

# TOURISM ABBOTSFORD

## 2024 MARKETING PLAN



TOURISM  
ABBOTSFORD



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

19 PRIORITY ACTIVITIES FOR YEAR TWO HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED.





## DESTINATION MARKETING

- 1** Make It Easy for People to Choose Abbotsford
- 2** Make It Easy for People to Explore 'More Abby'
- 3** Execute Loud, Proud & Compelling Targeted Marketing
- 4** Grow Visitation from Washington State
- 5** Leverage Events to Encourage More Day & Overnight Visitors
- 6** Participate in Cooperative Marketing Campaigns
- 7** Continue to Host Media/Influencers and Secure New Stories

## DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

- 8** Grow Taste of Abby Fall Food Festival into One of BC's Premier Food Festivals
- 9** Support the User Experience and Assist in Development of a Long-Term Land Management Plan for Sumas Mountain
- 10** Continue Progress of 'Experience the Fraser'
- 11** Secure Development of a New Hotel
- 12** Continue to Explore Development of Conference/Large Scale Meetings Facility
- 13** Leverage Relationships with Industry to Ensure Abbotsford is a Viable Long-Term Tourism Destination

## PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

- 14** Effectively Communicate with Stakeholders and Partners
- 15** Develop a Destination Ambassador Program

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & OUR TEAM

- 16** Celebrate and Promote Abbotsford's Culture & Diversity
- 17** Advocate for Accessibility Needs in and Around Abbotsford

## SUSTAINABILITY & RECONCILIATION

- 18** Support Indigenous Tourism Development
- 19** Support Long-Term Development of Fraser Valley as a Sustainable Tourism Region

# 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 redesign of website to increase mobile useability
- Incorporate 'Build Your Abbotsford Itinerary' based on interests, themes and dates of stay
- Transition CRM program to Wordpress for easier management
- Help visitors plan their Abbotsford stay by updating accommodation listings on the website to include more detailed information like pet-friendly offerings and key services
- Work with partners to create value-added offers and packages for event attendees
- Use engaging social media to keep Abbotsford information relevant and interesting and to encourage visitors to share their Abbotsford experience on social channels
- Use Explore Abbotsford App to promote things to do and upcoming events
- Review Abbotsford information on Hello BC and other travel planning websites (Trip Advisor etc.)

2

## MAKE IT EASY FOR PEOPLE TO EXPLORE 'MORE ABBY'

**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
- Improve Visitor Services team ability to be mobile
- Ensure team members are well versed and trained on Abbotsford experiences
- Continue to utilize 'Explore Abbotsford' App to make it easy for visitors to access Abbotsford information
- 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; Abbotsford Canucks games)
- Develop other branded collateral for trails and biking that support the look, feel and content of community guide
- Update 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
- Provide updates to front-line hospitality workers about what is happening around community
- Explore ways of making tourism office more accessible to public or explore new office options



# 3

## EXECUTE LOUD, PROUD & COMPELLING MARKETING

**Our marketing efforts and messaging will continue to 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
- 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, Highstreet, Sumas Mountain)
- Use paid advertising and sponsored social posts to increase awareness of messaging in our key markets
- Explore in-house social media execution
- Develop a more effective consumer newsletter strategy
- Use engaging social media to keep Abbotsford information relevant and interesting and encourage visitors to share their experience and spread some 'Abbytude'
- Plan for at least one significant seasonal campaign



# 4

## GROW VISITATION FROM WASHINGTON STATE

**We will continue to 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)



# 5

## GROW AND LEVERAGE FESTIVALS & EVENTS

**Use festivals and events strategically to introduce travellers to Abbotsford and extend lengths of stay to fill need periods and to help create an Abbotsford 'vibe'.**

- Continue collaboration with stakeholders to finalize and begin implementation of a Festivals and Events strategy
- Work with City to establish 'event concierge' service and supports for event organizers
- Consider creation of an 'Event Development Fund' for strategic investments to support signature event development
- Continue implementation of new Marketing Grant program which Events are eligible to apply for
- Distribute 'Game On' sport hosting booklet
- Attract more high traffic events
- Increase awareness of events happening in community
- Engage with tourism stakeholders to put together value added offers for confirmed events that encourage 'come early/stay longer' for participants and their families.
- Establish ongoing hotel specials for non-peak season events
- 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
- Work with facility operators to promote and package upcoming events (TRADEX, Abbotsford Centre etc.)
- Explore 'Valley Vibes' live music concept

