

A smiling woman with dark curly hair is holding a large bouquet of flowers. The bouquet is wrapped in brown paper and features a variety of flowers including pink dahlias, white daisies, yellow ranunculus, and green hydrangeas. The background is softly blurred, showing more flowers and the woman's face.

2024

ANNUAL REPORT



TOURISM
ABBOTSFORD



TOURISM ABBOTSFORD'S MANDATE

We are Abbotsford's tourism champions. We lead our industry, inspiring targeted travellers to choose Abbotsford 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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT **5**

5 YEAR TOURISM STRATEGY **6**

ACCOMMODATION PERFORMANCE **6**

TOURISM ACTIVITIES **8**

VISITOR SERVICING **13**

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT **14**

STAKEHOLDER SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS **15**

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION **17**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS **18**

STAFF **19**





MESSAGE

FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Tourism Abbotsford had another incredible year in 2024, filled with growth and progress despite some challenges. The Tourism Abbotsford team and board remained focused on executing the 5-year Tourism Strategy, working alongside local stakeholders to build strategic marketing campaigns that encourage visitors to experience “more Abby.” However, as anticipated, there were some fluctuations in the market this year that affected overall performance.

While we had expected a slowdown in the MRDT (Municipal and Regional District Tax), the decline was more than anticipated, due to the following factors:

- Loss of pipeline workers who had been saturating Abbotsford’s hotels in 2023, leading to a decrease in hotel occupancy.
- Changes in the economy resulted in sports groups opting to travel daily for tournaments instead of staying overnight, impacting local accommodation demand.
- The Average Daily Rate (ADR) for hotels was lower in several months compared to 2023, indicating a pricing shift.
- We also lost 61 hotel rooms when the Travelodge closed, further reducing hotel capacity in the region.

Despite these challenges, Tourism Abbotsford had an amazing year with several key achievements and exciting developments:

- **Hiring of New Executive Director, Clare Seeley and Event & Ambassador Manager:** We welcomed new leadership, including a new Executive Director and an Event & Ambassador Manager, who will help us elevate our community’s tourism experiences moving forward.
- **Bouquets and Barrels Marketing Campaign:** This campaign successfully showcased the region’s floral experiences and wineries, attracting visitors looking for a mix of natural beauty and local craftsmanship.
- **Organization of Canada Day Celebrations:** For the first time, Tourism Abbotsford organized the Canada Day celebrations, bringing the community together for a day of national pride and enjoyment.



- **Completion of the Events Strategy:** With the support of the Events Advisory Committee, we finalized the Events Strategy, which is instrumental in planning for Abbotsford's future event offerings. Additionally, we developed a Customer Journey Map to help us define the next steps in improving the overall visitor experience.
- **Creation of Go!Abbotsford Website:** In collaboration with the City of Abbotsford, we launched the Go!Abbotsford website, a one-stop resource for visitors to explore everything the city has to offer. We also updated the Tourism Abbotsford website, ensuring it reflects our community's current tourism offerings.
- **Ambassador Training Program:** We officially launched the Ambassador Training Program, which helps local residents and business owners become champions for Abbotsford, ensuring visitors have a positive and informative experience when they come to the area.
- **International Promotion by Bethenny Frankel:** Bethenny Frankel helped put Abbotsford on the international map by promoting our community as the "Town of Treasures", showcasing the hidden gems of the region to her large global following.

- **Continued Partnership with UFW:** We strengthened our collaboration with the University of the Fraser Valley (UFW), partnering on initiatives such as Art in the Alley and the Experience the Fraser projects, which provided students with opportunities to explore and contribute to the tourism sector.
- **Support for New Product Development:** We worked alongside local partners to support the development of exciting new tourism experiences, including the launch of Terror at Tanglebank, a unique seasonal offering that added a fresh twist to Abbotsford's event calendar.

Despite the hurdles we faced in 2024, we are optimistic about the future of tourism in Abbotsford. The Tourism Abbotsford team remains committed to working with stakeholders, partners, and the community to make Abbotsford an even more attractive and exciting destination. We look forward to the continued growth of our local tourism sector and to welcoming even more visitors in 2025.

Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication to making Abbotsford a destination of choice

KAMNA SURI

Tourism Abbotsford Society Board President



5 YEAR TOURISM STRATEGY HIGHLIGHTS

ACCOMMODATION PERFORMANCE



HOTEL REVENUE
\$31,235,098 ^{-11%}
(2023 = \$35,206,300)



OCCUPANCY (%)
70% ^{-9.6%}
(2023 = 77.2%)



AVERAGE DAILY RATE (ADR)
\$167.73 ^{-1.9%}
(2023 = \$170.96)

Destination Marketing

- Make it easy for people to choose Abbotsford
- Make it easy for people to explore “More Abby”
- Execute Loud, Proud & Compelling targeted marketing
- Grow visitation from Washington State
- Leverage events to encourage more day and overnight visitors
- Participate in cooperative marketing campaigns
- Continue to host media/influencers and secure new stories

Destination Development

- Grow Taste of Abby Fall Food Festival into one of BC’s premier food festivals
- Support the user experience and assist in the development of a long-term land management plan for Sumas Mountain
- Continue progress of “Experience the Fraser”
- Secure development of a new hotel
- Continue to explore development of conference/large scale meeting facilities
- Leverage relationships with industry to ensure Abbotsford is a viable long-term tourism destination

Partnership & Collaboration

- Effectively communicate with stakeholders and partners
- Develop a Destination Ambassador Program

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Our Team

- Celebrate and promote Abbotsford’s culture and diversity
- Advocate for accessibility needs in and around Abbotsford

Sustainability & Reconciliation

- Support Indigenous Tourism Development
- Support long-term development of the Fraser Valley as a sustainable tourism region



TOURISM ACTIVITIES

Canada Day

Tourism Abbotsford, in partnership with the City of Abbotsford, produced the 2024 Canada Day Parade and Family Festival. The event brought the community together in a vibrant celebration of unity, culture, and national pride. The event featured a full day of activities for residents and visitors of all ages, culminating in a dazzling fireworks display.

This year's theme, "More Abby," emphasized inclusivity and community connection. The event welcomed over 60,000 attendees and featured a diverse lineup of activities and entertainment, including live music, cultural performances, family activities, food vendors, a community showcase and the return of the fireworks finale!

Highlights included:

- The annual parade featuring over 70 community groups.
- Main stage performances programmed by the Abbotsford Arts Council.

- A dedicated Kids Zone with family-friendly games and crafts.
- Over 50 local vendors and community organizations participated across the festival site.
- Accessible amenities including sensory-friendly zones, multilingual signage, and mobility accommodations such as wheelchairs.

The event was guided by core principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion, ensuring all residents felt represented and celebrated. Community feedback was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the warm atmosphere, cultural richness, and the successful balance of celebration and reflection.

Abbotsford's 2024 Canada Day event was made possible through the support of dedicated staff, volunteers, sponsors, and community partners. It stands as a strong reflection of our city's values and our commitment to fostering a welcoming and inclusive community for all.





Taste of Abby

From September 13–22, 2024, we celebrated the fall harvest with Taste of Abby, partnering with local businesses to showcase the rich flavors of Abbotsford through unique programs and products. The event kicked off with the 3rd Annual Night Market at Jubilee Park, where 650 guests braved the rain to enjoy exclusive Taste of Abby offerings from 31 local restaurants, wineries, breweries, distilleries, and food trucks.

To further engage the community, Tourism Abbotsford partnered with 43 restaurants for the Take a Bite, Win a Flight contest. Diners at participating Taste of Abby restaurants were entered for a chance to win a one-hour helicopter ride for two with BC Helicopters.

This year, we also expanded its storytelling with two new episodes in the Taste of Abby Podcast Series with Aaron Pete of Bigger Than Me Podcast. Aaron joined **Mama Maan** in her kitchen to create her signature spicy hot sauce and visited **Loren Taves** at Taves Family Farm to learn more about their Search and Rescue apple initiative.

