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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Lhtako Dene Nation and the City of Quesnel have a joint vision for a unique First Nations cultural centre to be located on the Ceal Tingley Park property in Quesnel, British Columbia. The proposed facility is intended to serve, first and foremost, as a showcase of Lhtako Dene’s rich cultural heritage (including artifacts currently held by the UBC’s Museum of Anthropology) and historical connection to Quesnel and the local landscape, and as an interactive centre that connects guests and visitors directly to the Lhtako Dene community, as ambassadors of their continually evolving culture.

As identified by the City of Quesnel and the Cariboo Regional District in a July 2018 feasibility study, there is also a local (i.e. Quesnel) need for a community arts theatre venue. The City of Quesnel and Lhtako Dene First Nation see potential on the Ceal Tingley site to integrate a community assembly space, which could also be used as a community performing arts venue, within the planned Lhtako Dene Cultural Centre.

In supporting further exploration of this shared vision, Urban Systems has been engaged by the City of Quesnel (Economic Development) to undertake a review of the business case for the proposed Lhtako Dene Cultural Centre, from an organizational and operational standpoint. As an initial concept for the facility had been prepared in November 2018, following an October workshop with Lhtako Dene and City representatives, this report includes the following components:

- **Summary of market-driven critique of the initial Lhtako Dene Cultural Centre concept and descriptive outline of the current site and building concept** – This component included a workshop style teleconference with Formline Architecture and subsequent preparation of an updated concept (mid-December 2018) designed to optimize its future performance from a sustainable market and operational perspective.

- **Case Study Benchmarking of First Nations Cultural Centres** – Given the unique nature of these facilities – as showcases of culture, as event venues, and as hybrid business clusters requiring a blending of funding and revenue streams, detailed interviews were conducted with the executive directors and operating management staff of a select group of relevant First Nation cultural facilities in B.C. and the Yukon. This outreach resulted in detailed case study profiles of three First Nation cultural centres, each with clear lessons to offer regarding organizational structure, management and operations.

- **Recommend and describe an optimal operating model** (including operating and maintenance). This includes a description of the key elements of a proposed management agreement between Lhtako Dene Nation and the City of Quesnel to guide management, operation and use of the cultural centre space throughout the calendar year.

- **Support Lhtako Dene Nation in completing its grant application (Invest in Canada Infrastructure Program).**
2.0 MARKET-DRIVEN EVALUATION OF CONCEPT

An initial concept for the Lhtako Dene Cultural Centre was shared with Urban Systems in late November 2018. The concept, developed by Formline Architecture with input from both Lhtako Dene and the City of Quesnel, included a number of key elements and functions, including:

- Pithouse-inspired design that leverages its natural physical and historical context;
- Circular exhibition space, primarily for display of Lhtako Dene cultural artifacts currently being stored at UBC’s Museum of Anthropology (with additional cultural display space);
- Large circular space with a central stage and seating for 250 visitors, for use as a shared community assembly space and event space;
- Circular gift shop, featuring art and other Lhtako Dene cultural merchandise;
- Café, offering on-site food and beverage service for visiting guests (for the cultural centre and related events), with both indoor and outdoor patio components;
- Internal multi-functional exhibition/hall space connecting the above cultural centre elements, with room for additional 3-D displays and pieces;
- Outdoor circular plaza and gathering space, echoing the pithouse-inspired building design;
- Rooftop deck/patio space, for the use and enjoyment of guests and visitors;
- Office / operational function space; and
- Primary vehicular drop-off at the north end of Ceal Tingley Park, with a 16-stall surface parking lot.
In summary, the initial Lhtako Dene Cultural Centre concept completed in November 2018 featured the following components and building areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Centre Component</th>
<th>Proposed Area (Sq. M.)</th>
<th>Proposed Area (Sq. Ft.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ground Floor Spaces</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Entrance Lobby</td>
<td>102.4</td>
<td>1,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Cultural Centre Foyer / Circulation</td>
<td>270.4</td>
<td>2,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. 250-Seat Performance / Event Community Assembly Space</td>
<td>285.1</td>
<td>3,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Gift Shop</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Administrative Offices</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Café (Indoor portion)</td>
<td>128.3</td>
<td>1,381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Exhibit Space</td>
<td>222.8</td>
<td>2,398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Support Space</td>
<td>146.5</td>
<td>1,577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Building Service</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>1,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Area – Lhtako Dene Cultural Centre</strong></td>
<td>1,375.1</td>
<td>14,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Gross Area – Lhtako Dene Cultural Centre</strong></td>
<td>1,455</td>
<td>15,663</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A review of the initial concept was undertaken by Urban Systems’ Land Economics team in early December, with the aim of optimizing the concept’s market, operational and financial sustainability by orienting and configuring the centre’s critical activity and revenue generators in optimal locations.

Market-driven commentary on the relative positioning and configuration of these various core building elements is provided below.

A. Entrance Lobby (102.4 m² / 1,103 ft²)

The facility’s entrance lobby is in its optimal location, nearest the centre’s vehicular drop-off and limited capacity on-site parking area. Though optimal in terms of size, the initial lobby concept was adjacent to the 250-seat performance community assembly space, which by necessity is an enclosed, fully internal function.

*It was recommended that the arrival experience at the proposed LhÁtkÁ Dene Cultural Centre would be better supported by the integration of more active uses, ideally uses with elements that interact with both internal and external spaces (e.g. food and beverage, retail).*
B. Cultural Centre Foyer Circulation (270.4 m² / 2,911 ft²)

The centre’s internal grand foyer and circulation area is also intended to provide additional space for larger scale exhibit pieces, potentially on a rotating basis. Though the extent of this internal area is somewhat constrained by the site’s limited size and depth, it is also limited by the configuration and orientation of the building’s curved west façade, which mimics the circular pattern of a large outdoor plaza area. The space is also limited by the location and orientation of the centrally-located gift shop.

As this internal space will play a vital role in supporting future on-site events and larger exhibit items, it was recommended that this space be expanded, potentially through the reconfiguration of both the outdoor plaza area and gift shop.

C. 250-Seat Performance / Community Assembly Space (285.1 m² / 3,069 ft²)

The initial cultural centre concept includes a 360-degree circular community assembly space, located nearest the entrance lobby in the northernmost section of the facility. The intent of this facility is to allow for programmed cultural content, including films and live performance, but also to fulfill a stated community need for a community assembly space that Quesnel (and other) arts groups can use as a performance venue.

While a Feasibility Study for a Performing Arts Centre in the City of Quesnel (completed in July 2018) examined a 400+ seat facility, the subject site’s modest size and north-south linear configuration and access to parking make such a large facility unworkable. That being said, the more modest scale of the facility (estimated at 250 seats) is suitable for a broad range of events and performance types, so long as a more conventional auditorium-style theatre design be incorporated. This change would make the community assembly space more immediately marketable to a much broader customer and event base, which will support ongoing marketing and programming efforts.

Urban Systems recommended that the proposed community assembly space component would be an ideal activity anchor for the cultural centre’s south end. Reconfiguration and relocation of the theatre space into an auditorium-style facility on the facility’s south end would then free up space for more active uses alongside the entrance lobby, while naturally drawing visitors along the more curated cultural elements and displays.

D. Gift Shop (59.9 m² / 645 ft²)

The gift shop in the initial concept design is centrally located within the centre and also features a pithouse-inspired circular design.

It was recommended that the planned gift shop component of the Lhtako Dene Cultural Centre be relocated closer to the entrance of the facility, as this positioning would help to showcase some of
the more interesting available art pieces and contribute to a more engaging visitor arrival experience.

E. Administrative Offices (65.9 m² / 709 ft²)

The cultural centre’s administrative office and meeting room functions are located at the midpoint of the building’s eastern edge. Given the site’s size constraints and the need to integrate a number of core elements (including the 250-seat community assembly space and exhibit space), this is an optimal location for office/meeting room functions.

F. Cultural Centre Café (128.3 m² / 1,381 ft²)

In the initial concept, the proposed café is located at the centre’s southernmost point, adjacent to the required cultural exhibit space. It features both indoor and outdoor patio seating, as well as a modest kitchen/storage space.

