

TOURISM ABBOTSFORD

2025 MRDT PARTNER SATISFACTION SURVEY REPORT



TOURISM
ABBOTSFORD



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Tourism Abbotsford Partner Survey was conducted to assess partners' familiarity with and satisfaction with Tourism Abbotsford, while also gathering insights to support future planning. The survey included both mandatory questions required under Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) guidelines and optional questions designed to further our understanding of partner awareness, expectations, and perceived value of engagement with Tourism Abbotsford.

The survey was distributed to 220 tourism partners and received 53 responses, representing a 24% response rate. In previous years, respondents were able to complete the survey multiple times; however, this year participation was limited to one response per IP address to ensure data integrity. Respondents were asked to provide feedback on a range of topics, including their level of engagement with Tourism Abbotsford's services, programs, and marketing initiatives, as well as their perceptions of Abbotsford's tourism potential and future growth opportunities.

Overall, results indicate a high level of familiarity and satisfaction among partners. 96% of respondents reported that they understand the role of Tourism Abbotsford, while 94% agreed that staff are knowledgeable and respectful. In addition, 92% believe that Tourism Abbotsford provides effective leadership and direction for the local tourism industry. Overall satisfaction was 81% satisfied or very satisfied.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Partners emphasized the importance and shared gratitude of Tourism Abbotsford's focus on supporting local businesses, events, and residents, and expressed strong appreciation for collaborative, practical marketing that is rooted in both community and influencers.
2. Experiences identified as having the highest potential for growth include farm-based experiences, arts & culture, and outdoor recreation.
3. Partners identified three key barriers: limited tourism infrastructure including conference and events space, sports facilities and accommodations; city-related challenges such as permitting, zoning, lack of grant funding, and perceived lack of investment in events, sports, arts & culture; and broader economic pressures including inflation, and cost of living that reduce affordability and participation in tourism experiences.
4. Partners felt that priority areas should include a focus in ensuring tourism has a voice during community planning, destination management, and supporting product development.
5. Partners overwhelmingly praised the Tourism Abbotsford team for their professionalism, passion, collaboration, and effectiveness, particularly given the organization's small size. Comments consistently highlighted the team's approachability, work ethic, creativity, and visible presence in the community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Continue prioritizing locally focused, community-grounded marketing and partnerships that support independent businesses, attractions and events.
2. Work in closer alignment with the City of Abbotsford and elected officials to streamline permitting, clarify grant programs, and advocate for greater municipal investment and support for events, culture, and tourism infrastructure.
3. Strengthen Abbotsford's destination identity by developing standout experiences and clusters that encourage visitors to stay longer.
4. Advocate for and support expanded infrastructure and venues including accommodations, event spaces, transportation, and recreation facilities to unlock growth opportunities, particularly for sports, conferences, and large-scale events.
5. Maintain a strong focus on affordability and accessibility by targeting staycation and regional markets and supporting inclusive, low-barrier experiences in response to ongoing economic pressures on families and visitors.





BACKGROUND

The Partner Survey is a standard requirement of the Municipal, Regional, and District Tax (MRDT) Program for communities that voluntarily collect the 3% MRDT. The program is administered by Destination BC on behalf of the Province of British Columbia and the Ministry of Finance.

Findings from the survey will be incorporated into the 2025 MRDT report and shared with the Tourism Abbotsford Board, as well as the 220 partners who were invited to participate.

METHODOLOGY

To ensure consistency and comparability with previous years, the survey methodology remains primarily the same, with changes where new programs or initiatives were introduced. The survey was distributed via an anonymous link shared through an email from Tourism Abbotsford, the partner newsletter, and LinkedIn.

To encourage candid feedback, no contact information was collected, ensuring all responses remained anonymous.

The survey was created using SurveyMonkey, following the basics of the Destination BC survey template. It was sent to business owners, organizations, and community leaders, in alignment with Destination BC's recommendations.

Survey distribution and reminders followed this timeline:

- January 23, 2026 – Initial Survey Sent Via Email
- February 3, 2026 – First Reminder Email
- March 10, 2026 – Final Reminder Email
- March 17, 2026 – Response Deadline

Following the deadline, responses were reviewed, and data was compiled. Open-ended responses were analyzed to identify key themes and recommendations in an unbiased manner.



AUDIENCE

The survey was distributed via the Tourism Abbotsford to the primary contacts of 220 Abbotsford partners, marketing partners, and community leaders.