A major highlight of the event was the introduction of the TOA Leadership Award, recognizing outstanding contributions to Abbotsford's culinary scene. The inaugural award was presented to Jenna Thompson, who recently earned her Red Seal in Culinary from the University of the Fraser Valley and is currently a junior sous chef at a local restaurant.

Additionally, the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Abbotsford Society proudly announced the recipients of the 2024 Food & Farm Awards during the Taste of Abby Night Market on September 13. These awards continue to be a cornerstone of Taste of Abby, a signature fall food celebration that has become a defining event for the region.

Marketing Highlights

- Published 53 blogs throughout the year.
- In April, we launched Bouquets & Barrels, a seasonal marketing campaign highlighting Abbotsford's floral experiences and wineries. As part of the initiative, we hosted three floral workshops in partnership with Foxglove Floral Café, Howesclere Evergreens & Gardens, and Five Acres Flower Farm. We also introduced a tear-off sheet showcasing the region's seasonal flower experiences and wineries. To expand our reach, we ran a paid campaign and contest with Global Calgary, offering a grand prize that included a flight for two, a hotel stay, and a curated spring itinerary in Abbotsford. During the contest period, we successfully collected 1.2K email entries.
- Worked with Infinus Technology to enhance the Tourism Abbotsford website, including migrating business listings from Simpleview to WordPress and refreshing the site's design. Additionally, we implemented a translation feature that allows users to seamlessly convert written content from English into multiple languages.
- Relunched an updated Falling for Abbotsford campaign this fall with updated videography for Skydive Vancouver and the brand-new Terror at Tanglebank attraction that opened at The Agora & Apothecary at Tanglebank Estates. We shared videos about the new Terror at Tanglebank experience which garnered over 1 million views across TikTok, Instagram and Facebook. In addition, our video highlighting the Magical Pumpkin Garden at Taves Family Farm reached nearly 375k views and our video for Maan Farms Haunted was seen by over 128k people.
- Began planning the update for the 2025/2026 Abbotsford Guide, collaborating with Coasted Creating on the design process.
- During Taylor Swift's Eras Tour, we set up a Swiftie photo area at YXX and introduced the **Swiftie Staycation: The Ultimate Abbotsford Itinerary for Taylor Swift Fans**.
- We continued our monthly "10 Things to Do" series, showcasing unique experiences for the upcoming month through a dedicated blog and social media.
- Distributed 12 newsletters to our consumer database, achieving an average open rate of 39.2%.

Industry/Partner Support

- Sent 12 newsletters to our partner database, with an average open rate of 39.0%.
- City and Tourism Abbotsford signed New Four-Year Agreement.
- Hosted two Wine Industry evenings with Town Hall Brands and our local wineries.
- Hosted Industry Night at the Abbotsford Canucks and Holiday Mingler at Tanglebank Estates.
- Hosted our AGM at Taves Estate Cidery
- Working with Sema:th First Nations on Tourism Strategy.
- Participated in the City of Abbotsford's Economic Development Table Meetings, Food Economy Meetings, and Hotel & Conference Centre Meeting until the city disbanded the committee.
- Launched the Spring Fraser Valley Wine Passport May 15-June 30. The program was expanded to include wineries in Surrey and Richmond.
- Attended City of Abbotsford Community Accessibility Workshop and Sport Court Workshop.
- Launched Two Stay n Play Packages: Sandman Airport and Tradex for the Taco Smackdown and Clarion Hotel and Maan Spooky Corn Maze and Terror at Tanglebank.
- Attended a Semá:th Longhouse visit with Tourism Abbotsford Board and Events Advisory Committee.