It was recommended that consideration be given to potential relocation of the café component to a location nearer the cultural centre’s primary entrance at the centre’s north end. Ideally, the café should help to activate the centre’s primary arrival zone and thus better support year-round operation as both a local community and cultural tourism amenity.

G. Exhibit Space (222.8 m² / 2,398 ft²)

One of the core functions of the cultural centre will be to showcase important cultural artifacts and pieces on-site, giving visitors an opportunity to engage with Lhtako Dene’s cultural heritage in a place that has considerable historical and cultural value as a major Lhtako Dene settlement. As the land also represents the site of first European contact, and the park was named after Cecil Tingley, mayor of Quesnel from 1970 to 1976, the site – and its exhibit space – are uniquely positioned to showcase both Lhtako Dene culture and its connections a broader history.

One of the key aspects driving need for such a space is the desired retrieval and display of a number of important Lhtako Dene cultural artifacts currently being housed at UBC’s Museum of Anthropology on the University Endowment Lands. Given the importance of this core cultural centre function, that the space will need to feature both permanent and temporary installations, and that the facility be able to support on-site food and beverage and gift shop retail functions, it was recommended that serious consideration be given to relocating the exhibit space to a location closer to the cultural centre’s primary entrance, at the north end of the building.

H. Exhibit Support Space (146.5 m² / 1,577 ft²)

Dedicated space in direct support of the proposed exhibit area and community assembly space will be essential for ongoing programming and maintenance of cultural artifacts and pieces, as well as for on-site storage of items not on display at any given time. This space needs to be located adjacent to the exhibit and community assembly spaces, respectively, and be of sufficient size to support staging, storage and maintenance functions.
I. Building Service (93.6 m² / 1,007 ft²)

Other key functions of the building, including mechanical, electrical, communication, janitorial and washroom areas, total just over 1,000 sq. ft., or just under 7% of total net area. The project team identified early that additional public-access washrooms would be a desirable addition to the concept given the building’s potential to support recreational activity along the riverfront trail. This improvement would, in turn, lead to a modest increase in the overall proportion of building service to total net building area.

Updated Site and Building Concept

In early December 2018, a workshop-style teleconference call including the City of Quesnel’s Economic Development, Formline Architecture, and Urban Systems took place, during which the above market-driven considerations and recommendations were discussed. Following this constructive conversation, Formline worked through a number of important alterations to the initial concept, resulting in reconfiguration and re-orientation of key cultural centre components, while maintaining the integrity of the original pithouse-inspired design.

Key changes to the concept (as shown on the following page) were completed by mid-December, 2018, and included the following:

- Reconfiguration of the community assembly space /event space to a more conventional 250-seat auditorium design and relocation of this function to the centre’s south end; community assembly space support spaces now flank the stage area to the right and left;
- Relocation of the exhibit space to the north end of the centre, accessible via the entrance lobby;
- Slightly expanded Café relocated to the centre’s northwest corner, including outdoor patio area along the River Walk, with river views through the trees; featuring larger storage/kitchen area;
- Slightly reduced Gift Shop relocated to the centre’s northeast corner, with window displays visible from the main entrance / vehicular drop-off;
- Expanded Building Services component, with additional public-access washrooms; and
- Expanded rooftop plaza area, with ramp access on both the north and south ends of the building.
Lhtako Dene Cultural Centre – Updated Site Plan Concept (December 2018)

The revised concept features a modestly larger building area, slightly reduced on-site parking (11 stalls), and a continuous ramp for rooftop patio access.

Figure 3 Lhtako Dene Cultural Centre – Updated Site Plan Concept (December 2018). Event parking for the centre to be provided off-site / on adjacent properties.
The updated building concept shown below highlights the reconfigured Lhtako Dene Cultural Centre, with the active functions flanking the entrance lobby.
The overall building footprint has been increased from a gross area of 1,455 m² (15,663 ft²) in the initial concept to a revised total of 1,717 m² (18,482 ft²) in the revised concept, for an overall building area increase of 18%. A summary of building areas by function is provided in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Centre Component</th>
<th>Proposed Area (Sq. M.)</th>
<th>Proposed Area (Sq. Ft.)</th>
<th>Change from Initial Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Entrance Lobby</td>
<td>103.2</td>
<td>1,111</td>
<td>+ 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Cultural Centre Foyer / Circulation</td>
<td>301.0</td>
<td>3,240</td>
<td>+ 11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. 250-Seat Performance / Community Assembly Space</td>
<td>439.0</td>
<td>4,725</td>
<td>+ 54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Gift Shop</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>- 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Administrative Offices</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>758</td>
<td>+ 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Café (Indoor portion)</td>
<td>139.0</td>
<td>1,496</td>
<td>+ 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Exhibit Space</td>
<td>222.8</td>
<td>2,398</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Support Space</td>
<td>158.6</td>
<td>1,707</td>
<td>+ 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Building Service</td>
<td>138.6</td>
<td>1,492</td>
<td>+ 48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Net Area – Lhtako Dene Cultural Centre</td>
<td>1,628.2</td>
<td>17,526</td>
<td>+18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Gross Area – Lhtako Dene Cultural Centre</td>
<td>1,717</td>
<td>18,482</td>
<td>+18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most significant changes to proposed building areas were made to the following components:

- **Community Assembly Auditorium**: has been expanded to include significantly expanded back-stage support areas. This will allow the community assembly space to better serve the needs of a more diverse group of target end users, which in turn will support marketing and programming efforts year-round.

- **Building Service Functions**: have also been expanded to better meet operational requirements (mechanical, electrical, janitorial), but also to provide additional washroom facilities accessible to the public and River Walk trail users.
3.0 FIRST NATION CULTURAL CENTRE BENCHMARKS

To best understand how to establish and operate a sustainable First Nations Cultural Centre, Urban Systems connected with the directors and/or operating managers of three well-known established facilities in B.C. and the Yukon. This primary outreach resulted in detailed case study profiles of 3 relevant cultural centres, including strategic insights into building design, program offerings, organizational / management structure, staffing considerations and a range of revenue and cost drivers.

The Squamish Lil’Wat Cultural Centre in Whistler, Nk’Mip Desert Cultural Centre in Osoyoos and the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre in Whitehorse were chosen for their successes in delivering cultural content to the broader community, in generating revenue from a number of different sources, and in capacity building for their respective communities. Each of these detailed case study profiles concludes with a series of key insights and lessons that can support effective planning for the Lhtako Dene Cultural Centre.

Squamish Lil’Wat Cultural Centre (SLCC)

Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre Location</th>
<th>Resort Municipality of Whistler, directly across from the Fairmont Chateau Whistler</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building and Site</td>
<td>38,000 sq. ft. (3,350 sq. m.) building on a 4.35-acre site – construction completed in 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards</td>
<td>Canadian Wood Council Award – Western Red Cedar 2008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Squamish Lil’Wat Cultural Centre is the product of historical protocol agreements and dialogue between the Squamish and Lil’wat First nations and the Resort Municipality of Whistler, dating back to the late 1990s. In 1997, the municipality met with the Squamish and Lil’Wat nations to explore opportunities to expand the two nations’ cultural and physical presence in Whistler. The cultural centre idea unfolded over the next few years, and the centre was completed in 2008. Funding made available from the Vancouver 2010 Olympic & Paralympic Winter Games Shared Legacy Project was a critical driver of the centre’s development and launch.

The SLCC was constructed by Newhaven Construction Management and designed by Ratio Architecture in Vancouver, who made use of the labour and expertise of various First Nations.

- It is designed to be a showcase for the culture and heritage of the Squamish and Lil’Wat Nations.
- The 4.35-acre site was granted under a long-term lease from the Resort Municipality of Whistler.
- The Cultural Centre was funded by contributions from a variety of public and private sector donors, including:
  - Federal Government of Canada
  - BC Provincial Government
  - Resort Municipality of Whistler
  - Squamish and Lil’Wat First Nations
  - Bell Canada
  - Western Economic Diversification
  - Terasen Gas
- The Centre is a “green” development, incorporating principles of sustainability and environmentally responsible technologies.
Current Programming and Events

The centre is intended to provide a series of fun, yet educational visitor experiences, and offers a multitude of interactive activities and events. Cultural delivery and the promotion of positive cultural awareness are a central mandate of the SLCC. The main forms of cultural delivery are in the form of guided tours, during which tour guides are encouraged to add their own interpretations, experiences and stories to the base tour, thus adding a degree of variability to the visitor experience.

