

2022

ANNUAL REPORT



TOURISM
ABBOTSFORD

TRADE

WE HAVE 'ABBYTUDE'

We are Abbotsford's tourism champions. We lead our industry, inspiring targeted travellers to choose Abbotsford and 'Experience More Abby' through our strategic marketing campaigns and our visitor engagement programs.

We educate residents and their elected representatives on the contribution tourism makes to life in Abbotsford. We advocate for our industry's needs and for improvements to infrastructure and experiences that visitors and residents alike will enjoy.

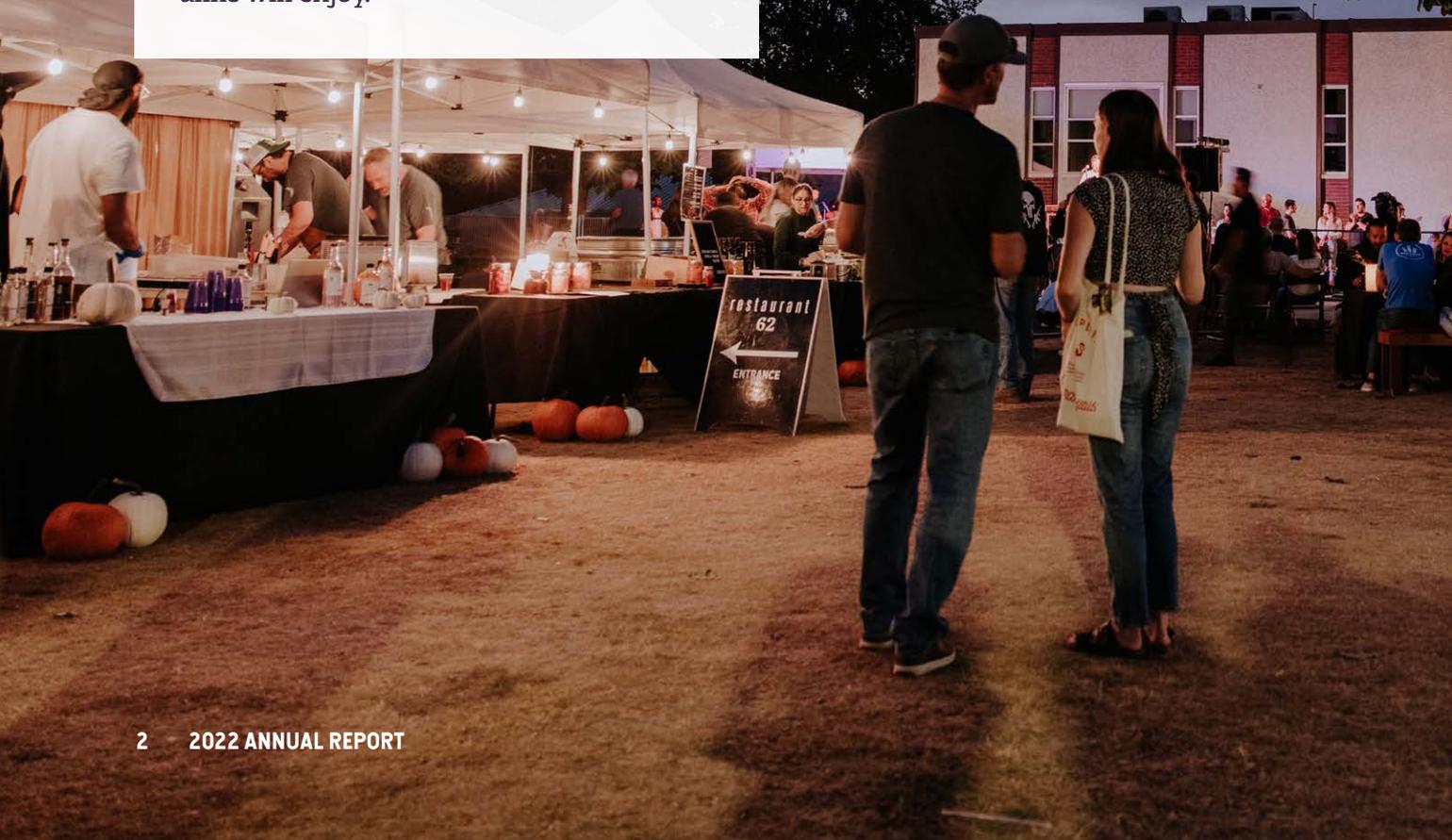


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MESSAGE

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



2022 was another milestone year for tourism as travel restrictions were fully lifted and our industry made significant progress along the path of recovery. In fact, by year's end, many metrics locally pointed to 2022 being the best year ever for tourism in Abbotsford.