Respondents were asked to indicate their industry by selecting from the following categories:

- Accommodation
- Arts & Culture
- Attraction/Sightseeing
- Farm Experience
- Food & Beverage
- Transportation
- Shopping
- Other (Please Specify)



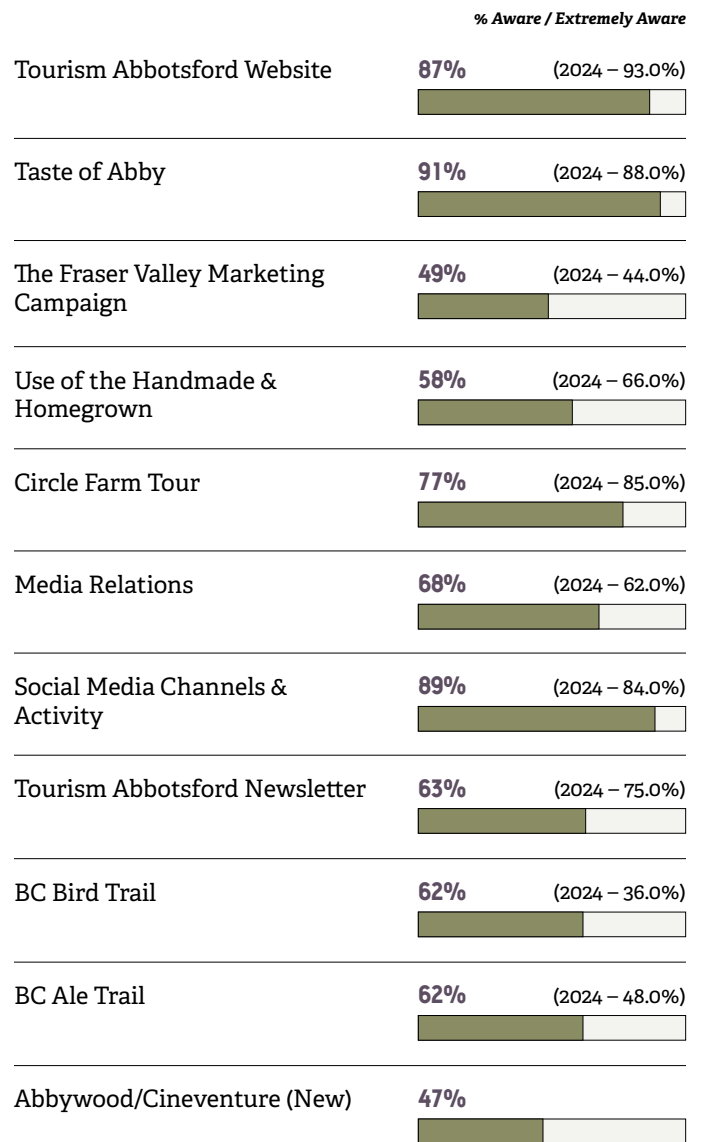
RESULTS

The following report is a detailed breakdown of the compiled results showing average response percentages and written responses.

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'Strongly Disagree' and 5 is 'Strongly Agree,' please rate your agreement with the following statements about Tourism Abbotsford:



2. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is 'Not at All Aware' and 5 is 'Very Aware,' how aware are you of the following activities and services that Tourism Abbotsford implemented in 2025?

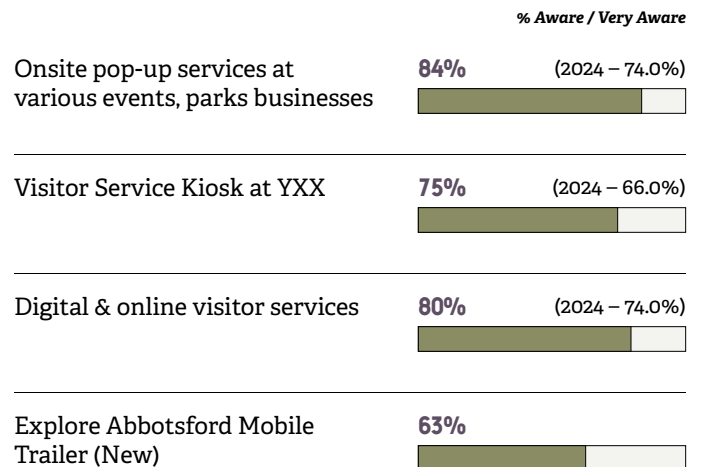




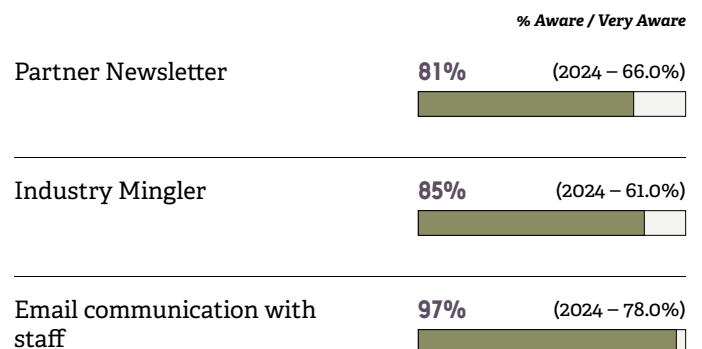
3. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is 'Not at All Aware' and 5 is 'Very Aware,' how aware are you of the following industry and community activities that Tourism Abbotsford implemented in 2025?



4. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is 'Not at All Aware' and 5 is 'Very Aware,' how aware are you of the following Visitor Services activities that Tourism Abbotsford implemented in 2025?

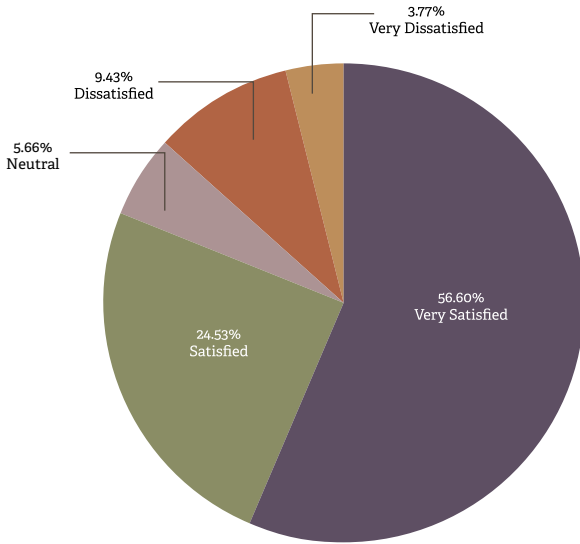


5. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is 'Not at All Aware' and 5 is 'Very Aware,' how aware are you of the following communication activities that Tourism Abbotsford implemented in 2025?



6. Taking everything into account, how satisfied are you with the overall performance of Tourism Abbotsford?

82% Partners surveyed were Satisfied or Very Satisfied



7. If you voted below "satisfied" what could Tourism Abbotsford do to improve your satisfaction?

The ale trail is a paid service. Not all breweries are willing to pay a fee to be listed as a business which they already are. I am a brewery. I refuse to pay for bc ale trail. Why is that the sole basis for promoting places that manufacture beer? We exist with or without the ale trail. I think its not a worthwhile service and abbotsford should put way more effort into promoting local breweries that actually support the local economy. We see thousands of people every year from out of town.

Great job team!

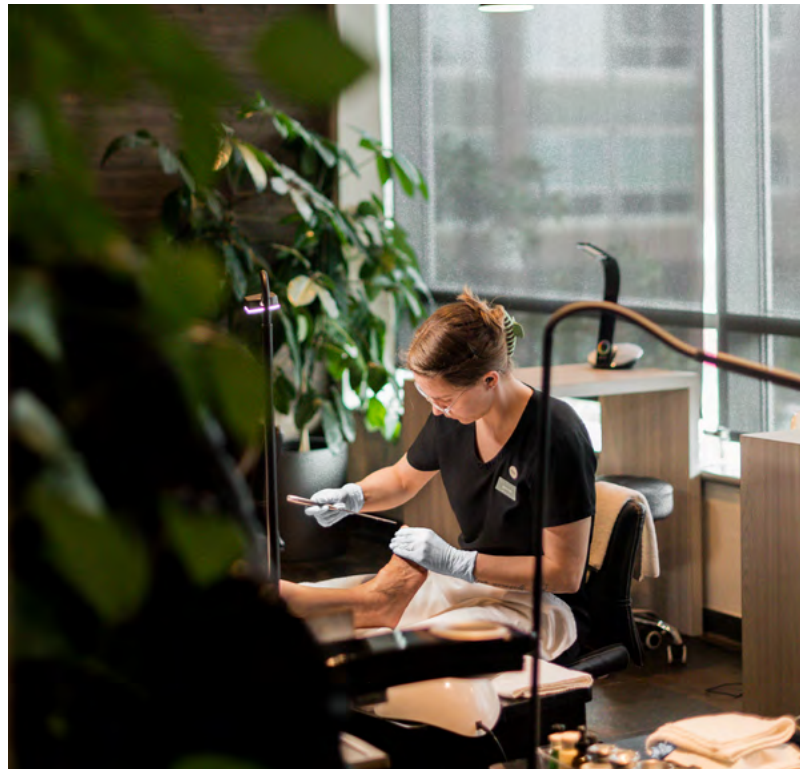
I am not sure how Tourism Abbotsford could support our organization. I'd be interested in knowing more.