The SLCC can also be rented out for special events. Important components of the cultural centre include the following elements and functions:

- Cultural experiences ranging from an interpretive centre, both temporary and permanent art exhibits, as well as live theatre and demonstrations of Squamish and Lil’Wat craft
- Traditional pit house and Longhouse, offering artist-lead workshops and demonstrations
- Aboriginal tourism information centre oriented entirely to Squamish-Lil’Wat regional history and culture
- Tours: eco-tour booking centre for guided cultural & heritage experiences; walking tour of old growth forest, complete with totem grove and botanical garden
- Whistler’s largest First Nation gift shop featuring culturally relevant products
- Restaurant offering local (and First Nation-inspired) cuisine and catering
- Gallery office featuring art commissioning sales of Squamish, Lil’Wat, and other Northwest First Nations artworks

Indigenous Youth Ambassador employment and training program
The SLCC also runs the Indigenous Youth Ambassador (IYA) program which is an important training and capacity building program for First Nations youth. The program is 12 weeks long and takes in 9 students three or four times per year. Students in the program receive industry training, mentorship and certifications that will help them to connect with their cultural heritage, while preparing them to enter the workforce upon completion. Students are introduced to all facets of running the cultural centre, from tour guiding to café and event booking management, and are exposed to other tourism-related jobs in Whistler, including a variety of catering and ski hill tourism operations. The SLCC hires the best graduates to work at the centre upon their completion of the program.
SLCC Building Layout

As an important point of reference for subsequent details on venue rentals, programming, and centre features, building layouts and key rooms/features by level are provided below. As noted in the Main Level layout, the SLCC includes a viewing deck and living roof area connecting visitors to the site’s natural surroundings.

SLCC – Main Level (Open Evenings Only)

SLCC – Mezzanine Level (Open Evenings Only)

SLCC – Ground Level (Open Days and Evenings)
Current Rental Rates

The cultural centre offers a range of admission rates for visitors — the table below highlights admission rates from 2009, when the centre first opened, and the most current (i.e. 2019) rates. Many of these rates have remained the same, while a few rates have even been decreased to make admission more affordable for families and youth/students. Admissions to SLCC are valid for the entire day, so guests are encouraged to spend more time at the centre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ticket</th>
<th>2009 General Admission Rates</th>
<th>2019 General Admission Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>$18.00</td>
<td>$18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior (65+)</td>
<td>$13.50</td>
<td>$13.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with Disabilities</td>
<td>$13.50</td>
<td>$13.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student / Post Secondary</td>
<td>$13.50</td>
<td>$13.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student / Youth (13-18)</td>
<td>$11.00</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (6-13)</td>
<td>$8.00</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Pass</td>
<td>$49.00</td>
<td>$42.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As identified in the above rate table, rates for Students / Youth aged 13 to 18 in 2019 reflect a drop of over 50% relative to the 2009 rate. This is intended to make the centre more accessible to a broader array of visiting students and youth and to encourage repeat visitation.

The cost of a Family Pass and child admissions has also been reduced relative to the 2009 rates based on a similar rationale. For a centre like SLCC, visitor volumes and both food and beverage and retail (i.e. gift shop) spending are more of a revenue driver than admission rates.
Private Event Performance Services

The cultural centre offers performance services that include wedding, banquet and conference blessings, dance performances and welcome / guided processions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Service</th>
<th>2019 Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delegation Welcome to our Traditional Territory with Song</td>
<td>$200 - $800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wedding Blessing</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome and Guided Procession from Partnering Hotels</td>
<td>$800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome Performance</td>
<td>$800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feast Blessing</td>
<td>$200 - $800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Nations Hoop Dancing</td>
<td>$1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spkwus Slulum - Eagle Song Dancers</td>
<td>Varies with Performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weddings and Conferences

The SLCC is one of Whistler’s premier wedding venues and is highly sought after for its remarkable catering and unique architecture. The centre has three wedding venues available for booking, which include a Great Hall, Mezzanine Patio and the Istken Hall and other meeting rooms and areas which can be booked out for events. Capacities range from 80 to 300 people per room. The entire facility can also be booked at once for events of up to 900 attendees.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Area (sq. ft.)</th>
<th>Reception (#people)</th>
<th>Banquet (60’ Rounds, #people)</th>
<th>Theatre (#people)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Hall</td>
<td>5,372</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Istken Hall &amp; Café Area</td>
<td>4,268</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mezzanine Level and Longhouse</td>
<td>4,921</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>200 (outdoor events)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longhouse</td>
<td>1,298</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buyout</td>
<td>16,145</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Catering

The SLCC also offers catering services for events hosted at the facility. The catering team is led by red seal chef David Li, who specializes in west coast fare, naturally sourced foods and First Nations cuisine. Catering can be arranged for numerous occasions, including tour groups, weddings, and conferences.

Hours and Seasons of Operation

- The Squamish-Lil’Wat Cultural Centre is open daily and year-round.
- Regular hours are 9:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.
- Winter hours are 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
- Holiday hours are subject to change.

Operational and Management Structure

The SLCC is a successful and ever-evolving enterprise and, although it is focused primarily on positive cultural awareness, much of its operational structure is in place to support its revenue-generating enterprises. The centre has an executive director and an Operations Manager that perform most of the executive tasks. The Executive Director reports to a board made up of representatives from the Squamish and Lil’Wat Nations. Under these positions, there are ten departments that belong to either an administrative or revenue-generating function.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Departments</th>
<th>Revenue Generating Departments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Café</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Gift Shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Maintenance</td>
<td>Travel Trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Youth Ambassador (IYA) Training Program</td>
<td>Venue Booking and Event Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and Marketing</td>
<td>Cultural Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Staffing

One of the core mandates of the SLCC is to build capacity within the Squamish and Lil’Wat nations. The centre’s IYA training program plays a large part in fulfilling this mandate, as many graduates transition to working for the centre.

Hiring staff to work at the SLCC is challenging due to the general unaffordability of housing in Whistler. As many cannot afford to live in Whistler, the SLCC makes a special effort to provide transport for its staff that live in neighbouring communities including Pemberton, Mount Currie and Squamish. By helping its employees get to work, the SLCC has addressed some of the staffing challenges faced by other organizations in Whistler.

A selection of the types of staff that the SLCC employs is listed below:

- **Administrative Staff** – Executive Director, Operations and Inquiries, Weddings and Corporate Events Coordinator, Travel Trade and Community Events Coordinator, Gallery & Gift Shop Services, Catering and Events Manager, Marketing and Communications
- **Retail Staff** – Admissions, gift shop, and café staff
- **Catering Staff** – Line Cooks, Dishwashers, Servers,
- **Building Maintenance Staff** – Janitors,
- **Cultural Tour Staff** – Team Driver and Cultural Delivery Ambassador, Youth Ambassador, Museum Youth Ambassador

Revenue and Cost Drivers

The SLCC is a not-for-profit organization. Part of this designation means that many of its operations are funded through Federal or other funding programs or grants. However, the SLCC also has significant revenue streams that support its positive cultural awareness mission in its venue rental, catering and event services, gift shop and café businesses. Their training and employee transportation programs are important not only for training employees and getting them to work but play an important role in building capacity for the larger First Nation and the greater community.

The centre’s setting in Whistler BC allows it to capitalize on the massive number of tourists that pass through the community on an annual basis. Visitors come from all over the world, which means that the cultural centre does not have to rely on local and regional business to drive their revenue streams. The SLCC’s position relative to the traditional territories of the Squamish and Lil’Wat people also positions it as an outpost of cultural information, so its position within a major tourist destination is ideal for sharing this cultural heritage with the greatest number of people.