Not only did 2022 mark a milestone for performance, but our organization realized several milestones including turning operation of the Fraser Valley Trade & Exhibition Centre (Tradex) over to a new operator. After 18 years of operation, July 8th marked our last day as facility operator. It was a bittersweet ending for the team who worked hard the past couple of years to keep Tradex viable as an event venue during the most challenging of times.

During our tenure as facility operator, we welcomed thousands of events and millions of visitors and witnessed first-hand the significant economic impact that events have on our community. An economic impact analysis based on 2019 performance showed that Tradex events generated over \$19 million in direct spending impact annually, and over \$22 million annually when taking into account all direct, indirect and induced impacts.

Flowing from this significant change to our business, we relocated the tourism office from Tradex to the recently renovated Centennial Library building in Historic Downtown Abbotsford. Being centrally located in this retail and food & beverage hub brings us closer to many tourism and hospitality businesses. Our new proximity to industry partners has already proven valuable, we look forward to further developing our relationships with local business owners and making new acquaintances in the year ahead.

2022 was a foundational year for our organization as we worked closely with local industry to develop a new five-year tourism strategy and renewal of the Municipal & Rural District Tax (MRDT) agreement with the Province. The new strategy provided an opportunity to engage industry and tap into a renewed

energy for tourism in Abbotsford. The strategy and MRDT renewal were supported by all 12 hotel tax collecting partners, a testament to the importance of tourism and the valuable work of our organization.

During development of the new strategy, the tourism team collaborated closely with industry highlighted by one-on-one interviews and workshops with a wide range of Abbotsford's tourism industry partners including representatives from Semá:th First Nation to understand their tourism aspirations. Additionally, visitor and resident surveys were conducted to gauge support of Abbotsford tourism activities and help inform development of new strategies.

Despite projections during the pandemic that full recovery of our industry wouldn't be realized until 2025 or 2026, the tourism industry locally not only returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2022, but for several sectors within the industry, performance surpassed previous record levels from 2019. As was the case throughout the pandemic, we continued to be amazed at the ingenuity and perseverance of our local business owners who went from the ups and downs of pandemic regulations to the stresses of bustling operation with limited staff.

The Board and staff of Tourism Abbotsford look forward to working with stakeholders, partners and the entire community as we embark on a new and exciting chapter for our industry and for our organization.

ALLAN ASAPH

Tourism Abbotsford Society Board President



NEW 5 YEAR TOURISM STRATEGY

Development of our new strategic plan was based upon extensive engagement with industry stakeholders, residents, and with visitors themselves. Conversations were also held with industry partners including local First Nations, Destination BC, and Indigenous Tourism BC.

From our collaboration and engagement, the following strategic priorities were established:

Destination Marketing

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

Destination Development

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

Partnerships & Collaboration

- Proactively Communicate with Stakeholders and Partners

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Our Team

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

Sustainability & Reconciliation

- Support Indigenous Tourism Development
- Educate Visitors on Responsible Travel



ACCOMMODATION PERFORMANCE



HOTEL REVENUE
\$31,401,867 +60.9%
(2021 = \$19,511,976)



OCCUPANCY (%)
74.3% +21.4%
(2021 = 61.2%)



AVERAGE DAILY RATE (ADR)
\$146.50 +32.5%
(2021 = \$110.58)



TOURISM ACTIVITIES

Sun & Soil Concert Series

For the third year in a row, we hosted the Sun & Soil Concert Series, this time at EcoDairy Farm. John Welsh and the Los Valintenes performed, and we had local food and refreshments by Nature's Pickin's, Raven's Brewing and Singletree Winery. Concerts were also held in Chilliwack and in Langley.

Taste of Abby

The Taste of Abby Fall Food Festival is a nine-day food festival designed to bring awareness to the growing food and farm culture in Abbotsford, celebrating the handmade and homegrown products and producers that call Abbotsford home.