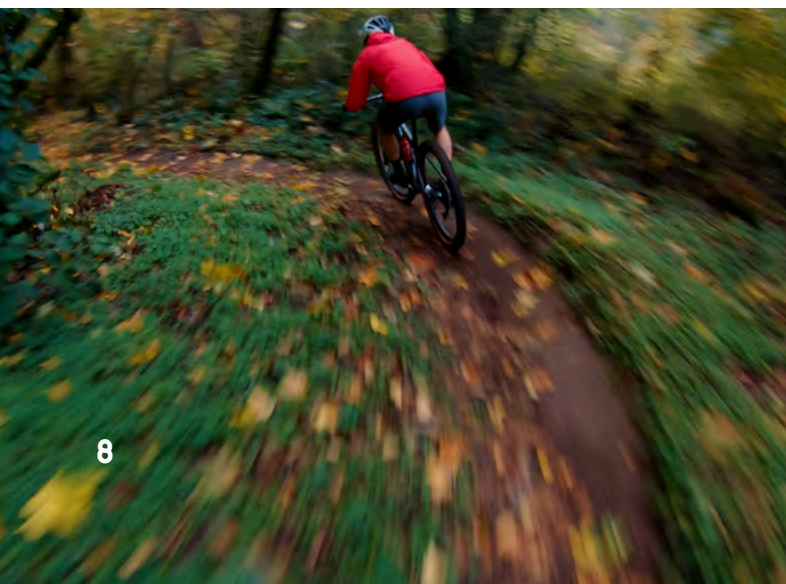
Get the city of Abbotsford to value tourism the way tourism Abbotsford does.

The Tourism team does a great job with what they have but it would be great if they included more businesses than the same downtown locations or farms. Would like to see more diversity in the type of restaurants they promote - Abbotsford has some great Asian cuisine that I never see recognized.

Amazing service, really appreciate yall

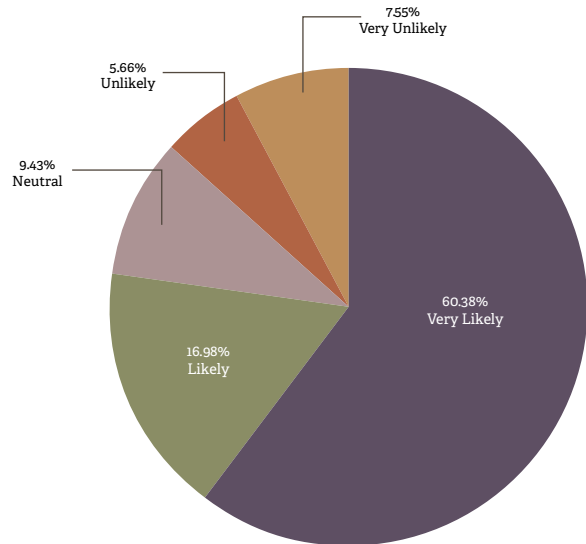
Re-engage with arts and culture sector in a more deliberate way. Really appreciated how Tourism Abbotsford did that in the past.





8. How likely is it that you would recommend Tourism Abbotsford's as a marketing platform and resource to a colleague or another tourism related business in Abbotsford?

77% of surveyed partners responded Likely and Very Likely (2024 – 88%)



9. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'Strongly Disagree' and 5 is 'Strongly Agree,' please rate your agreement with the following statement:

Tourism Abbotsford's activities advance or support growth of the visitor economy: **94%** (2024 – 88.0%)

10. In your opinion, what are the top barriers to growth in the tourism industry in Abbotsford? List up to three barriers.

- 1. Infrastructure Deficiencies** (Conference & event space, sports facilities and accommodations and insufficient public transit and transportation corridors; leading to lack of key hosting opportunities)
- 2. Regulatory & Municipal Barriers** (Red tape, permit applications, zoning, perceived underinvestment in events, sports and arts & culture)
- 3. Economic Pressures** (Inflation and rising cost of living, reduce affordability and ability to participate).

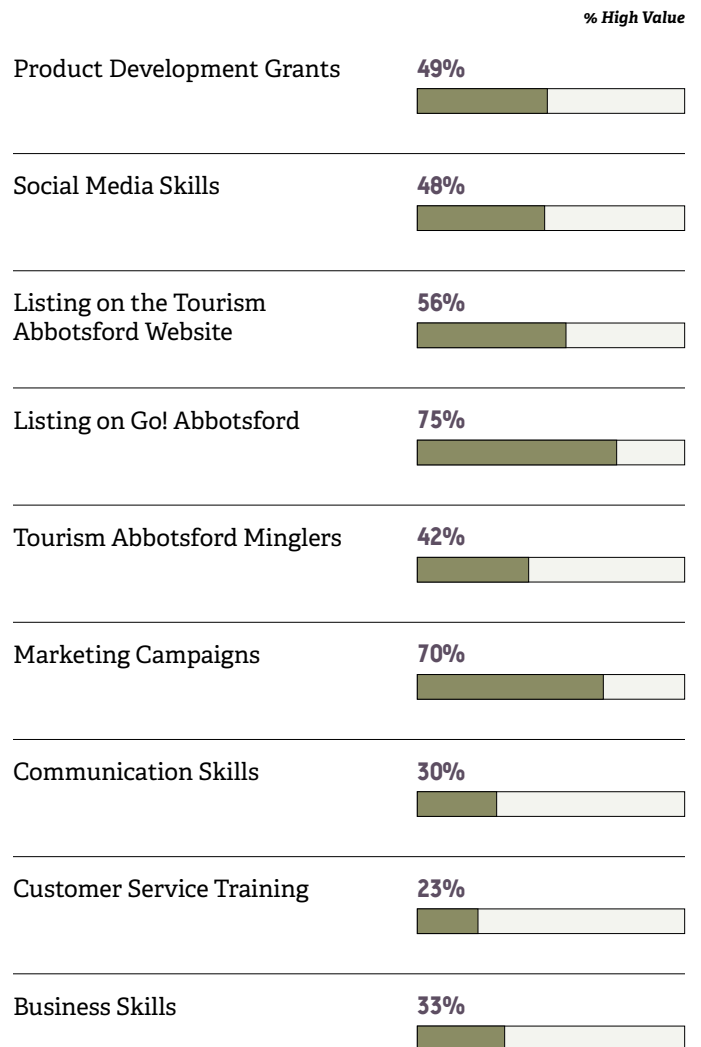
** See Appendix A for all responses to this question.*