A description of each of the centre’s main revenue streams is detailed in this section. The relative importance of each revenue stream in terms of annual revenue is listed below:

- **Gift Shop** – approximately $700,000
- **Café** – Break-even operation
- **Catering and Event Services** – estimated at between $1.5 and $2.0 million
- **Venue Rentals** – approximately $450,000
• Cultural Services – approximately $450,000

**Gallery Gift Shop**

The gallery gift Shop is the SLCC’s second largest revenue stream, generating approximately $700,000 in revenue each year. The merchandise mix includes both local, handmade Squamish, Lil’wat and other First Nation pieces, but also a range of manufactured goods with First Nation artist designs. The SLCC places great importance on how their store is organized, being careful to monitor their most important sales categories and allotting shelf space based on those shifting proportions. At present, 50% of goods sold are either clothing (28%) or jewellery (22%). The remaining 50% is a mix of housewares (3rd), footwear, trinkets, books, carvings, and art.

The gift shop generates about 60% of its sales during regular daily operating hours, while 20% of sales are conducted during bus tour breakfasts and activity times. The remaining 40% of sales occur during evening hours.

**Café**

The café offers small snacks, sandwiches and salads to visitors. While the café in and of itself is not a large annual revenue generator, it does play a vital amenity role for guests and visitors. When the centre first opened, the café had some involvement in the emerging travel trade catering business. This dual function served both well at the time, but the SLCC’s catering and event services department has since grown to be the centre’s largest annual revenue generator.

**Catering and Event Services (Travel Trade)**

When the SLCC first opened, the café served as an incubator for the centre’s emerging catering business. The centre is now able to cater all events held on the premises. For the first two years of operations, the centre partnered with the 4 Seasons Hotel (located across the street) to provide food for the café. Through the IYA training program, staff were also trained at the café during this period so that they could run the operation by the close of the hotel contract. The sales and marketing manager at the time identified a gap in the local catering market for travel trade (bus tour) breakfasts. The tour company books all meals, activities, and accommodations. The SLCC began providing breakfast space with catering provided by the Four Seasons hotel. This business was successful and evolved to the point that the SLCC took on the tour group catering service, including serving the Rocky Mountaineer vacation package tours that run through Whistler.

The travel trade bus tour sector mainly caters to elderly patrons with fixed programming and schedules. As this business line evolved, the event and venue rental space business also grew, and the SLCC’s catering service grew to support all on-site events. In the early stages, the centre partnered with several local companies to provide food services for its larger events. SLCC catering now has a dedicated staff and the equipment and capability to cater the vast majority of its events on-site.

The catering business grew from its success in travel trade. Travel trade has the added benefit of hitting multiple revenue centres, as patrons tend to have breakfast, followed by an interactive tour of the cultural centre, a visit to the gift shop and a final stop at the café before loading back on to the tour bus. Travel trade is now the SLCC’s largest annual revenue generator.
Key considerations in building up the travel trade business line include:

- **Lead time for travel trade booking**: Travel trade contracts are booked years in advance. Current operators are booking two years in advance to organize their tours. Good connections can be made at travel conferences such as Rendezvous Canada, where marketing professionals can easily meet and get matched with a variety of tour operators to fill key spots in their annual programming calendars. These events also tend to be valuable for cultural centre managers and operators, as the interactions can help to identify service or offering gaps relative to the market.

- **Peak vs Non-Peak Season**: Peak season for travel trade events is April to September, which limits the number of staff that the centre can keep on during the winter months. The centre now hosts a series of cultural dinners in the winter. These dinners have two functions: they fulfill the centre’s mission of supplying cultural programming and allow the centre to retain more of its catering staff through the slower months, so it can still host events.

**Venue Rentals**

The SLCC now hosts and caters many events, conferences, and weddings each year. The SLCC tends to top the lists of the most desirable conference and wedding venues in Whistler. Partnerships with nearby hotels allow the SLCC to host off-site events for their conferences to give attendees a change of scenery.

Having flexible space was identified as being important for attracting a variety of events. Event hosts have the option of booking out individual spaces/rooms or the facility as a whole. Any combination of rooms can be rented out to suit the varying needs of different event hosts. Additionally, exhibits featured in the centre’s main foyer can be hoisted to the ceiling as needed to provide more space.

**Cultural Services**

The Squamish Lil’Wat Cultural Centre’s prime mandate is to provide positive cultural awareness and opportunities for the community to connect and learn about Squamish and Lil’Wat culture. Revenues associated with this revenue service are collected from admissions to the facility and tickets to special events (e.g. cultural dinners, featuring performance staff for blessings, welcome songs). As the centre grows and changes, there is a desire to grow the performance aspect of SLCC to draw more regular – and repeat visitors and provide new forms of cultural experience.

**Funding Sources**

The SLCC is a not-for-profit organization which applies for regular grants to help fund its operations. Key funding sources for the SLCC include:

- Federal Government Funding
- IWAS funding (for the IYA program)
- Western Diversification Fund
- First Peoples Canada Council of the Arts
- Canada Council
- Regional Municipality of Whistler
- Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT)
Relevant Lessons for the Lhtako Dene Cultural Centre

Building and Store Design

- While the gift shop component does not need to be large, it should be oriented and merchandised in a way that prioritizes the showcasing of authentic and higher price point pieces. This can help to support sales of custom art and carvings while boosting sales of more accessible, lower price point items such as jewellery and clothing. Incorporate racks and cases that can be moved about to maximize flexibility and use of space. (See page 45).

- Design event/exhibit and hall spaces to be flexible. Where possible, consider having larger display items on pulley systems so that they can be lifted up when needed to create different aesthetics and feel depending on the nature of the event.

Programming

- Focus on interactive and engaging programming. Museums and cultural centres are seeing a shift in their traditional funding sources, as more and more funding sources and philanthropists are choosing to donate to different types of charities. These organizations are having to re-invent themselves to generate more revenue by hosting more events and programming, including more immersive and interactive experiences. Since many of these spaces were not designed for that purpose, some are having trouble adapting. Venues such as the Royal Ontario Museum have undergone significant renovations in recent years to be able to host these types of alternate revenue-generating activities to stay relevant. (See page 44).

Identifying Opportunities

- Hire a sales and marketing manager to identify key business opportunities that the centre can participate in. The SLCC’s success in the travel trade sector was a direct result of this type of expertise, and not necessarily an obvious move for a cultural centre. Travel trade-related business has become the centre’s largest revenue generator. (See page 44).

- Future business operations for SLCC include manufacturing their own goods for the gift shop.

- SLCC is developing a performance department to expand its experiential cultural services.
**Nk’Mip Desert Cultural Centre**

**Overview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre Location</th>
<th>Osoyoos, British Columbia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building and Site</td>
<td>Partially submerged 9,000 sq. ft. building situated on a 22-hectare site</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Nk’Mip Desert Cultural Centre was completed in 2006 and has since become a successful and attractive facility that complements the Osoyoos Indian Band’s other business ventures and tourism attractions. Nk’Mip is a leader in aboriginal tourism and has won several awards for the experience, educational opportunities and business leadership that they demonstrate. The facility is also a model of environmentally-friendly construction, being made of thick rammed earth walls; this drastically reduces energy needs for heating and cooling in the centre’s desert climate.

The Nk’Mip Desert Cultural Centre is an experiential anchor and forms part of the larger Nk’Mip Resort, created by the Osoyoos Indian Band. This destination resort encompasses the following main components:
- Nk’Mip Desert Cultural Centre
- Nk’Mip Cellars Winery
- 4.5 Star Spirit Ridge Resort & Conference Facility (including Solterra Spa and Mica Restaurant)
- Sonora Dunes Golf Course
- Nk’Mip RV Park & Campground
- Nk’Mip Desert Cultural Centre – highlighting the Resort’s guiding principles of sustainable eco-tourism. The Nk’Mip desert lands are classified as one of the country’s three endangered ecosystems.
- The Cultural Centre offers tours, programs (e.g. “Rattlesnake Research Program” for both native and non-native biologists, conservation specialists, and interpreters), self-guided nature trails and interpretive sites to allow visitors an entertaining and rewarding cultural experience.