Event Support

- Tourism Abbotsford hosted five Events Advisory Committee Meetings.
- Continued work on the Community Event Strategy with Partners & Hawes, the Events Advisory Committee, and community event leaders. Identified a Customer Journey Map is top priority.
- The team was very busy providing support (marketing, accommodation blocks, visitor servicing, grants etc.) to over 73 events including: Canada West Basketball, BCHL Showcase BC Volleyball Provincial Championships, Pacific International Judo Championships, Agrifair, The Sky's No Limit - Girls Fly Too event, Provincial Skipping Championships, Symphony in the Park.
- Tourism Abbotsford was on site to welcome attendees and to showcase More Abby at the BC Amateur Golf Tournament hosted at Ledgeview Golf Club, Agrifair, Pacific Agriculture Show, and the Fraser Valley Development Economic Summit.
- Welcomed 15 new events including the BCHL Showcase, World Curling Championships, BC School Sports A Basketball Championships, Backyard Ultra, Hospice Car Show, Farm Management Conference and more!
- Continued involvement with Sport Abbotsford.
- Continued involvement and marketing support for the second annual Stetís ímexstowx gathering for National Day of Truth and Reconciliation with community partners.

Destination Fraser Valley Marketing

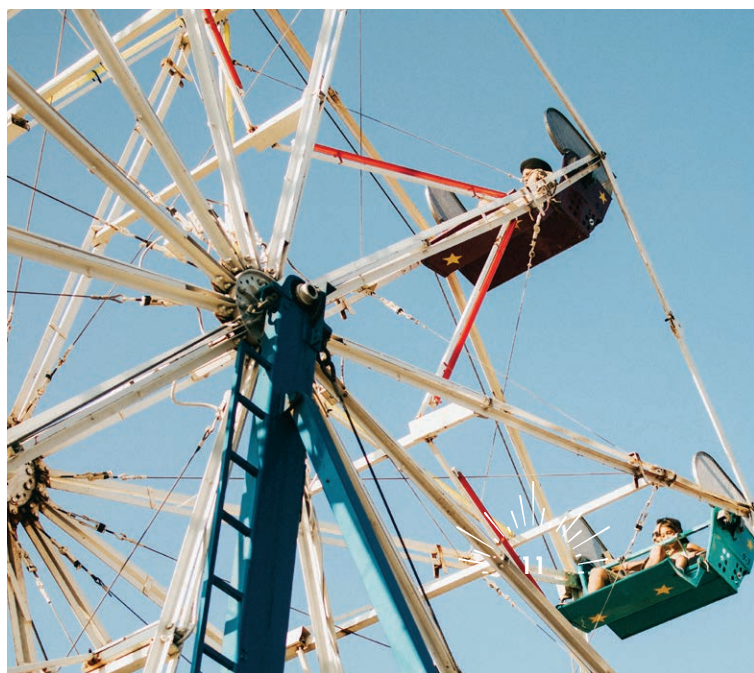
- Attended the Northwest Flower Show in Seattle to highlight flower experiences happening in the Fraser Valley in the spring and summer.
- Attended the Vancouver Outdoor Show to showcase unique outdoor experiences that the Fraser Valley has to offer.
- Began work on the updated 2025/2026 Experiences Guide.

Go! Abbotsford

In April, Tourism Abbotsford, in collaboration with the City of Abbotsford, introduced Go! Abbotsford, an online community calendar. We partnered with Partner & Hawes for naming, logo, and website design, while Infinus Technology handled website development.

Throughout 2024, Tourism Abbotsford launched three seasonal marketing campaigns—Spring, Summer, and Fall—targeting the Greater Vancouver market through Rogers Media, Global BC, and paid social media ads. These campaigns leveraged major events and experiences, such as Lakeland Flowers' Abbotsford Tulip Festival and the Abbotsford International Airshow, to attract visitors and encourage extended stays. The Fall campaign highlighted thrilling “spooky” events, including Haunted at Maan Farms and Terror at Tanglebank. Additionally, we placed an ad in the Abbotsford Canucks' pocket schedule.

The Go! Abbotsford website launch was a great success, reaching over 31K users and generating 72K page views within just eight months. The community submitted over 600 events.



SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS

84,000 Total

WEBSITE USERS

58,000 Total

FOLLOWING



12,300 followers

112,700 views



22,000 followers

895,200 views



5,200 followers

1,800,000 views



1,800 followers

20,000 impressions

Circle Farm Tour

- Welcomed Windberry Farms as new Circle Farm Tour partners.
- We distributed over 30,000 Circle Farm Tour guides through our Circle Farm Tour partners, hotels, trade shows, events and throughout the community.
- In February, we hosted the Circle Farm Tour Partner Mingle + Digital Workshop at The Egg Store, where we provided valuable insights on utilizing digital assets and short-form videos. During the event, we also distributed our 2024 Circle Farm Tour guides.

