



Market, Community, & Socio-Economic Impact

5.0 MARKET, COMMUNITY, & SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

5.1 Market Commentary

5.1.1 Current Demand

Big White Ski Resort remains one of British Columbia's most visited winter destinations. Internal visitation records now indicate that the resort hosts approximately 700,000 skier visits annually, with total resort visitation exceeding one million guests per year. Demand has continued to strengthen across all seasons, supported by expanded summer programming, the continued development of the Big White Bike Park, and increased participation in warm-season activities.

Overnight visitation has likewise increased over this period, with significant growth in guests from the USA (68%), Australia (45%), New Zealand (42%), and Canada (14%). Reflecting this, resort accommodation occupancy rates are typically between 87% and 95% during the winter season. Significant growth has also occurred in the food & beverage, events, shuttle bus service, ski rental and repair, and ski & board school sectors over this same period. In summary, all aspects of operations at Big White Ski Resort are experiencing continued growth and increasing demand. The concepts presented in this Master Plan have been developed to meet this demand while maintaining the positive experience and guest environment that has generated such success.

5.1.2 Market Context and Market Trends

The British Columbia ski industry continues to demonstrate resilience and stability. Recent data indicates approximately 6.2 million skier visits during the 2023-24 season¹⁴, a level consistent with historic peaks. Broader provincial indicators also confirm a healthy market.

Big White Ski Resort remains strongly supported by both regional and destination markets. Using website traffic as a measure of guest interest, Big White has seen an 83% increase in interest, from 816,220 users in 2015 to 1,498,525 users in 2024. This trend spans the globe with growing interest from Canada (+85%), the USA (+95%), Australia (+57%), the UK (+74%), New Zealand (+53%), Japan (+1,067%) and Mexico (+123%).

¹⁴ Destination British Columbia. Ski Sector Profile – 2024.
<https://www.destinationbc.ca/content/uploads/2025/06/Destination-BC-Sector-Profile-Ski-V6-FINAL.pdf>

Historically, the Resort has been recognized as one of British Columbia's most visited winter destinations, previously cited at over 650,000 skier visits, with current internal data indicating approximately 700,000 annual skier visits and more than one million total resort guests per year. Internal performance indicators confirm sustained demand, growth in summer visitation through expanded programming - such as the Big White Bike Park - and ongoing increases in food and beverage, events, transportation, rental, repair, and snow-school activity.

Regional economic and demographic conditions continue to reinforce Big White's market position. As of 2020, the median after-tax household income reached \$75,500 within the Kelowna CMA and \$73,500 within the City of Kelowna, representing increases of 11.9% and 13.1% respectively since 2015¹⁵. Rising regional affluence - combined with ongoing population growth - supports a stable and expanding base of regional skiers.

Big White additionally benefits from strong demand in national and international destination markets, as indicated by the updated website traffic numbers outlined above. The broader trend remains one of rising global interest in the Okanagan and British Columbia as year-round tourism destinations.

Regional air access continues to strengthen this trajectory. Kelowna International Airport (YLW) recorded a new annual passenger record of 2,133,582 travellers in 2024¹⁶, underscoring improved connectivity and long-term tourism potential.

Collectively, these conditions support the demand-side rationale of the Master Plan and affirm Big White's ability to capture continued growth through increasing regional prosperity, improved accessibility, and expanding national and international visitation.

¹⁵ Statistics Canada. 2021 Census: Income Profile – Kelowna CMA & City of Kelowna. <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement>

¹⁶ Kelowna International Airport (YLW). Annual Passenger Statistics (2024). <https://ylw.kelowna.ca/business/facts-statistics>

5.2 Socio-Economic Impact Analysis

The total capital investment required to realize the concepts presented in the Master Plan is estimated at approximately \$1.8 billion (CAD)¹⁷. As envisioned, this investment is expected to occur over two phases.

Unsurprisingly, investment of this magnitude will generate significant employment opportunities at the resort and in the surrounding communities. Construction activities undertaken to realize the proposed development are projected to create 6,800 person-years of direct employment and 3,700 person-years of indirect employment at resort buildout (Table 5-1). These jobs are projected to generate \$473 million (CAD) in direct wages and \$227 million (CAD) in indirect wages over the construction period.

Table 5-1. Projected Construction Investment, Jobs, and Wages by Phase

Phase	Investment (\$ CAD)	Jobs (Person Years Employment)		Wages (\$ CAD)	
		Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
1	796,500,000	3,000	1,600	208,800,000	100,000,000
2	1,010,100,000	3,800	2,100	264,300,000	127,200,000
Total	1,806,600,000	6,800	3,700	473,100,000	227,200,000

The economic benefits of the proposed concepts will continue during resort operations. At buildout, based on a projected visitation of 1.95 million guests annually¹⁸. Operations are projected to support 1,420 full-time equivalent jobs of direct employment and 360 full-time equivalent jobs of indirect employment annually, leading to estimated wages of \$43 million (CAD) and \$17 million (CAD), respectively.

Table 5-2. Projected Annual Revenue, Jobs, and Wages by Phase

Phase	Jobs (Full Time Equivalent)	Wages (\$ CAD)		GDP (\$ CAD)	
		Direct	Indirect	Direct	Indirect
1	430	110	13,200,000	5,126,000	31,700,000
2	990	250	30,500,000	11,838,000	73,200,000
Total	1,420	360	43,700,000	16,964,000	104,900,000

If realized, it is anticipated that Big White will contribute \$1.4 billion (CAD) to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and generate \$111 million (CAD) in taxes through construction activities, and that at buildout, resort operations will contribute

¹⁷ All financial projections are in 2020 dollars

¹⁸ Based on projected Comfortable Carrying Capacity, and assumes that the resort utilization rate and ratio of summer to winter guests remain unchanged from historic values.

approximately \$105 million (CAD) to GDP and generate \$3.4 million (CAD) in tax revenue annually¹⁹.

The above estimates were arrived at by applying direct and indirect multipliers for jobs, wages, GDP, and taxes obtained from Statistics Canada for the Province of British Columbia²⁰. The industry sectors used included residential and non-residential construction, forestry and logging, and amusement and recreation industries.

5.3 Economic Feasibility

Big White Ski Resort is a successful, long-standing, and well-established destination all-season resort that has experienced increased demand and growth across all seasons and areas of operation. To facilitate ongoing success, the Resort aims to leverage its years of experience in resort development and operations proactively. Furthermore, the proposed development and diversification of mountain facilities, guest experiences, and base area amenities, as presented in this Master Plan, have been identified and developed through comprehensive analyses guided by industry best practices, catering to market trends and resort needs, and aligned with Big White's vision. All the proposed activities are designed to enhance the guest experience, meet guest requirements and expectations, and achieve a net financial gain for the Resort, ensuring its long-term financial viability. Big White commits to continue to work closely with the Mountain Resorts Branch to illustrate the economic feasibility of the phased and market-driven components of the Master Plan as they come online. The approval of a new Master Plan will serve as a placeholder for opportunities to enable Big White to move forward with confidence, ultimately benefiting British Columbia.

¹⁹ These values do not include the sale of resort real estate.

²⁰ Statistics Canada (2020). Table 36-10-0595-01 Input-output multipliers, provincial and territorial, detail level. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/3610059501-eng>.