The centre is part of a larger area run by the Osoyoos Indian Band, which also includes the Nk’Mip Cellars Winery and the Hyatt Hotel and Nk’Mip Resort. These other components incorporate accessory businesses (e.g. gift shops, cafés) that may typically be incorporated as on-site visitor amenities within First Nation cultural centres. The Desert Cultural Centre does not include these accessory uses, but it does rent out event space as a revenue stream. The centre is currently undergoing a significant renovation to expand its conference facilities and its venue rental revenue potential.

The expansion will double the floor area available for event rentals. This space will include a banquet space with capacity for 300 people and a modular indoor/outdoor space that can be opened up in the summer, to host large events such as car shows, and closed in the winter to host conferences and other events. The renovation will be completed in two phases as listed below.

- Existing venue rental – 12,000 ft²
- Phase A Expansion – 6,000 ft²
- Phase B Expansion – 6,000 ft²

Current Programming and Events

The desert cultural centre provides an array of interactive activities intended to entertain and inform guests throughout the year. These include outdoor experiences (e.g. rock climbing, rappelling) which attract visitors looking for more active experiences. A roster of current event offerings and regular programming at Nk’Mip includes:
- Private Corporate Events, Conferences and Weddings
- Rappelling in the Desert – a guided walk through the desert followed by rappelling down a rock face
- Group Tours and School Programs
- Nk’Mip Desert Gift Shop – stocks authentic First Nations arts and crafts, including clothing, accessories, jewellery, books and gifts.
- Rattlesnake Research Program – the Western Rattlesnake is a rare animal that lives only in the desert climate of the Okanagan Valley. As one of only three endangered ecosystems in Canada, the Nk’Mip lands have been designated by the Osoyoos Indian Band, in partnership with the Canadian Wildlife Service, as the host of the Rattlesnake Research Program since 2002. Researchers capture and study the snakes, then release them into the wild with microchip tags and radio transmitters to study their habits. The program was awarded the Aboriginal Tourism British Columbia’s “Power of Education” award.
- Participation of Elders for opening remarks or prayers can be secured for $100, while Live Dancers can be arranged for $250.
- Rotating exhibitions (on completion of expansion)
- Hyatt Hotel leads tour groups for wine and cheese events at the centre
- Business Conferences
Current Rental Rates

During peak season, the cultural centre offers a range of admission rates based on visitor age and student status. Nk’Mip also offers discounted group rates and a family pass to make the experience more accessible. The table below highlights admission rates from 2009, when the centre first opened, alongside the current (i.e. 2019 rate schedule). Many of these rates have remained the same, except for group rates which have increased modestly since 2009.

Visitor & Group Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ticket</th>
<th>2009 General Admission Rates</th>
<th>2019 General Admission Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>$12.00</td>
<td>$12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior (65+)</td>
<td>$11.00</td>
<td>$11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student / Post Secondary</td>
<td>$11.00</td>
<td>$11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child (6-17)</td>
<td>$8.00</td>
<td>$8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under 5</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Pass</td>
<td>$36.00</td>
<td>$36.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Rate 10+</td>
<td>$10.50, $12.00 guided</td>
<td>$11.00, $13.65 guided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Rate 20+</td>
<td>$9.60, $11.20 guided</td>
<td>$10.00, $12.60 guided</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Meeting Facilities

The Nk’Mip cultural centre is equipped with state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment and a surround sound viewing theatre: This facility, along with additional equipment and services can be pre-arranged and rented as follows:

- **Nk’Mip Chaptik Theatre Meeting Room** – can accommodate 80 or more people and can be rented for $100 per hour, $200 for a half day, $400 for a full day. Well-equipped for Annual General Meetings, corporate retreats, lectures, or movies.

- **Nk’Mip Indoor Gallery Meeting Room** – seats from 20 to 50 guests and can be rented on evenings and weekends for $75 per hour, $150 for a half day, or $300 for a full day. Space is most suitable for small formal dinners, receptions, and wine & cheese events.
• **Nk’Mip Voices from The Past Pit House Theatre Meeting Room** – designed to accommodate 10 to 15 people for private functions; this space can also be rented on evenings and weekends at rates of $75/hour, $150/half day, and $300/full day.

• **Nk’Mip Outdoor Gallery Meeting** - this space is suitable for between 50 and 200 guests and can also be rented for $75 per hour, $150 per half day, and $300 for a full day.

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**Figure 5 - Nk’mip Desert Cultural Centre floorplan.**

**Hours and Seasons of Operation**

- **Spring Hours (March to May)** – Tuesday through Saturday, 9:30 A.M. to 4 P.M.
- **Summer Hours (May to October)** – 9:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. daily
- **Winter Hours (November to March)** - 9:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Tuesday to Saturday
Operational and Management Structure

The cultural centre is a key avenue for skill-set capacity building for Osoyoos Indian Band (OIB). As the centre is relatively small, all staff have the opportunity to work across a range of functional areas, which helps to build up confidence and the work experience required in the job market. The centre is run by OIB and is one of many businesses and not-for-profits near Osoyoos that contribute to the Nk’Mip resort area. The Desert Cultural Centre has an operations manager and a marketing manager that run the centre full-time and year-round, as well as a larger seasonal staff to support higher visitation and programming during the peak summer period. The operations manager reports directly to the OIB.

Staffing (all functions)

The Nk’Mip Desert Cultural Centre is a highly seasonal operation, with programming and tours. Only the operations and marketing managers run the centre year-round. All remaining staff are hired to support activities and regular programming (including guided tours) during the high season, which runs from April to September. During the October to March period, guests and visitors to the resort are offered free access to the centre, but with no programming or activities.

The types of positions held at the centre are listed below:

- **Administrative Staff** – Manager, Events & Bookings, Admissions & Gift Shop, Marketing, Reptile Research Lab
- **Interpretive Staff** – Tour guides, rappelling guides, desert ecosystem guides
- **Volunteer Program** – The centre hosts a volunteer program where community members can help with a range of activities from April to September.

During the high season, the cultural centre employs about 14 staff, including the full-time operations and marketing managers. This number also includes eight full-time non-management positions and four part-time student positions. Of these, eight positions are filled by band members. As mentioned previously, the centre is important for capacity building within the nation, which has resulted in many of the centre's employees returning each season. As the centre has enjoyed very low turnover, with many staff having well over a decade of Nk’Mip experience, this has helped to minimize overall hiring and training costs.

Staff wages range from minimum wage to $19 per year with 2% increases annually. Part-time student positions occupy the lower end of the wage scale while long-time staff receive more.

Revenue and Cost Drivers

The Desert Cultural Centre is run as a not-for-profit and has three main sources of revenue. Approximately 50% of annual cost recovery is generated through grant funding and donations, while the remainder is generated through cultural service programming and event (e.g. venue) rentals.
**Fundraising Program** - Nk’Mip encourages any organization wishing to support the cultural centre and their research initiatives to host a fundraiser at the Nk’Mip resort. In 2018 the centre raised $264,000 from various sources including:

- Donations and Partnerships
- BC 150 Grant
- Canada Summer Jobs Grant
- Aboriginal Tourism British Columbia (ATBC)
- Snake Program
- Endowment fund

**Donations and Partnerships** – The centre offers a range of opportunities for people to donate and partner with the centre to finance its programs and operations. Individual donations, including gift donation opportunities, are available. Corporate partnerships are also available. Twenty-two corporate partners are listed on the Nk’Mip Desert Cultural Centre website.

**Events** – Funds collected from programs hosted by the Nk’Mip are important to the financial well-being of the centre. The centre hosts more events during the winter season, when there are no cultural tours taking place. Currently, the centre would like to host more events but they are constrained by space limitations. A major renovation is, however, well underway, which will ultimately double its available conference/venue rental floor space.

**Cultural Services** – Cultural tours are held multiple times per day from April to September. The centre also hosts other programs including its snake education program and rappelling as part of its desert tour program. During the winter, the centre does not charge admission to view the permanent exhibits as it does not run tours or any other active programming during these non-peak periods. Visitors are welcome to donate but are not obligated to do so.

**Nk’Mip Desert Gift Shop** – The centre features a gift shop that sells authentic regional and other First Nation arts and crafts and other goods.

