


TOURISM ABBOTSFORD

2023 MARKETING PLAN



TOURISM
ABBOTSFORD



THE TEAM AT TOURISM ABBOTSFORD IS ENERGIZED TO BEGIN IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION OUTLINED IN THE NEW FIVE-YEAR STRATEGY BUT RECOGNIZES THAT THE DELIVERY OF MEASURABLE RESULTS WILL REQUIRE FOCUS AND DISCIPLINE. TOGETHER WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS,

15 PRIORITY ACTIVITIES
FOR YEAR ONE HAVE BEEN
IDENTIFIED.



DESTINATION MARKETING

- 1** Make It Easy for People to Choose Abbotsford
- 2** Share 'More Abby' and Extend Visitor Length of Stay/Encourage Return Visits
- 3** Grow Visitation from Washington State
- 4** Leverage Abbotsford's Ability to Host Events
- 5** Continue to Secure New Stories, new Content and Host Media, Influencers
- 6** Execute Loud, Proud & Compelling Marketing
- 7** Participate in Cooperative Marketing Campaigns

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

- 8** Grow Taste of Abby Fall Food Festival
- 9** Support and Advocate for Experiential and Infrastructure Enhancements
- 10** Grow Awareness and Understanding of 'Experience the Fraser' Concept Plan

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

- 11** Proactively Communicate with Stakeholders and Partners

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & OUR TEAM

- 12** Celebrate and Promote Abbotsford's Culture & Diversity and Work with Stakeholders to add Scale, Depth and Density of Experiences
- 13** Embrace Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

SUSTAINABILITY & RECONCILIATION

- 14** Support Indigenous Tourism Development
- 15** Educate Visitors on Responsible Travel

DESTINATION MARKETING





1

MAKE IT EASY FOR PEOPLE TO CHOOSE ABBOTSFORD

Ensure we are utilizing marketing tools and partner outreach to make it easy to find Abbotsford information and to plan day and overnight trips

- Investigate development of website tool to 'Build Your Abbotsford Itinerary' based on interests, themes and dates of stay
- Enhance website useability and ensure that imagery is fresh
- Work with event organizers, local organizations and clubs to bid on hosting regional, provincial and national events and tournaments that preferably occur in need periods
- Distribute our new 'Abbotsford Advantage' sport hosting booklet
- Work with partners to create special offers and packages for event attendees
- Continue to strengthen relations with airlines operating out of the Abbotsford Airport, collaborate to leverage their audiences to raise awareness of Abbotsford
- Help visitors plan their Abbotsford stay by providing more detail on accommodation operator profiles on TA website
- Promote Abbotsford's pet friendly offerings
- Use engaging social media to keep Abbotsford information relevant and interesting and to encourage visitors to share their Abbotsford experience on social channels
- Use App to promote things to do and upcoming events

2

SHARE 'MORE ABBY' AND EXTEND VISITOR LENGTH OF STAY/ENCOURAGE RETURN VISITS (VISITOR SERVICES)

We will demonstrate value as well as excitement in our offers by continuing to celebrate everything that defines 'Abbotsford' and build awareness, excitement and intention to visit amongst visitors who stay longer, share their stories with their friends and return often to experience 'more Abby'.

- Provide visitor services and information to travellers in-destination about 'More Abby'
- Improve Visitor Services team ability to be mobile
- Review opportunities for additional satellite Visitor Info services including at main shopping centres and recreation areas
- Utilize 'Explore Abbotsford' App to make it easy for visitors to access Abbotsford information
- Build resident understanding that they are part of the Tourism Abbotsford 'team' (create Abbotsford Ambassadors)
- Engage with tourism stakeholders to put together offers for confirmed events that encourage 'come early/stay longer' for participants and families (i.e. golf package; Canucks games)
- Develop and distribute branded Community Guide
- Provide Airbnb operators with Abbotsford information to share with their guests
- Use engaging social media to keep Abbotsford information relevant and interesting



3

GROW VISITATION FROM WASHINGTON STATE

We will continue to celebrate everything that defines 'Abbotsford' and build awareness, excitement, and intention to visit amongst US visitors who stay longer and encourage them to share their stories with their friends.

