant source of information yielding 29,512 unique user views in 2024. The webpages most engaged with were our Things to Do and Attraction pages. I can't, unfortunately, say how many of these views converted into engagement with the products and experiences offered but at the very least GPRTA raises the profile of those featured.

In partnership with the Rotary Club of Grande Prairie, GPRTA connected 219 individuals to bus tours that showcase unique history, features and offerings throughout the city.

While we scaled back on participation at events, tradeshow and conferences, we did support or participate in Canada Day, Winter Festival and provide administrative support and guest services on-site at the Bear Creek Folk Festival.