**Relevant Lessons for the Lhtako Dene Cultural Centre**

**Programming**

- Cultural Centres can be challenging to run. These operations tend to be reliant on grant funding, partnerships and donations. It is very difficult to generate a profit on an annual basis. Nk’Mip hopes to improve its revenue streams with the completion of its new conference and event space. (See recommended annual funding budget, page 48).

**Staffing**

- Staffing the cultural centre can be challenging. The seasonal nature of the Desert Cultural Center requires it to lay off and rehire staff each season. This puts extra pressure on year-round staff. If the centre were able to operate year-round, it this may make staffing easier. Where possible, LDCC staff should be involved in multiple aspects of LDCC operation and partnerships with local arts groups should be leveraged for interested volunteer positions. (See page 43).
Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre

Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre Location</th>
<th>Whitehorse, Yukon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building and Site</td>
<td>Located on the bank of the Yukon River, 45,000 sq. ft. building situated on a 6.47-hectare site</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre (KDCC), located on the bank of Chu Ninkwan (Yukon River), was developed as a celebratory space for Kwanlin Dün to share their history, stories, arts and culture. The centre’s location marks a return to the riverfront for KDFN, as the community had historically been relocated away from the Yukon River to allow for city development. KDCC construction was completed in 2012, and the centre has since become a major focal point, not only for Kwanlin Dün, but also for the City of Whitehorse and its business and arts communities.

KDCC also leases 15,000 sq.ft. of its site/building to the Yukon Territorial Government to house the Whitehorse public library, which is physically connected to the cultural centre. KDCC is considered the city’s premier conference and convention centre due to its ideal riverfront – and central Downtown setting.
Whitehorse – location and world-class architecture. The centre is also an important place of learning and artistic expression and runs several education programs as well as an artist-in-residence program.

Current Programming and Events

The centre hosts several educational programs and cultural events that range from intimate classroom opportunities to large public outdoor events including the following:

- **Interpretive Programs** – available on request during the winter season.
- **Christmas Craft Fair Open House** – Co-hosted with the Whitehorse Public Library
- **National Indigenous Peoples Day Celebrations** - Live music, dancing and other events in celebration of National Indigenous Peoples Day
- **Shakaat Artists-in-Residence** – This program gives access to spaces to emerging Indigenous artists within KDCC. The program is made possible through the Arts Fund and the Department of Tourism and Culture. The 2018 program hosted four artists in residence.
- **Workshops and Programs** –
  - **Sewing Circle** – Every Thursday at 5:00 P.M.
  - **Moose hide to Moccasins** – Participants learn how to prepare moose hide for use in traditional leather work
  - **Moose hair Tufting with Florence Moses**
The Kwalin Dün cultural centre includes eight indoor spaces available for rent, ranging from premier conference spaces to more intimate classroom and lounge settings. The centre also has several outdoor spaces that can be rented, including a firepit area with seating, a multi-purpose room, patio and tenting areas that are flexible for a range of event types. There are also two kitchen areas that are fully equipped for catering service and plating uses. A site plan from the concept as outlined in 2009 is presented below for reference.

Figure 6 – Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre Grounds – Site Plan
Figure 7 – Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre floorplan.

The following table lists the various KDCC rental areas, expected room capacities and rental rates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Area (sq. ft.)</th>
<th>Reception (#people)</th>
<th>Banquet (60′ Rounds, #people)</th>
<th>Theatre (#people)</th>
<th>Full Day Rental (price)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kwanlin Longhouse</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Zil Män Multi-Purpose Room</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>$800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geiwú Tlein Eetí Artists Studio</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shásh Zéitígi Classroom A</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sit shuyi dè áwé Classroom B</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geis Tóo’e Elders Lounge</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Corridor Lobby &amp; Hallway</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Spaces Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre</td>
<td>10,000+</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>$100 - $900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Catering and Bar Services

The centre offers basic catering services that can fulfil most breakfast, lunch and day-time event needs. There is a staff baker that can produce a variety of baked goods, including muffins, scones and bagels. For larger private events, the centre also welcomes any third-party caterers into its full-service kitchen. The centre’s event team is also more than happy to recommend local caterers that would suit the needs of prospective events. This has worked well as a bridge supporting existing downtown businesses.

For events requiring bar service, KDCC can also help to facilitate bar service for a variety of drinks and bartending services. More information on event-specific services can be discussed with the centre’s events team.

KDCC offers a range for service levels to meet different budgets for its catering, beverage and kitchen equipment rentals.

Audio Visual Services

Many of KDCC’s spaces were designed with exemplary acoustics. The team at the Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre has top of the line expertise and equipment to serve the audio-visual needs of events large and small. If an event’s specific needs cannot be met in-house, the centre’s staff can arrange additional assistance from trusted local providers. The centre has a wide variety of equipment available for rent including projectors, microphones and stage equipment, with rental rates ranging between $25 and $400 per item. The centre also has A/V technicians that are available for hire at $50 per hour (3-hour minimum).

Table 2  Catering and kitchen services schedule for the KDCC (KDCC, 2019)
Hours and Seasons of Operation

- The Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre is open daily and year-round.
- Regular hours are 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., though evening events also form part of the schedule.
Kwanlin Dün Cultural Society and Board

The Kwanlin Dün Cultural Society is a not-for-profit society and was established in 2013, with a board appointed by Chief and Council. The board is composed of six members that include a chair, vice chair treasurer/secretary and three governors. The KDCC board reviews the year’s activities and plans for the upcoming season at its annual general meeting. The board also makes decisions on which funding to apply for and can apply as a not-for-profit, which gives it more flexibility in balancing operating and maintenance costs and centre revenues.

The KDCC also employs an executive director that is responsible for running the cultural centre operations. The executive director reports directly to the board but is hired by the Kwanlin Dün Government and acts as a conduit into the centre’s activities for the nation.

Staffing (all functions)

The KDCC has 17-20 people on staff, depending on the season. This staff complement includes five office staff including the executive director, that run the administrative side of the cultural centre. The remaining staff are a mix of part-time and full-time positions in event services and property management departments. However, there is some overlap, as some staff are shared between the property management and event host staff for event setup and take down. All staff wages are paid for through room rental revenue.
The goal of the KDCC is to ensure its core staff be of Yukon First Nation descent. At present, two of the six office staff are Kwanlin Dün members. The nation is still building capacity among its members but will hire more members as capacity, and required skill sets continue to develop.

Current Positions at the KDCC include:

- Executive Director
- Finance Coordinator
- Operations Manager
- Event Manager
- Cultural Programs & Marketing Manager
- Event Coordinator
- Client Services Supervisor
- Reception

Revenue and Cost Drivers

The Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre has ultimately become very successful and has exceeded KDFN’s expectations. The centre now runs at a “profit” each year, which supports contribution to a capital reserve allowance and the establishment of a scholarship program for local First Nations youth. Careful financial management has been critical for organizing how the centre's revenue streams cover operating costs and generate business. For example, most staff salaries are paid for through the room rental business, while the library lease covers most of the centre’s operations and maintenance costs.

There are certain cost drivers associated with the revenue streams such as staffing, equipment and maintenance, but the most consistent annual costs for the facility include heating, electricity, property taxes and additions to its capital reserve fund, as broken out below.

- Heating $80,000 – $100,000 annually
- Electricity $80,000 – $100,000 annually
- Property Tax - $120,000 annually
- Capital Reserve Fund - $100,000 annually Capital replacement reserve – part of lease revenue goes to this reserve fund so the centre can maintain the space when the lease runs out

The following sections describe the main revenue streams for the KDCC in more detail.

Room Rental

Room and venue rentals are KDCC’s main revenue stream. The centre is host to some of the best meeting spaces in the City of Whitehorse. Its most important and regular tenants are the Government of Canada, the Yukon Territorial Government and the City of Whitehorse. The KDCC also draws larger events such as the First Nations General Assembly meetings, high school graduations, Aboriginal Day Celebrations, and other week-long conferences and special events.
The total annual revenue for venue rentals is approximately $600,000. In addition to the rental fees, the centre also generates revenue with additional staffing, catering, equipment rental and security that total upwards of $400,000 each year.

**Catering Business**

The KDCC catering business specializes in breakfasts, snacks, lunches and beverages. The catering business supports the room rentals and generates approximately $200,000 per year in revenues. Larger events and evening events are catered by external businesses who rent kitchen space from the KDCC.