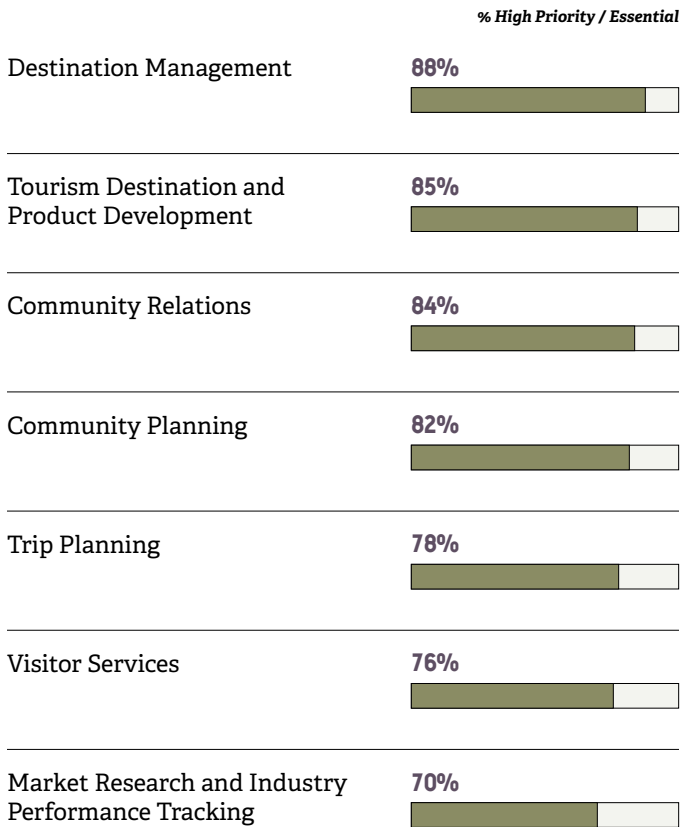
11. How much potential growth do you think each of the following products of experiences have in Abbotsford? These are listed highest to lowest for potential initiatives as completed by the survey:



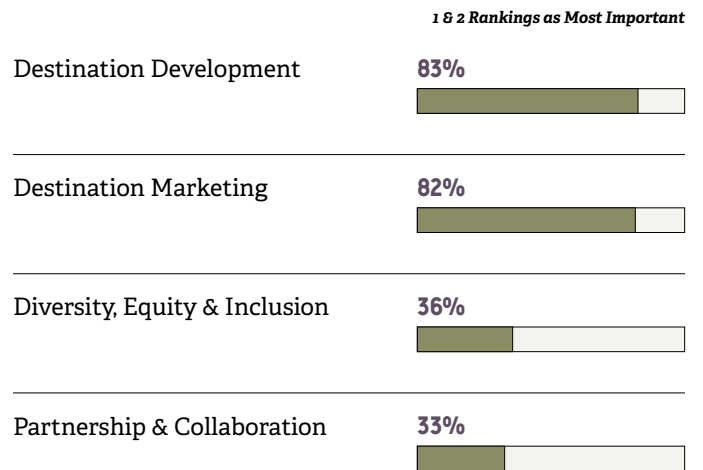
12. Which of the following would provide value to you and your business in the next 12 months on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being highest value.