- Grow partnership/collaboration with Whatcom County Tourism Association
- Execute marketing campaigns in shoulder months targeting Bellingham and Seattle residents
- Participate in Destination Fraser Valley consumer show activities in Washington State
- Work with media in Washington State to target niche audiences (mountain biking, gardening, beer/wine drinkers)

4

LEVERAGE ABBOTSFORD'S ABILITY TO HOST EVENTS

Use festivals and events strategically to introduce travellers to Abbotsford to fill need periods and to help create an Abbotsford 'vibe'.

- Collaborate and seek input from the City of Abbotsford and the Abbotsford Events Advisory Committee to create a Festivals and Events strategy
- Investigate need for Tourism Abbotsford's Event Hosting program to expand to provide more financial support for events
- Consider creation of an 'Event Development Fund' for strategic investments to support signature event development
- Engage with tourism stakeholders to put together offers for confirmed events that encourage 'come early/stay longer' for participants and their families.
- Work with City to establish 'event concierge' type service/clear guidelines and supports for event organizers
- Collaborate with 55+ Games Organizing Committee to help ensure successful event
- Re-establish value-added offers sheet for event attendees
- Advocate for strong event support throughout the community and with City Hall
- Work with local clubs and volunteer groups regarding tournament hosting opportunities to support bid preparation
- Work with facility operators to promote and package upcoming events (TRADEX, Abbotsford Centre etc.)

5

CONTINUE TO SECURE NEW STORIES, NEW CONTENT AND HOST MEDIA, INFLUENCERS

Coordinate Abbotsford information, itineraries and group familiarization tours for media, on our own and in support of Destination BC's efforts to provide a gifted experience.

- Continue hosting media on an individual basis throughout the seasons
- Pitch story angles
- Provide media etiquette training to industry partners
- Support Destination BC's travel media initiatives, recognizing their desire for communities to collaborate
- Ensure Media page on Tourism Abbotsford website is constantly updated
- Share media articles with partners
- Organize two 'handmade and homegrown' group fam tours

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EXECUTE LOUD, PROUD & COMPELLING MARKETING

Our marketing messaging will be bolder to help capture the attention of travelers and to encourage residents and local industry to be louder champions and ambassadors for Abbotsford.

- Share 'Why Abbotsford' celebrating the Abbotsford 'vibe' and embedding the brand in the DNA of all efforts
- Develop content featuring small business owners who are doing interesting and exciting things in Abbotsford
- Implement messaging to showcase reasons to stop and stay in Abbotsford in highly visible areas
- Update website for specific messaging as needed
- Develop branded merchandise program
- Develop welcome signage program for implementation at key locations around Abbotsford (i.e. YXX, VIA Rail platform, Highstreet, Sumas Mtn)
- Use paid advertising and sponsored social posts to increase awareness of messaging in our key markets
- Use engaging social media to keep Abbotsford information relevant and interesting and encourage visitors to share their experience and spread some 'Abby Love'

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PARTICIPATE IN COOPERATIVE MARKETING CAMPAIGNS

Destination Fraser Valley is a cooperative initiative between DMO's in the Fraser Valley, including Tourism Langley, Tourism Abbotsford, Tourism Chilliwack, Tourism Mission, Tourism Harrison River Valley, and Tourism Hope, Cascades and Canyons. These DMO's work together with the belief that we are stronger together with our complementary products and experiences than we are apart.