**Funding and Partnerships**

As a not-for-profit, the KDCC receives much of its operational funding from different government grants and programs. The Yukon and Federal Government funding programs are used to fund much of its cultural delivery and programming. Key funding sources for the KDCC include:

- CORP Funding
- Contribution Agreements
- Canada Works Programs (for hiring seasonal employment)

In addition to these funding sources, the KDCC receives in-kind contributions from the Kwanlin Dün First Nation government. The nation sponsors the salaries of the executive director and another manager position. These positions allow the Nation some oversight into how the KDCC is run, including salary levels.

**Leasing space**

A significant revenue generator for the KDCC is the lease of the library space. 15,000 sf of the building’s south end is leased out on a 10-year lease to the Yukon Territorial Government. The government's lease generates approximately $700,000 annually with $560,000 of that for the library space itself and $140,000 to contribute to shared/common spaces in the building including the main lobby/welcome area, corridors and outdoor landscaping. These rates also represent government cost-sharing for utilities for the building.
Relevant Lessons for the Lhtako Dene Cultural Centre

Purpose

• Have a clear mandate on what the centre’s core purpose and role, both for the First Nation and for the larger community. If it is primarily for exhibitions and learning it will require museum grade construction and environmental controls to house artifacts. These facilities and assets require specialized equipment and staff for maintenance and handling. (See page 43).

• If revenue generation is a critical consideration, particularly with respect to food and beverage and catering service, then be aware of design and social considerations. Whether or not to allow alcohol on-site for special events is an example that KDCC had to consider. Make sure that the community is consulted early on with respect to considerations with social/cultural implications.

Building Design

• Ensure that there is enough office space. KDCC was built with 2,000 sf of office space, which it has since found to be inadequate to meet the various staffing functions it requires. The centre is currently exploring the possibility of reorganizing parts of the building to create more space for office use. With less venue/meeting room rental space, this may be less pressing for LDCC. (This was addressed in the revision of the building concept – see table, page 12).

Programming

• Have a good idea of what the programming for the centre is going to be because that will determine staffing levels and roles needed for the cultural centre. (See page 44).

Cultural Sensitivity

• Some key cultural sensitivities need to be addressed when programming the centre. Conversations with the board and the nation need to clarify questions like:

• Will alcohol be permitted on site for events? Where will it be permitted within the centre (e.g. Around the artefacts?). Prohibiting alcohol will limit the centre’s appeal as a location for conferences and weddings.

• If the centre will host celebrations of life/funerals, will it allow these for non-band members?

• What dates would the nation like to block off for important events each year? If the nation is partnering with the municipality, what dates would they like to reserve the centre for?

Organizational Structure

• KDCC was not always revenue positive. The centre struggled during its first few years but was able to recover with some targeted effort in key areas such as:
  o A focus on accountability for all positions, with clearly defined responsibilities by role
  o A focus on governance and obligations of the board
  o Setting clear lines of communication
  o Clear and usable financial systems and forms

• Establish a clear agreement between the nation and the City. (See page 43-44).
4.0 RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The subject property at Ceal Tingley Park offers a unique opportunity to develop a first class, LEED-Platinum-certified cultural centre, which can serve first and foremost as a showcase of Lhtako Dene Nation’s cultural heritage (and continual evolution), but also as a premier community venue for conference, speaking, and performing arts events. With the land being provided by the City, the planned Cultural Centre building, once constructed, will be owned by Lhtako Dene Nation. The City of Quesnel will play a vital role during the initial period of operation, as Lhtako Dene will contract the City to provide operations and maintenance staffing for the new facility under its sub-regional North Cariboo Recreation and Parks Department. Thus, the new facility will benefit from the City’s experience managing other recreational and community facilities in the City of Quesnel.

During the contract period, which should be established to cover a ramp up period to allow LDCC to achieve operational stability, Lhtako Dene Nation will work alongside contracted City staff to build capacity and facility-specific skills and experience to manage the centre from an operational and maintenance perspective. To assist with development of a robust cultural and performing arts program throughout the calendar year, the City of Quesnel may subcontract a local non-profit (Quesnel and District Arts Council) to work with local and regional arts groups in developing a set list of LDCC events.

To ensure that LDCC functions first and foremost as a First Nation cultural centre, it will be critical for Lhtako Dene Nation to also establish, in partnership with the City and local arts groups, a clear vision for the cultural centre (a mission statement), along with a supporting schedule of important Lhtako Dene and Indigenous cultural dates and events, around which a calendar of local and touring arts programming can be established. These groups can also be excellent sources of volunteers and potential seasonal staff for LDCC.

Given the importance of quickly establishing LDCC as a sustainable cultural facility and tourism operation, Lhtako Dene and the City of Quesnel will need to establish a management agreement that clearly establishes key aspects of how the facility is to be operated and maintained during a specified contract period (likely 2 to 4 years), which will allow it to reach operational stability. This management agreement should cover aspects such as:

- **Period of the Contract**

  The agreement will need to outline the anticipated period during which the City will manage the operations and maintenance of the LDCC facility under its sub-regional parks function. Ideally, the agreement should also outline a capacity building checklist that will help to determine Lhtako Dene readiness in taking over these core operational and maintenance functions. Should additional capacity building be required beyond the initial contract period, then the agreement should allow for possible contract renewal.

- **Capacity Building and Knowledge Transfer**

  Outline and describe how the City’s facility operational and maintenance staff (North Cariboo Recreation and Parks) will work with the Lhtako Dene Nation to build capacity and facility-specific skill sets during the contract period. Establish mentoring program that allows for the
effective transferring of knowledge in a real work setting. Only by working alongside experienced staff can real capacity building take place. The agreement should allow for ongoing skills training beyond the initial contract period, on an as-needed basis to ensure that operations and maintenance staff are up-to-date on the management of building and equipment.

- **Establish a Calendar of Critical Cultural Dates**

  As the primary function of LDCC will be to serve as a showcase of Lhtako Dene and indigenous culture, it will be vital to establish, at the outset, a calendar of important cultural dates, during which LDCC will not be available for non-First Nation programming or events. This will give Lhtako Dene Nation a clear starting point for working with local and regional arts groups to develop a broader arts and cultural program around a set list of Lhtako Dene and other indigenous event dates. Outline acceptable event uses for the centre that align with Lhtako Dene’s cultural values.

- **Programming Partnerships with Local Arts Groups**

  As mentioned above, Lhtako Dene Nation will work with local arts groups to develop an event programming schedule for LDCC that respects core First Nation programming and gatherings. In support of LDCC’s programming development during the initial contract period, the City of Quesnel may subcontract some of the programming for LDCC’s 250-seat community assembly space to local arts groups such as the Arts Council, Quesnel Live Arts, Friendship Centre, Quesnel Youth or the Aboriginal Family Program Society. The cross-cultural connections developed as part of these interactions is likely to lead to new programming and event ideas.

- **First Nations Programming**

  Lhtako Dene will be responsible for programming First Nation cultural events, programs, exhibits, performances and tours. It is highly recommended that the Nation reach out to managers of other successful First Nation-run cultural centres to share lessons learned and industry connections that can help to facilitate these programming efforts.

- **Tourism Outreach and Marketing**

  One of the core market drivers for the development of the LDCC facility is growing tourist demand for exposure to local First Nation culture. Lhtako Dene Nation thus has an opportunity, with the support of local arts and business representatives, to work with Destination BC and the local Visitor Centre to promote LDCC cultural events and other regular (i.e. guided tours) programming. LDCC’s appointed cultural centre manager should ideally also play a hands on role in the centre’s ongoing marketing and sales efforts.

- **Parking**

  A critical factor for LDCC, with its community assembly theatre, will be to support ease of access via all modes. The City will agree to work with the Nation to establish sufficient parking capacity within easy walking distance of LDCC, as the site itself is only able to accommodate
10-15 parking stalls. These nearby parking areas should total at minimum 120 stalls. Efforts will need to be made to ensure pedestrian safety and ease of circulation to and from LDCC.

In addition to the establishment of a clear management agreement with the City of Quesnel, as outlined above, Lhtako Dene Nation and the City should consider a number of operational considerations.