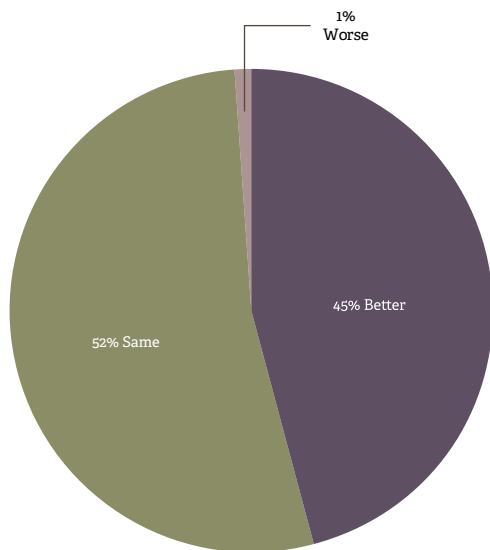
13. In your opinion, how much priority should Tourism Abbotsford assign to each of the following programs? These are listed highest to lowest for potential initiatives as completed by the survey (NEW):



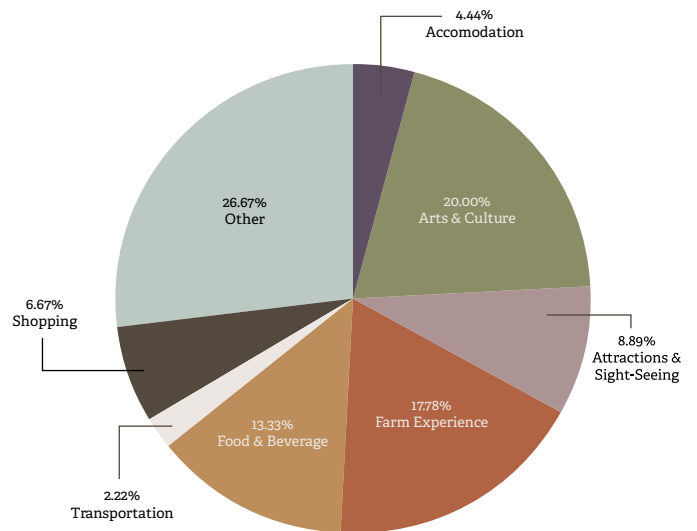
15. How would you rank the following Tourism Abbotsford initiatives, 1 being the most important. These are listed highest to lowest for potential initiatives as completed by the survey (NEW):



14. How would you rate tourism levels in 2025 compared to previous years?



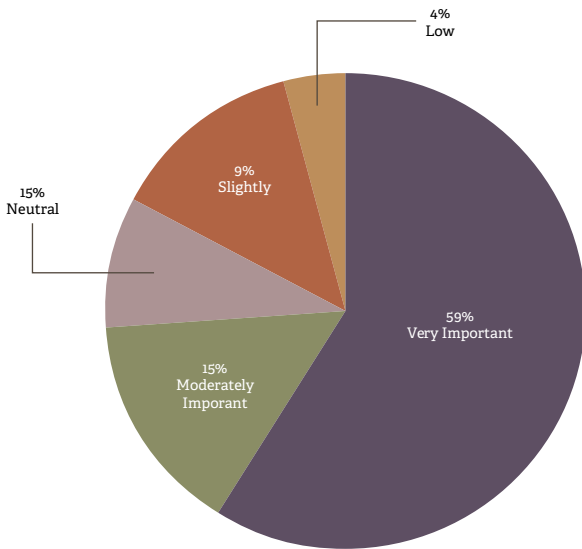
16. Please identify the tourism sector you primarily conduct business in.



16A. If you voted 'OTHER', please specify what type of business or organization.

- Venue
- Entertainment
- Marketing/Media
- Business Support
- Education
- CDMO
- Small Business
- Recreation/Outdoor activity
- Sports
- Government
- Tournament Host

17. How crucial is support from local residents to your organization's efforts? 5 being very important.



18. The last words are yours:

Great job! Can't wait to see what you have in store for 2026.

The Tourism Abbotsford team continues to make a huge impact on our community. Their collaborative approach, strong partnerships, and genuine support for local businesses and events help elevate Abbotsford as a destination. They consistently champion community partners, foster meaningful connections, and contribute to the growth and vibrancy for tourism in Abbotsford.

Our work relies on local tourism / "staycation". Targeting locals and those within the Fraser Valley / Metro Vancouver. I am unaware of how many people visit Abbotsford as a "destination". I would assume visits are part of regional tourism and just one stop for visitors. I wonder if Abby is a launch pad to other locations in the Fraser Valley given its central location. "hub of the valley"...