Taste of Abby launched September 9th with a Night Market featuring local food, wine and beer vendors,

food trucks, live music, and artists. The event was attended by 500 people. The week concluded with the first ever Abbotsford Food and Farm Awards.

The food festival received \$85,000 in funding from governments and \$16,500 in sponsorship. Media uptake was strong with several articles noting Taste of Abby including [A Delicious Day Out: 'Taste of Abby' Fall Food Fest](#) article in BC Living. The Taste of Abby Fall Food Festival will be taking place from September 15-24 in 2023.

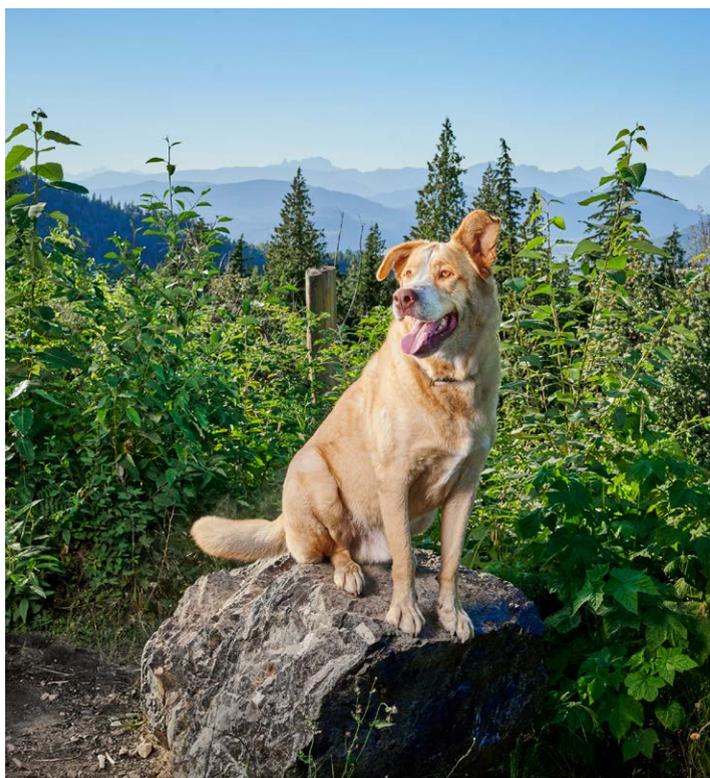
Industry Communications & Community Support

- Published 13 partner newsletters
- Hosted two local industry get togethers - a Spring 'Better Together' Mingler and a Christmas Mingler
- Sponsored the Chamber of Commerce 'Tourism Excellence Award'

- Presented at the Abbotsford Involve symposium and Abbotsford Rotary Club meeting highlighting our 2022 Marketing Tactics
- Ran 'Gratitude' campaign to thank restaurants, delivered congratulation notes and small gift baskets to recognize those nominated
- Worked closely with the BC 55+ Games Directors and City Liaison in preparation of hosting event in 2023
- Participated as part of the adjudication committee to review applications for the Abbotsford Disaster Relief Fund
- Continued work with the BC Destination Marketing Organization Association
- Attended the Future of Tourism Roundtable in Harrison Hot Springs as part of the Province's Tourism Renewal Initiative

Marketing Highlights

- Published [15 blogs](#) throughout the year
- Partnered with Abbotsford News to launch a pet photo contest showing [pictures of pets enjoying the outdoors](#) of Abbotsford. Over 300 photos were submitted, the contest winner (Odin) won a free photoshoot in partnership with Olly's Pet Supply
- Ran an 8-week spring campaign promoting Abbotsford as a 'road trip detour'. Campaign [landing page](#) directed people to content which focussed on short itineraries. In total, the campaign reached a social media audience of over 385,000 generating 1198 clicked verified visits
- Ran 'Abby Aglow' Christmas campaign from November 18th to December 22nd – campaign had a reach of 219,543 and 68,297 video views across social media platforms
- Created [Experience Abbotsford video](#) for Abbotsford Canucks home games and for broadcast on AHL TV. Partnered with Abby Canucks for pop-up ticket giveaway October 28 home opener