- Continue to work with Destination Fraser Valley to promote the Fraser Valley as a leisure destination
- Attend Vancouver Outdoor Show and Vancouver International Wine Festival with Destination Fraser Valley
- Invest in new photography for Circle Farm Tour partners
- Work with wineries in Abbotsford to promote the region as a wine destination
- Explore concept of Fraser Valley Wine Show
- Continue to work with the BC Ale Trail, the BC Bird Trail to promote Abbotsford experiences
- Leverage BC Ale Trail to further enhance promotion of Abbotsford breweries
- Explore cooperative Garden campaign
- Grow Fraser Valley Sun & Soil Concert series



DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT



GROW TASTE OF ABBY FALL FOOD FESTIVAL

The purpose of TOA is to promote and celebrate local food, and to showcase the great things our dedicated farmers and makers are doing as we continue to build Abbotsford up as a food tourism destination.

- Host Taste of Abby Fall Food Festival September 15th – 24th building off successful components of 2022 event (TOA store shelves, Night Market, Indigenous Picnic, Awards)
- Grow TOA as a destination food event showcasing the best of Abbotsford's culinary, arts, culture and farm to table experiences.
- Add more mini events and featured experiences
- Continue to build up educational programming
- Launch Food Symposium in parallel with Taste of Abby for those interested in agtech, food security, food sustainability
- Grow Food & Farm Awards into a larger event, include additional elements and scholarship program
- Develop TOA branded merch
- TOA beer and wine collaboration
- Add additional arts & culture elements to night market and weeklong offerings





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SUPPORT AND ADVOCATE FOR EXPERIENTIAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENTS

In the ever-changing landscape of Destination Marketing, DMO's like Tourism Abbotsford are being tasked with helping to manage growth of tourism product and experiences and to ensure tourism benefits everyone including residents.

- Work with the City of Abbotsford to attract a hotel/conference centre investor
- Consider 'seed funding' support for new visitor experiences meeting established application criteria to support their launch and delivery
- Support ADBA and collaborate with other business leaders to grow Historic Downtown as a destination
- Support and advocate for strategic plan and comprehensive infrastructure investments by City, Regional District and Province that enhance the visitor experience
- Work with arts and culture sector to advocate for performance amphitheater in Mill Lake
- Continue discussion with Lakeland Flowers to explore development and launch of flower festivals that would run April – September
- Continue to collaborate with Destination BC and Fraser Valley Destination Development Committee to find best ways of developing regional trail network
- Continue to explore development of Garden Tourism
- Work with Destination BC's Vancouver, Coast & Mountain team to stay updated on funding opportunities and best ways to educate stakeholders
- Advocate for destination development investments that prioritize trails, trail-related services and amenities



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GROW AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF EXPERIENCE THE FRASER CONCEPT PLAN

Experience the Fraser is a large recreational, cultural, and heritage development project that has the potential to truly be a world-class, transformational experience, which attracts visitors from around the globe. While great progress has been made to implement the ETF plan through the Illustrative Foundational Program, there is still a long way to go to fully implement the vision of the Experience the Fraser Concept Plan.

- Educate elected officials on 10-year vision for destination development in the Fraser Valley
- Develop an ETF Tourism Action Plan to engage the local tourism industry in understanding the ETF and identifying opportunities
- Support regionally coordinated and annual Fraser River celebrations and events
- Advocate for continued investments in 'Experience the Fraser'

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION



11

PROACTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

We will foster partnerships, collaboration and mutual respect to strengthen, leverage and amplify every initiative upon which we embark.

- Visit stakeholder businesses for one-on-one conversations about tourism opportunities and challenges
- Provide regular informal platforms for tourism stakeholders to meet, share ideas/concerns and inform advocacy efforts and other investment strategies
- Hand deliver welcome package to new tourism-related businesses in collaboration with City Ec Dev and Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce
- Strategic communications – newsletter to provide regular updates to stakeholders on a fixed schedule so they become anticipated – monthly ‘Tip Sheet’ – new funding announcements; upcoming events and marketing campaigns; cooperative marketing opportunities; training programs such as DBC’s digital literacy offer
- Continue to produce and distribute weekly ‘What’s On’ in Abbotsford’ digital flatsheet
- Continue to distribute monthly newsletter – look into options for which software to use and refresh/update email list
- Attend meetings of various not-for-profit groups; share Tourism Abbotsford’s activities and create ‘space’ for discussions as to how to work together more effectively
- Solicit partner information and collateral for the Visitor Services team for the spring and summer visitor season