# 6

## 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 Hot Springs, and Tourism Hope, Cascades and Canyons.**

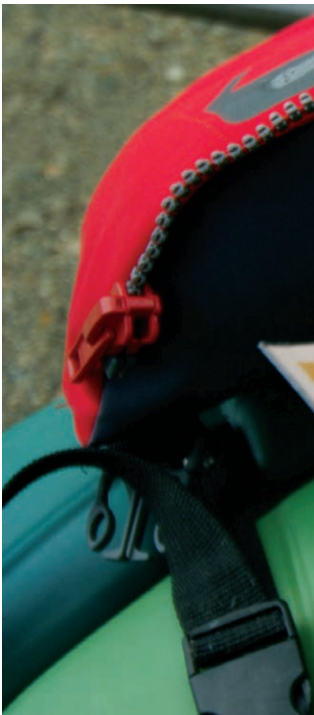
- Continue to work with Destination Fraser Valley to promote the Fraser Valley as a leisure destination
- Attend Northwest Flower Show & Vancouver Outdoor Show
- Work with Tourism Langley to promote the region as a wine destination
- Explore concept of Fraser Valley Wine Show
- Leverage BC Ale Trail and BC Bird Trail to promote Abbotsford experiences
- Grow and leverage collaboration with Gardens BC

# 7

## CONTINUE TO HOST MEDIA/INFLUENCERS AND SECURE NEW STORIES

**Coordinate Abbotsford information, itineraries, and tours for media to amplify Abbotsford messaging and content.**

- Craft and pitch story angles
- Continue hosting media on an individual basis throughout all seasons
- Targeted outreach to media
- Curate targeted list of influencers in Bellingham, Seattle, Okanagan, Alberta, Vancouver Island
- 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 hosting etiquette information with partners
- Share earned media articles with partners
- Organize media FAM tours – including one specific to wine connoisseurs







# DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT



## GROW TASTE OF ABBY (TOA) INTO ONE OF BC'S PREMIER FOOD FESTIVALS

**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 13th – 29th
- 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
- Launch Culinary Arts scholarship
- Develop ToA branded merch
- ToA beer and wine collaboration
- Add additional arts & culture elements to night market and weeklong offerings



## SUPPORT THE USER EXPERIENCE AND ASSIST IN DEVELOPMENT OF A LONG-TERM LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR SUMAS MOUNTAIN

**Sumas Mountain is a land mass with several stakeholders including the Semá:th FN, CoA, FVRD, and the province. As Sumas Mountain is on the ancestral land of the Semá:th FN, a long-term land management plan respecting the traditions and culture of SFN needs to be developed.**

- Building off the work done by the Collaborative Stewardship Forum, advocate for a management framework and infrastructure investments by City, Regional District and Province that enhances the long-term user experience on Sumas Mountain while respecting the traditional cultural practices of the Sto:lo People
- Continue to collaborate with Destination BC and Fraser Valley Destination Development Committee to find best ways of developing a cohesive regional trail network
- Advocate for destination development investments that prioritize trails, trail-related services and amenities
- Continue work with Fraser Valley Mountain Bike Association on trail signage improvements
- Work with Destination BC's Vancouver, Coast & Mountain team to stay updated on funding opportunities and best ways to educate stakeholders



# 10

## CONTINUE PROGRESS OF ‘EXPERIENCE THE FRASER’

The Experience the Fraser (ETF) Concept Plan identifies trails and blueways, implementation strategies, and actions that connect communities to each other and to the river, knit together points of interest such as parks, natural features, historic and cultural sites, and festivals with the intention to create one of the world’s great river destinations.

- Continue to collaborate with Destination BC and Fraser Valley Destination Development Committee to discuss ways of moving project forward
- Continue to engage and update Council and City Staff on Experience the Fraser and advocate for staff time to be put towards ETF
- Develop an ETF Tourism Action Plan to engage the local tourism industry in understanding the ETF and identifying opportunities
- Educate partners about ETF and ways they can support and align with in the future
- Advocate for infrastructure investments in support of Experience the Fraser (ETF) by Regional District and Province
- Support regionally coordinated and annual Fraser River celebrations and events.
- Work with Destination BC’s Vancouver, Coast & Mountain team to source funding opportunities and best ways to educate stakeholders about ETF
- Work with DBC grant writers to explore grant opportunities



11

## SECURE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW HOTEL

- Work with the City of Abbotsford to attract a new hotel
- 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