DIGITAL MARKETING



WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS

125,567 Total

WEBSITE USERS

72,623 Total

Social Channels

 11,000

 7581

 17,176

 1700

 52,366 hashtag
#ExploreAbbotsford

Event Support

- Continued use of Explore Abbotsford App to promote events and highlight what there was to do in Abbotsford
- Hosted quarterly Tourism Abbotsford Events Advisory Committee meetings
- Attended Sport Tourism Canada Conference in Edmonton in November
- Supported organizers of Geowoodstock to help plan event which was attended by over 5000 people in August. Following the event, a “[Geo Tour](#)” remained featuring caches left at different local businesses and parks which will continue to draw visitors to area
- Updated Tourism Abbotsford’s [Sport & Event Hosting brochure](#) to draw visitors into Abbotsford
- Supported over 27 community events and 8 sporting events with marketing and hosting grants

Destination Fraser Valley Marketing

- Contributed \$35,000 towards annual Fraser Valley cooperative marketing program
- 40 blogs distributed via website and social media platforms – an example of a blog featuring Abbotsford content can be [found here](#)
- Officially launched [new website](#) featuring a listing system highlighting major attractions and events the Valley offers as well as a listing system for Circle Farm Tour partners
- Sponsored advertorial in [Seattle Magazine March issue](#)
- 10,000 copies of the Fraser Valley Food & Wine Guide distributed through visitor centres, local businesses and at consumer shows
- Attended the Vancouver International Wine Festival and The Vancouver Outdoor Show

Circle Farm Tour

- Welcomed two businesses to the Abbotsford CFT – Coligny Creek and The Egg Store
- Partners featured through an assortment of 6 blogs, numerous social media posts and reels throughout the year
- Purchased a 1-page ad in Edible Magazine with insert of a collective CFT guide
- Printed and distributed 35,000 copies of CFT brochures

Cooperative Marketing

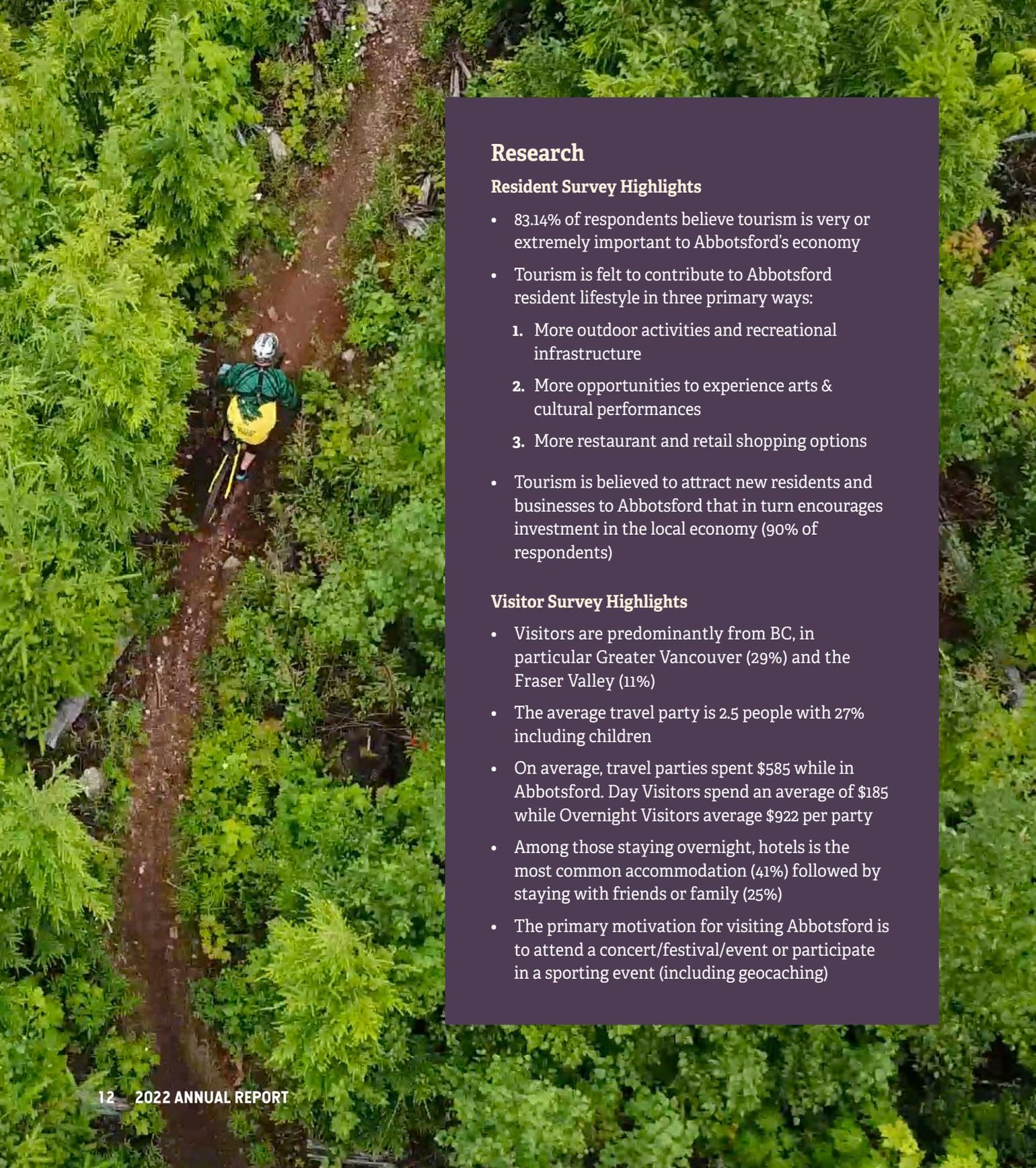
- BC Bird Trail
 - Refreshed itinerary suggestions for Abbotsford's portion of the [Fraser Valley Bird Trail](#)
 - Hosted five media in the Fall, one of the outcomes was a Daily Hive article featuring birding - [From birds to brews: Abbotsford is the perfect spot for a weekend getaway](#)
 - Fraser Valley Bird Trail page had 215,117 pageviews, social channels had 67,720 impressions and 6104 engagements