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & OUR TEAM





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CELEBRATE AND PROMOTE ABBOTSFORD'S CULTURE & DIVERSITY AND WORK WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO ADD SCALE, DEPTH AND DENSITY OF EXPERIENCES

Abbotsford is a community rich in arts, culture, and heritage. We will celebrate Abbotsford's culture and history to help enhance travel experiences.

- Add Arts & Culture representative to the Tourism Abbotsford Society Board
- Work with stakeholders and the City of Abbotsford to add scale, depth and density of experiences so Abbotsford becomes known as a culture/heritage destination
- Help support implementation of the City's Cultural Strategy
- Help foster further collaborate with arts, culture and heritage organizations in Abbotsford
- Develop trail guide & develop Culture Crawl map
- Highlight culture in Abbotsford through our content and website
- Look in to becoming Rainbow Certified
- Host at least one Fraser Valley Sun & Soil Concert Series with addition of art activation as part of event
- Support local live theatre groups
- Host sector roundtable so partners can provide updates, discuss collaborative marketing ideas and how to increase relevance of Arts & Culture offerings to visitors



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EMBRACE DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Tourism Abbotsford will continue to make a conscious effort to highlight diversity, equality, and inclusivity in everything we do.

- Work with each of our team members to create a career plan and invest in individual career development aligned with that plan
- Continue to learn about Accessibility Tourism and begin work on an Accessibility Tourism strategy
- Work with UFV City Studio to investigate developing tourism experiences for people with accessibility challenges
- Develop materials/content for people with visual/hearing challenges

SUSTAINABILITY & RECONCILIATION



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SUPPORT INDIGENOUS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Abbotsford lies within the traditional territory of the M̓athexwi First Nation, the Sé:math First Nation, and the Leq'á:mel First Nation. These three nations belong to the Stó:lō. The Stó:lō Nation covers territory from Yale in the Fraser Canyon to Fort Langley. In Halq'emeylem, the language of the Stó:lō translates as “river.” The Stó:lō people are called the “people of the river.”

- Continue to reach out to local communities of M̓athexwi and Semá:th to offer support for tourism experience development
- Advocate for an Indigenous advisor role at the City
- Offer support and resources to non-Indigenous tourism businesses to share how to engage respectfully with Indigenous communities
- Work with Indigenous youth in school classrooms to explore what tourism means to them and what they might be interested in as a career opportunity
- Support Indigenous led events including 'With a Good Heart' Pow Wow
- Support Abbotsford SD #34 Indigenous Program Events
- Develop Indigenous page for TA website
- Work with City Economic Development in identifying Indigenous businesses



15

EDUCATE VISITORS ON RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

We will educate our industry, residents and visitors on sustainable tourism practices and responsible travel considering local priorities as well as the framework of the United Nations seventeen Sustainable Development Goals.

- Incorporate messaging about responsible travel behaviour in our outreach to travellers and residents
- Destination Fraser Valley to continue partnership with BC Adventure Smart and Leave No Trace Canada to encourage responsible tourism
- Participate in VCM's Sustainability Council & Action Plan
- Review Heritage BC's Reconciliation Pledge and consider something similar for the tourism industry in Abbotsford, led by Tourism Abbotsford's organizational commitment. *Reference: Reconciliation Pledge*
- Identify and share relevant training and certification programs that may be of interest and value to stakeholders
- Explore electronic vehicle charging stations for Historic Downtown and other key destinations around the community.
- Advocate for improved sustainable forms of transportation
- Advocate for destination development investments to support EV charging; E-bike routes/networks
- Partner with car share programs





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