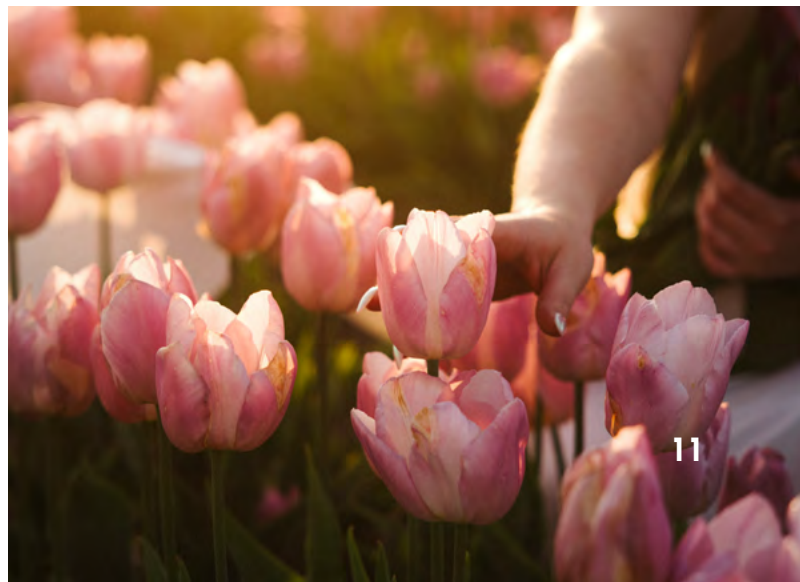
Tourism Abbotsford does amazing, inspired and visionary work! Thank you and congratulations!

I would love to see further clarification and direction on the grants being offered. Especially as it relates to the marketing grant, the needle seems to keep changing making it hard to understand what it is Tourism is looking to do with that. I'm excited to see where Tourism is headed in 2026 and beyond!

It appears there is a renewed focus and improvement on tourism, seeing Abbotsford for the many things it has that have been somewhat overlooked. We are much more than a farm stop to see the local blueberries and flowers. These are strong anchors but the reach can be so much more.

Strong work on behalf of the community from a small and dedicated team.

* See Appendix B for all responses to this question.



APPENDIX A

10. In your opinion, what are the top barriers to growth in the tourism industry in Abbotsford? List up to three barriers.

1. **Infrastructure Deficiencies** (Conference & event space, sports facilities and accommodations and insufficient public transit and transportation corridors; leading to lack of key hosting opportunities)
2. **Regulatory & Municipal Barriers** (Red tape, permit applications, zoning, perceived underinvestment in events, sports and arts & culture)
3. **Economic Pressures** (Inflation and rising cost of living, reduce affordability and ability to participate).

RESPONSE 1 answers Note: 2 and 3 are not included but were added to the top three barrier summary above):

- Disposable income
- Proximity to Vancouver
- Lack of sporting infrastructure and facilities to host large-scale sporting events. There is demand!
- City permitting process and wait times
- Lack of hotels, inadequate public transit options, and challenges to business growth.
- Family costs of living - competing with activities for the same shrinking \$
- Canada/US relationship issues
- When there are increasing social and financial pressures on individuals they don't appreciate and enjoy their lives as much and may be more risk adverse to new adventures even if they are close to home.
- Barriers and logistical problems for sports venues coming into Abbotsford, Lack of a particular destination, highlight that stands out provincially, Inconsistent, advertising of entertainment venues over the years and change of management
- Public transportation, signage at smaller farms offering products.
- Focus on business that are local not chain franchises.
- City of Abbotsford, Current State of the Economy, Lack of Funding
- Lack of City of Abbotsford support for hosting events
- Lack of grants and financial support opportunities
- Lack of actual event venues
- Economy, City of Abbotsford challenges (events), Lack of Community engagement by the Public.
- large geography (accessibility challenges); lack of event variety; lack of DIY and small community/grass roots events; lack of arts and culture events; because of this I'm surprised that people would come to Abby from afar as a destination and not just passing through – I think local tourism/"staycation" is a natural audience
- economy, local regulations, cohesion between tourist sites
- zoning that facilitates more tourism-themed areas- sports, activity centres, kids' education daycamps
- lack of accommodations
- public transit
- Cost prohibitive to low income families
- Not enough space in programs for all to attend
- lack of conference centre
- lack of quality hotel rooms
- limited events
- the city of Abbotsford
- City of Abbotsford, Lack of a strong / cool downtown core, Lack of cool things to do in the city
- Donald Trump
- lack of walkable spaces, lack of support from the city for events and culture, highway 1
- traffic from Vancouver is brutal bad press from the floods
- lack of awareness beyond farms
- Not enough support/financial support for good events, lacking resources/venues for hosting, lack of city support
- Proximity to Vancouver; Highway 1; lack of festivals and cultural events
- Economy is suffering. Taxation and inflation are robbing Canadians and making the "extras" in life unaffordable
- recreation facilities, accommodation
- Workforce shortages, inconsistencies & training; brand visibility outside of the Valley; Inattention to poverty, housing & other social challenges; Abundant choices within a competitive regional array of events, experiences & facilities.
- Funding, lack of city support, agricultural regulations
- Geography outside the largest urban population area. High cost of City of Abbotsford event support services (police, fire, roads, etc.). Lack of adequate hotel space during peak tourism periods.
- Government support through permitting and grants, the city's layout, Lack of entertainment neighborhood/nightlife
- The need for additional outdoor trails. Development of McKee trails leaves a huge hole in our community for outdoor activities such as hiking, biking and trail running.
- Accommodation, parks and recreation facilities, Agricultural regulations
- Having Abbotsford viewed as a destination for tourism/ events and not just somewhere to go from.
- Economic conditions for families.
- Cost of "tourism" activities Lack of awareness
- Lack of new recreation centres, sports fields and outdoor biking/hiking
- A lack of will on the part of the City to create tourist and/ or entertainment districts that help create a more desirable city to live, work and play. (i.e. there was no identified entertainment district(s) in their most recent community plan that I could see. A lack of meaningful investment in community-based events - feel like we do the minimum and then call it an 'event'- it's a bit embarrassing (i.e. downtown Christmas Tree - ugly). Residents, municipal leaders and business owners can afford to show some more pride in our City.
- We need more space, commitment (from the city) and opportunities for events and experiences. The city doesn't always provide accurate, consistent or adequate information in a timely manner.
- Permit issues
- People staying home to save money in these difficult times
- Political red tape
- we need more options of activities in Abbotsford