Cooperative Marketing

- Renewed our agreements with BC Bird Trail and BC Ale Trail. We decided not to renew in 2025 for Gardens BC.
- BC Ale Trail hosted a booth at this year's Taste of Abby Night Market.

Earned Media

- Bethenny Frankel turned our community into an international sensation as the “Town of Treasures” resonated across social media. Tourism Abbotsford became a hot commodity with TV interviews with Global and CTV and an article published in the Georgia Strait.
- Hosted a media event at Lakeland Flowers to highlight our Bouquet and Barrels marketing campaign, which saw 20 media attend an evening in the tulips making flower crowns with Foxglove Floral Café and tasting local wines from Cannon Estate Winery and Singletree Winery.
- Joe Leary and Rick Mohabir, hosts of Just Here for the Beer Radio, recorded a special episode at Old Yale Brewing, featuring a lively discussion about Abbotsford’s thriving craft beverage scene. They were joined by representatives from Taves Estate Cidery, Ravens Brewing, Field House Brewing, Maan Farms Estate Winery, Old Yale Brewing, and Clare Seeley to showcase the incredible offerings brewing in the region.



VISITOR SERVICING & AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

- Provided visitor servicing at the Abbotsford International Airport and at 70 pop-up booths at community locations and events. Interacted with a total of 10,307 people.
- Delivered Community and Experiences Guides to accommodation partners and featured experiences.
- We have a newly branded Tourism Abbotsford truck complete with a beautiful illustration of Sumas Mountain along the side.
- Purchase a Mobile Trailer Kiosk to be launched for the 2025 season.
- Updated our Explore Abbotsford Guide to be ready for the 2025 season.
- Two staff members completed training to become certified SuperHost Trainers.
- Facilitated the first SuperHost Foundations of Service Quality workshop through the Ambassador Program.



DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

- The Destination Development Funding project for directional and entrance signage on Sumas Mountain was successfully completed and installed by the Fraser Valley Mountain Bike Association, with \$15,000 in funding from the Province of BC.
- Tourism Abbotsford team members and board participated in a clean-up day on Sumas Mountain, collecting garbage along the entrance and main roadways.
- We welcomed the new owners of The Agora & Apothecary at Tanglebank Estate and supported their launch of the Terror at Tanglebank fall attraction.
- Tourism Abbotsford actively looked to attract a new hotel investor, and then facilitated discussions with landowners, a hotel investor, and the city to advance plans for a new hotel development.
- Finalized Indigenous Wordmark project. Artwork completed by Ovila Mailhot to be launched in 2025.
- Participated in the Fraser Valley Development Council meetings.
- In collaboration with Destination BC and the FV Development Council, we continued to focus on the development of **Experience the Fraser**. Worked with the University of the Fraser Valley and six fall classes to explore opportunities along the route. This is in partnership with the CEWL program.
- Tourism Abbotsford, Walt Judas CEO TIABC, Chad Wetsch GM, Vancouver, Coast & Mountains met with members from Semá:th First Nation Economic Development.
- Hosted staff from DBC, Chad Welsh, Josie Heisig, Laura Plant for a tour of Tradex with Susan Steffens to look at enhancements to attract large sporting events including accessible sports.

STAKEHOLDER SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

The Tourism Abbotsford Stakeholder Survey was conducted to assess stakeholders' familiarity with and satisfaction toward Tourism Abbotsford, while also capturing insights to inform future planning. The survey included both required questions under the MRDT (Municipal and Regional District Tax) guidelines and optional questions designed to enhance our understanding of stakeholder awareness, expectations, and perceived benefits of engaging with Tourism Abbotsford. In total 77 responses were received, representing 35% response rate.

Results indicate a high level of familiarity and satisfaction among stakeholders: 92.2% reported being either Familiar or Very Familiar with Tourism Abbotsford's services, and 85.3% indicated they were either Satisfied or Very Satisfied with the organization's overall performance.