5.0 KEY OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Parking
The concept as currently configured includes only on-site parking for 10 to 12 vehicles and a formal drop-off area. If LDCC is to effectively accommodate not only an exhibit hall, café and gift shop but also a 250-seat community assembly space, it is reasonable to assume that the centre will generate the need for parking of at least 100 to 120 vehicles to support community assembly space related or venue-wide rental events. It is understood that the City of Quesnel is currently exploring the potential to accommodate additional parking areas on nearby properties. This will be an essential component in support of the effective year-round operation of LDCC.

Gift Shop

Store Design
A key aspect of the gift shop’s design will be to effectively showcase handmade authentic goods including local and regional First Nations carvings and art pieces. The most authentic and valuable pieces will need to be prominently displayed, as this will set a quality tone and feel for the shop and serve as a reminder of the importance of supporting local First Nation artists. Designing the gift shop space more deliberately around the higher price point items benefits and encourages the sale of a range of more accessible, lower-priced items, while the sale of higher quality items is more supported by the overall store design and the knowledge shared by staff.

Though the LDCC gift shop is not likely to achieve sales productivity rates on par with traditional downtown retail spaces, it is reasonable to anticipate annual sales of $175/sq. ft. or annual volume of $131,000 for a 750 sq. ft. space. This level is only likely to be achieved in year 3 or 4, once the centre has achieved operational stability.

Merchandise Authenticity
Patrons of First Nations gift shops often seek out items of cultural significance and an opportunity to make a purchase that they can be confident supports First Nations and First Nation artists. One common consideration for First Nation cultural centre gift shops is to determine the balance of unique handmade vs manufactured First Nation design-inspired items. Some gift shops/galleries choose only to sell handmade items, while others have a mix of handmade and manufactured items. There is a perception that manufactured items are not authentic, however, in the interest of supporting a broader understanding of Indigenous Tourism BC (ITBC) has developed a program called “Authentic Indigenous”
that rates authenticity of First Nations merchandise so gift shop purchasers can identify authenticity readily. The Authentic Indigenous program is composed of three tiers.

- Tier 1 – Handcrafted Art (carvings, paintings or jewelry)
- Tier 2 – Artists design and make merchandise, but outsource the majority of production
- Tier 3 – Non-indigenous company that designs First Nation inspired merchandise and pays royalties to artists. Artists must receive at least 5% and include the artist's name and Nation on the packaging.

Most merchandise sold in First Nations gift shops falls under the Tier 3 classification. Top suppliers in this category sell a mix of authentic and more mass-produced products featuring First Nation artist designs. There has been some question in the past as to whether artists were fairly compensated, but the industry is evolving to provide more fair compensation and to ensure that a higher proportion of their goods meet Tier 3 or higher requirements of the Authentic Indigenous program. Top suppliers covering this segment of the market include:

- Panabo - [https://www.panabosales.com/catalog/products](https://www.panabosales.com/catalog/products)
- Native Northwest - [http://www.nativenorthwest.com](http://www.nativenorthwest.com)
- Golden Top - [http://www.goldentop.ca](http://www.goldentop.ca)

**Cultural Centre Café**

The café component of the planned LDCC cultural centre will be an important amenity for guests and visitors, and one that has the potential to catalyze the growth of future venue rental or limited catering businesses. Based on the experience of other cultural centres, cafés in this context tend to be vital components of the visitor experience, but do not necessarily generate significant positive net revenues. Optimally, such a facility’s annual revenues will offset the costs of its annual operation.

Quality will be important for maintaining a successful business. The café should focus on making high-quality coffee beverages and offer fresh baked goods, and sandwiches, potentially in partnership with a local bakery. The café should also stock a selection of other beverages including, juices, tea and pop. Given the First Nation cultural focus, it would be advisable to include some simple First Nation-inspired food items on the menu (e.g. bannock, bannock sandwiches), which could be prepared on-site.

For the café to contribute to the growth of a future event and catering business, it will be important for this component to have sufficient floor area for storage and event set up. Future phases of the café or event business may also rely on an expanded kitchen with a walk-in refrigerator. Without a full kitchen, it would be possible for the centre to run catered events by partnering with local restaurants and caterers who could service these functions on an as-needed basis.

Cafes in similar contexts in BC thrive by selling high-quality coffee in a comfortable or unique setting and by offering high quality baked goods and entrees. The current café design is approximately 1,000 square feet and which could reasonably expect to serve an annual daily average of approximately 45 customers per day. As a coffee and beverage focused café with limited food service, it would expect to generate $190 per square foot in sales annually. This would cover the cost of staff and café operations.
In addition to regular visitors to the cultural centre, local City of Quesnel residents will play a significant role in contributing to the café’s success. The café’s location on the edge of downtown and adjacent to the riverfront trail system will be important for encouraging regular walk-by traffic. It will be important to ensure that there is good access to the café from the riverfront pathway system and that the café itself be marketed as a natural meeting / gathering spot for local residents and recreational enthusiasts.

Key Grants

First Nation Cultural Centres make up a large portion of their funding through Federal and Provincial programs and grant funding. Key grants that can help fund staff salaries and cultural and heritage programs include:

- CORP Funding
- Canada Works Programs (for hiring seasonal employment)
- Aboriginal Tourism British Columbia (ATBC)
- Western Diversification Program
- Canada Council of the Arts
- Heritage Canada funding
- Museum Assistance Program (pays for heritage workers)

The City of Quesnel and its local non-profit arts groups can effectively support Lhtako Dene First Nation in discussing and developing a regular roster of annual funding and grant applications to supplement anticipated revenue streams from venue rental, guided tour, performance event, café and gift shop operations.
Annual Operational Cost and Revenue Estimates

A preliminary budget for the LDCC cultural centre is presented below. The table presents realistic estimates for costs and revenues based on existing facilities in Quesnel, and cultural centre benchmarks and underscores the important role that funding programs will play in the centre’s operation. The scenario below assumes that the centre is likely to be sustainable under these core assumptions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating Budget Category</th>
<th>Annual Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Programming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Café</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gift Shop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Venue Rental</td>
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<td><strong>Administration Expenses (leveraging Quesnel and District Theatre Feasibility Report)</strong></td>
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<td>Staffing</td>
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<td>Supplies</td>
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<td>Telephones</td>
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<td>Capital Purchases</td>
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<td>Property Tax (permissive tax exemption) *</td>
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<td>Capital Reserve Program</td>
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<td>Administrative Cost Contingency (15%)</td>
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<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net Revenues</strong></td>
<td><strong>$ 1,350</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* LDCC likely to be subject of a permissive tax exemption
Conclusion

As noted in the above operational budget table, and as noted in conversations with executive and operational management of a number of relevant benchmarks First Nation cultural facilities in B.C. and the Yukon, the LDCC can be expected to become a self-sustaining operation. This is predicated on the previously outlined assumptions re: A Management Agreement with the City of Quesnel, on sufficient management and staffing (including an executive director to be appointed by LD Nation), that LDCC can develop a significant and regular arts and cultural programming calendar, and that the centre runs its combined café and gift shop businesses as net positive revenue generators.

That being said, and as is expected with such cultural centre facilities, LDCC cannot be expected to be a significant profit generator and will require significant annual funding, grants and contributions from various levels of government to be a self-sustaining operation. A Capital Reserve Program has been assumed that would set aside $50,000 per annum to prepare for future capital works and upgrades. This is proportional to the scale of the LDCC facility relative to other reviewed benchmark facilities.

Though the establishment and operation of the Lhtako Dene Cultural Centre will be challenging, the rewards will go well beyond job creation and the building and sharing of Lhtako Dene and other First Nation cultural awareness. The LDCC will also:

- Provide capacity building and training for LD Nation members;
- Create a much-needed community assembly space, which can also integrate LD Nation and other First Nation programming throughout the year;
- Support local recreation by acting as a natural meeting hub along the increasingly popular Riverfront Trail;
- Fill an important gap in the local City of Quesnel tourism spectrum – adding high-quality First Nation arts and cultural content increasingly sought out by visitors and tour groups;
- Establish an active bridge between LD Nation and local business and arts groups.