APPENDIX B

18. The last words are yours:

Great job! Can't wait to see what you have in store for 2026.

The Tourism Abbotsford team continues to make a huge impact on our community. Their collaborative approach, strong partnerships, and genuine support for local businesses and events help elevate Abbotsford as a destination. They consistently champion community partners, foster meaningful connections, and contribute to the growth and vibrancy for tourism in Abbotsford.

We have highly valued our tourism partners over the past many years and enjoy their enthusiasm and dedication to the partnership with all stakeholders.

Focus on local businesses. Influencers don't make the difference.

Thank you, a great group that is passionate about supporting local and advocating for our ongoing growth of tourism activities here in Abbotsford.

The Tourism Abbotsford team is truly exceptional. They are incredibly hardworking, approachable, and consistently bring positivity and enthusiasm to everything they do. Whether they're supporting local businesses, showing up for the community, participating in events, or delivering signature experiences like Taste of Abby, their commitment to excellence is clear. Their passion for showcasing Abbotsford as a vibrant, welcoming destination is inspiring, and their impact can be seen across the community year-round. Beyond their professionalism, their creativity and personality truly set them apart—especially through thoughtful, fun touches like their annual holiday cards and year-end videos, which always bring a smile and strengthen connections with partners.

Tourism Abbotsford sets a high standard for collaboration, innovation, and community pride.

Our work relies on local tourism / "staycation". Targeting locals and those within the Fraser Valley / Metro Vancouver. I am unaware of how many people visit Abbotsford as a "destination". I would assume visits are part of regional tourism and just one stop for visitors. I wonder if Abby is a launch pad to other locations in the Fraser Valley given its central location. "hub of the valley"...

Tourism Abbotsford does amazing, inspired and visionary work! Thank you and congratulations!

Abbotsford has the making for a beverage trail

Abbotsford Tourism continues to go above and beyond in how they serve the Abbotsford community. I truly think this year you have stepped up what you were doing to seeing how you can refresh and take things to the next level this year. I have appreciated the further collaboration with events and seeing newer faces on marketings/social media instead of just the same businesses being promoted. Would love to see that continue.



I would love to see further clarification and direction on the grants being offered. Especially as it relates to the marketing grant, the needle seems to keep changing making it hard to understand what it is Tourism is looking to do with that. I'm excited to see where Tourism is headed in 2026 and beyond!

Incredible work from such a small team! Thoughtful planning and time use; connecting with the community to know how best to serve/market.

Tourism Abbotsford's biggest strength is the team. They've built a really solid balance between promoting Abbotsford, developing the destination itself, and working closely with local businesses. It doesn't feel like marketing in isolation — it feels collaborative and practical. The work they've done has helped tourism grow in a way that supports the whole community, and you can see the impact. It's a strong foundation to keep building on.

Strong work on behalf of the community from a small and dedicated team.

Really appreciate what the team does, they do great with what they have. Would love to see more diversity overall. Would also be great to see the City do more, it seems like they shutdown ideas or growth in the community. Abbotsford is such a great place but it seems like other communities just seem to do it better with overall lifestyle improvement.

Thanks for being awesome. Your support this past year is appreciated and the work you do, is very visible for a small business such as ours.

Thanks to the hardworking team! Great work.

It appears there is a renewed focus and improvement on tourism, seeing Abbotsford for the many things it has that have been somewhat overlooked. We are much more than a farm stop to see the local blueberries and flowers. These are strong anchors but the reach can be so much more.

Great and engaging tourism team

Thank you for your work. Keep it up - and thanks for checking in.

Just keep doing what you are doing. Its been great!

Very impressed by the staff and their dedication

Keep up the good work and please include your local politicians in all communications and events... thanks