Key findings from the survey include:

1. Stakeholders would like to see Tourism Abbotsford play a more active role in community planning and advocacy and contribute to provincial destination management efforts.
2. There is an opportunity to increase stakeholder awareness of existing marketing co-op programs and strengthen recognition of the Handmade and Homegrown brand.
3. Experiences identified as having the highest potential for growth include events, farm-based and culinary experiences, and Indigenous tourism.
4. The top three barriers to tourism growth identified were the lack of hotels, the need for stronger sustainability practices, and concerns about the quality of accommodation.
5. The Tourism Abbotsford team received widespread praise for its dedication, support, and community engagement.

Based on the survey results, the following recommendations are being made:

1. Maintain and build on the strong internal culture and external relationships that have positioned the Tourism Abbotsford team as a trusted and valued partner.
2. Advocate for the development of an additional hotel and high-quality accommodation options to support tourism growth and attract major events.
3. Support investment in sports and event infrastructure, helping to position Abbotsford as a competitive host for regional and national gatherings.
4. Enhance transportation and accessibility, particularly transit options between Abbotsford and Vancouver, as well as within the local core.
5. Collaborate with the City of Abbotsford to streamline permitting and regulatory processes that currently create barriers for tourism businesses and events.
6. Expand marketing efforts to include a broader range of businesses and experiences, with an emphasis on hidden gems, underrepresented groups, and niche offerings.
7. Improve communication and coordination around events, enabling earlier planning and stronger collaboration across tourism sectors.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

A close-up, low-angle photograph of a field of lavender flowers. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some showing vibrant purple and others appearing more muted. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the lavender field and a hint of a distant horizon under a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at December 31, 2024, with comparative figures at December 31, 2023

	2024	2023
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	\$1,209,580	\$929,643
Accounts Receivable	500	2,276
Pre-Paid Expenses	17,798	15,929
Due from City of Abbotsford	210,156	621,956
	1,438,034	1,569,804
LONG TERM		
Deposits	2,456	2,456
Assets Total	\$1,440,490	\$1,572,260
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT		
Accounts Payable & Accrued Liabilities	52,530	58,684
Deferred Revenue	1,650	1,650
Liabilities Total	54,180	60,334
NET ASSETS		
INTERNALLY RESTRICTED		
Business Development Reserve	530,470	430,795
Operating Contingency Reserve	425,793	430,796
Destination Development	430,047	430,047
UNRESTRICTED	—	220,288
Net Assets Total	\$1,386,310	\$1,511,926
Total	\$1,440,490	\$1,572,260



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

KAMNA SURI

Board President
Accommodation Representative

LOREN TAVES

Vice President
Circle Farm Tour Representative

DANIEL LAVERICK

Secretary-Treasurer
Accommodation Representative

RUPI RAJWAN

Board Director
Sport Sector Representative

ALEX MITCHELL

Board Director
Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce Representative

VIK GORAYA

Board Director
Accommodation Representative

KRIS FOULDS

Board Director
Arts & Culture Representative

TANYA CURTIS

Board Director
Business Representative

ALLAN ASAPH

Board Director
Board Governance Representative

Board Director

Economic Development Representative

STAFF

CLARE SEELEY

Executive Director

BARB ROBERTS

Destination & Industry Development Manager

CONNIE HACKETT

Destination Marketing Manager

AUDREY ARCIGAL

Marketing & Administrative Coordinator

JEN GRAHAM

Events & Ambassador Manager

PAM ALLEN

Senior Travel Counsellor

COMMITTEE WORK

The team serves on a variety of community and industry board and committees, including:

- Sport Abbotsford
- BC Destination Management Organization Association
- Fraser Valley Destination Development Council
- Stetis ímexstowx Planning Committee
- Destination Fraser Valley
- BC Bird Trail Working Committee
- BC Sport Tourism Network
- Economic Development Committee
- Events Advisory Committee
- Lower Mainland Municipal Events Committee
- Canada Day Community and ACE Committees
- Hotel & Conference Committee
- Agrifair





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