- Fraser Valley Wine Region - partnered with Tourism Langley and our winery partners to promote the Fraser Valley wine region in the Vancouver Sun/Salut Winery Feature
- BC Ale Trail - new Fraser Valley Ale Trail video produced and launched <https://bcaletrail.ca/ale-trails/fraser-valley/>

Earned Media

- Hosted 17 media (including Instagrammers/ bloggers) throughout the year in support of campaigns and community stories. A list of media hosted can be found here
- Media page on website refreshed to consistently feature updated and relevant story starters, images, and previous media features
- Hosted long table media dinner event at Taves Farms on September 14th with several articles or blogs created from the event - Edible Magazine – A Berry Good Harvest / The Taste Report - [SAFFRON: Canada's spiciest new crop](#) and <https://vancouversun.com/life/food/local-food-reviews/restaurant-62-showcases-abbotsfords-bounty>





Research

Resident Survey Highlights

- 83.14% of respondents believe tourism is very or extremely important to Abbotsford's economy
- Tourism is felt to contribute to Abbotsford resident lifestyle in three primary ways:
 1. More outdoor activities and recreational infrastructure
 2. More opportunities to experience arts & cultural performances
 3. More restaurant and retail shopping options
- Tourism is believed to attract new residents and businesses to Abbotsford that in turn encourages investment in the local economy (90% of respondents)

Visitor Survey Highlights

- Visitors are predominantly from BC, in particular Greater Vancouver (29%) and the Fraser Valley (11%)
- The average travel party is 2.5 people with 27% including children
- On average, travel parties spent \$585 while in Abbotsford. Day Visitors spend an average of \$185 while Overnight Visitors average \$922 per party
- Among those staying overnight, hotels is the most common accommodation (41%) followed by staying with friends or family (25%)
- The primary motivation for visiting Abbotsford is to attend a concert/festival/event or participate in a sporting event (including geocaching)

VISITOR SERVICING

- Team of four was mobile at 27 locations in total including local parks and Circle Farm Tour businesses, as well as Abbotsford Airport
- Assisted 4,441 guests at the Abbotsford International Airport and 3805 through our mobile activations

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

- Participated in Fraser Valley Destination Development Council meetings - [Experience the Fraser](#) continued to be a priority initiative
- Participated in Rockies to Rainforest workshop for [DBC's iconics strategy](#)
- Collaborated with DBC and FV Development Council on implementation of a Hotel Market Study
- Met with Lakeland Flowers to discuss launch of Abbotsford Tulip Festival in 2023
- Met with Abbotsford Trails Society to discuss need for signage on Sumas Mountain to support a safe user experience
- Engaged ADDBA and UFV to explore accessible tourism topics for a university student project including identifying gaps and suggesting equitable solutions to grow our visitor economy and vibrant community



STAKEHOLDER SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

The Stakeholder Survey gathers information about the level of familiarity and satisfaction with Tourism Abbotsford. The survey was sent to 261 tourism stakeholders, in total 56 responses were received, representing a 21% response rate.