12

## CONTINUE TO EXPLORE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONFERENCE/LARGE SCALE MEETINGS FACILITY

- Attend meetings for the City of Abbotsford's 'Hotel & Meeting Facility' working group
- Engage consultant to help develop an economic feasibility analysis of a large-scale meetings facility
- Keep the Fraser Valley Destination Development Council updated on discussions of a meetings facility
- Secure letters of support from stakeholders (local & regional)

13

## LEVERAGE RELATIONSHIPS WITH INDUSTRY TO ENSURE ABBOTSFORD IS A VIABLE LONG TERM TOURISM DESTINATION

- Attend meetings for the City of Abbotsford's 'Hotel & Meeting Facility' working group
- Attend Fraser Valley Destination Development Council meetings
- Meet with regional MLAs and MP's to educate on tourism and destination development needs
- Work with Abbotsford Airport and carriers to increase lift into Abbotsford from an increasing number of domestic and international destinations
- Advocate for improved ground transportation in to, out of, and within Abbotsford
- Explore opportunities for Fraser River boat launch in Abbotsford
- Work with local, regional and provincial colleagues to increase awareness of funding opportunities





# PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATION

14

## EFFECTIVELY 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
- Hand deliver welcome package to new tourism-related businesses in collaboration with the City's Economic Development team and Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce
- Ensure front-line hospitality staff are up to date on what is happening in the community
- 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
- 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 VIC team for the spring and summer visitor season
- Host quarterly partner workshops – possible topics include accessible tourism, working with Indigenous People, media etiquette, sustainability
- Incorporate more branding into communication with partners

15

## DEVELOP A DESTINATION AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

**Develop and operate Abbotsford's Destination Ambassador Program, ensuring that our city is welcoming for everyone who lives, works, visits and plays in our community.**

- Introduce program and provide regular updates to stakeholders
- Provide a plan of activities, expected outcomes and budget to city staff
- Provide Destination Ambassador SuperHost training program
- Utilize online and social media platforms to share captivating visuals and narratives about Abbotsford as a destination. Content will be focused on attracting visitors and event attendees, helping to shape public perceptions, and encouraging sustainable travel practices
- Attend meetings of various business groups (i.e Chamber of Commerce) to share details and updates on program

# DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & OUR TEAM







16

## **CELEBRATE AND PROMOTE ABBOTSFORD'S CULTURE & DIVERSITY**

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

- Help support implementation of the City's Cultural Strategy
- Help foster further collaborate with arts, culture and heritage organizations in Abbotsford
- Encourage theatre event organizers to apply for Tourism Abbotsford Marketing Grant
- Continue to highlight culture in Abbotsford through our content and website
- Develop a Culture Crawl map
- Advocate for performance bandshell
- Translate key website content to Punjabi
- Look into Tourism Abbotsford becoming a Rainbow Registered DMO
- Create opportunities to connect with others of different cultural backgrounds

17

## **ADVOCATE FOR ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS IN AND AROUND ABBOTSFORD**

- Continue to learn about Accessibility Tourism
- Continue work with UFV City Studio to understand accessibility needs and to develop tourism experiences for people with accessibility challenges
- Develop marketing materials/content for people with visual/hearing challenges
- Explore accessibility mats for agritourism businesses to make experiences more accessible
- Identify a community champion for accessibility
- Increase accessibility content /features in TA marketing material and platforms

# SUSTAINABILITY & RECONCILIATION



MAKERRA LACE  
Design Studio  
Makerra Auger  
"Hawk Lace Woman"  
Jewelry Designer,  
Spirit Messenger  
makerralace.com  
makerralace.com  
246.1165  
@makerralace  
Hawk Lace





18

## SUPPORT INDIGENOUS TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

**Abbotsford lies within the traditional territory of the M̓athexwi First Nation, the Semá:th 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 Leq'á:mel to offer support for tourism experience development
- Indigenous tourism wordmark developed and incorporated into website and printed materials
- Continue exploring opportunities to incorporate traditional place names in to welcome signage at key entry points to community
- 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
- Continue support of Indigenous led events including 'With a Good Heart' Pow Wow.
- Review Heritage BC's Reconciliation Pledge and consider something similar for the tourism industry in Abbotsford, led by Tourism Abbotsford's organizational commitment.
- Continue to support Abbotsford SD #34 Indigenous Program Events
- Develop Indigenous page for TA website
- Identify and promote Indigenous businesses



19

## SUPPORT LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT OF FRASER VALLEY AS A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM REGION

**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 to encourage responsible tourism.
- Participate in VCM's Sustainability Council & Action Plan
- 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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