73% of respondents expressed they were either Familiar or Very Familiar with the services offered by Tourism Abbotsford. Additionally, overall satisfaction with Tourism Abbotsford is very strong with 82.5% either Satisfied or Very Satisfied.

3 key findings:

1. Stakeholders would like to receive more opportunities for sponsorship and partnerships
2. Post-pandemic, stakeholders identified Indigenous Tourism, Accessible Tourism, Events, and Arts & Cultural products as experiences with the highest growth potential
3. Tourism Abbotsford has an opportunity to expand marketing beyond specific products unique to the city and highlight the overall agriculture, local drink industry and cultural experiences offered year-round

Based on results, the following recommendations are noted:

1. Continue to support the growing food and drink culture movement
2. Continue marketing initiatives on destination events but increase general marketing material that promote Abbotsford's thriving agricultural, food and drink hub post-flooding
3. Participate in and sponsor more events
4. Create more outreach and awareness for government support programs for tourism related businesses
5. Advocate for developing and promoting a greater transit infrastructure
6. Collaborate with the City of Abbotsford in creating safe spaces and opportunities to highlight and celebrate diversity, including events that support the LGBTQ+ community



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at December 31, 2022, with comparative figures at December 31, 2021

	2022	2021
Assets		
CURRENT		
Cash	\$ 1,012,292	\$ 590,795
Accounts Receivable	64,492	363,414
Prepaid Expenses	5,549	15,711
Inventories	—	15,805
Due from City of Abbotsford	309,694	165,559
	<u>1,392,027</u>	<u>1,151,284</u>
LONG TERM		
Deposits	2,456	2,456
	\$1,394,483	\$1,153,740
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	40,694	76,289
Customer Deposit	21,401	86,401
	<u>62,095</u>	<u>162,690</u>
LONG TERM		
Long Term Debt	40,000	40,000
	<u>102,095</u>	<u>202,690</u>
NET ASSETS		
INTERNALLY RESTRICTED		
Business Development Reserve	306,873	163,123
Tradex Operating Capital Reserve	333,248	333,248
Operating Contingency Reserve	310,930	249,380
UNRESTRICTED		
	341,337	205,300
	1,292,388	951,051
	\$ 1,394,483	\$ 1,153,740

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ALLAN ASAPH
Board President
Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce
Member Representative

DANIEL LAVERICK
Secretary-Treasurer
MRDT Member Representative

LOREN TAVES
Vice-President
Circle Farm Tour Member
Representative

VIK GORAYA
Director
MRDT Member

KAMNA SURI
Director
MRDT Member

TANYA CURTIS
Director
Business Sector Representative

CARILYNN SIEMENS
Director
City of Abbotsford Ad-Hoc Representative

KRIS FOULDS
Director
Arts & Culture Representative

RUPI RAJWAN
Director
Sports Sector Representative



STAFF

TOURISM

KATE GLENN
Manager Visitor Experience

BARB ROBERTS
Manager Destination & Industry Development

MAKENA WARDLE
Marketing Coordinator

PAM ALLEN
Senior Travel Counsellor

CRAIG NICHOLS
Executive Director

TRADEX

BILL TAVARES
Director, Events & Building Services

JENN LAVERICK
Director of Food & Beverage

SARAH BOLTON
Director of Events

KAYLA BROWN
Human Resources Manager

RONI ROMY
Executive Chef

REBECCA OWEN
Food & Beverage Assistant / Duty Manager

LINDSEY BESSE
Coordinator, Business Administration

CRAIG NICHOLS
Executive Director

COMMITTEE WORK

The team serves on a variety of community and industry boards and committees:

- Communities in Bloom
- Sport Abbotsford
- BC Destination Marketing Organization Association
- Fraser Valley Destination Development Council
- FRESH Abbotsford Food Ecosystem
- Destination Fraser Valley
- BC Bird Trail Working Committee
- Abbotsford Events Advisory Committee
- BC Sport Tourism Network
- 55+ Games
- Abbotsford Business Community Coalition





**TOURISM
ABBOTSFORD**

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