



TOURISM MISSION¹ STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2026

CHAIR'S MESSAGE



What an incredible journey Tourism Mission has been on!

In May of 2019, the responsibility for tourism and the running of Mission's Visitor Centre was brought back into the domain of the City of Mission. Tourism Mission is managed by Clare Seeley and became part of the Economic Development Office of our community. The call for community members to form an advisory committee began immediately, and the formation of the Tourism Committee occurred in July 2019.

Within the tourism industry itself, there is not simply one facet that defines the sector. Our committee members represented the sector's diversity, allowing for a complete and holistic lens to build and grow tourism in Mission.

The committee began getting to work immediately. Guided by our Vision and Mission statements, we focused on defining Mission's brand, creating an interactive website that showcased the beauty of our community and provided both visitors and residents with exceptional itineraries to explore the diversity of what Mission has to offer. Throughout the pandemic, the work continued; the website developed and honed to capture and share what makes Mission unique. We focused on establishing a solid presence online and in print, publishing our first Visitor Guide to share throughout British Columbia. The resulting website and visitor guide are both innovative and intuitive, capturing both the natural beauty and the edgy spirit that defines us today.

TOURISM COMMITTEE

The Tourism Committee is a sub-committee of the Economic Development Select Committee (EDSC), appointed as an advisory body providing recommendations on tourism priorities, policies and matters that will foster and enhance community pride, visitor attraction, new tourism experiences and economic growth within the community.

We would like to thank all committee members who have been instrumental in the development of this plan:

PRESENT

Paula Kent, Committee Chair
Wynn Hollingshead, Sports Car Club of BC
Glen Robertson, EDSC Representative
Gwen Schmidt, Community Futures North Fraser
Michelle Demers Shaevitz, Mission Folk Music Festival
Ron Smith, Leq'á:mel Development Corporation
Jana Tennant, Steelhead Community Association
Ema Low, City of Mission
Clare Seeley, City of Mission

PAST

Rocky Blondin, Independent Cycles
Jo-Anne Chadwick, Fraser Valley Bald Eagle Festival
Katt Stearns, Katt Stearns Consulting
Stephanie Key, City of Mission



THE VISION

Sharing the wonders of Mission while keeping Mission wonderful.



MISSION STATEMENT

As an integral part of a thriving community, we will be innovative and strategic, ensuring tourism growth is sustainable, environmentally sound, and reflective of our diverse community.





THE PROJECT

The Tourism Committee has embarked upon a planning process to define the strategic direction for its tourism efforts over the next five years. The following plan represents the recommended areas of focus and priority investments to maximize progress towards a community-informed definition of success.

This plan is a living document to inform decision-making and resource allocation and should be regularly reviewed and updated with new market intelligence and community insights. The Tourism Committee consulted with and will share these recommendations with tourism businesses, organizations, and the community to refine and build support for its implementation.

Yearly tactics, timelines and measurements for success will be created annually in an Implementation Plan to further develop this document.

As Tourism Mission fulfills its role and works to achieve the objectives set out in this plan, these guiding principles will remain top of mind for the committee, staff and contractors:

- To be innovative & strategic
- To be respectful of the environment, Indigenous rights and title, Council's values and goals & objectives, and community and resident values
- To be transparent & accountable
- To work collaboratively

COMMUNITY CONTEXT



Defining the strategic direction for Tourism Mission begins with an acknowledgment of the history of Mission in order to understand where our values lie today, and where we hope to go in future years.

Mission is situated on the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territories of the Stó:lō Peoples (the people of the river), and in particular, on the lands of the Leq'á:mel (Leq'amel), Màthexwi (Matsqui), Sq'éwlets (Scowlitz), Semá:th (Sumas) and Kwantlen First Nations.

The Stó:lō Peoples have lived on the land that is now Mission since time immemorial. They have unique cultural and traditional practices which define their communities and inform their livelihoods today. The downriver dialect of Halq'eméylem is the language spoken by Stó:lō peoples.

Demonstrative of their long history is the National Historic Site Xá:ytem, home to a 6,000-year-old Pit House and Transformer Rock. The Pit House is one of the oldest archaeological sites in Canada, with the Transformer Rock holding a significant place in Stó:lō oral traditions.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT



Fraser River Heritage Park is the recognized site of a past federally-mandated Indian residential school, that operated from 1867 to 1984, the impacts of which continue to reverberate today.

In 2021, an historic land-transfer agreement was signed between the Province, the LMS Society, (Leq'á:mel, Matsqui and Sumas First Nations), and the City of Mission to return traditional lands to the First Nations and establish new public parklands, recreation areas, and to support residential and economic growth.

Tourism Mission commits to working with First Nations peoples to pursue meaningful change through developing a respectful and reciprocal relationship that offers culturally responsible and educative experiences, that align with the City of Mission's principles of reconciliation.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT



COMMUNITY CONTEXT



The colonial history of Mission is one driven by industry with lumber producers, railway builders, berry and dairy farmers able to maximize the fertile lands and natural resources to be found in the area.

Mission continues to manage a Tree Farm to this day (TFL#26), with these resources forming an integral part of the lifestyle on offer. This affords the community added economic and recreational benefits.

With a community spirit and sense of authenticity born of hard work and persistence, triumph and challenge, Mission by its admission likes to be just a little ‘rough around the edges”; proud to hold on to the small-town feel and sense of belonging as the community grows.

The community has established a vision for its future and framework to guide growth as documented in the Official Community Plan (OCP) adopted in January 2018. Elements from this also appeal to visitors and consequently, the community’s commitment to achieving this vision will also create a strong foundation for growth in the visitor economy.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

With the projected population set to reach over 50,000 by 2027 and many large development initiatives currently in the planning stage, including the Silverdale Comprehensive Planning Area, the Waterfront Revitalization Master Plan, and the Stave Heights Neighbourhood Plan, the geographical and economic landscape of Mission is set to change dramatically in future years.

The community's vision would seem to broadly direct Tourism Mission to attract visitors that value Mission as its residents do. Visitors who will use local shops, hotels, and restaurants and through their spending support the community, allowing it to benefit from graciously sharing their 'playground' with like-minded and respectful visitors.



DEFINING SUCCESS FOR TOURISM IN MISSION



PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

2018-2021: To build alliances and partnerships across the community, industry, user groups, and region. To maximize funding and investment opportunities and unify the marketing message.

- ✓ The Tourism Committee was created with a cross-section of stakeholders
- ✓ Tourism Mission participate in the Stave West Leadership Team
- ✓ We proactively participate in the cooperative marketing partnerships with BC Route 7 and the Fraser Valley Group
- ✓ We have begun to cultivate relationships with local First Nations communities, businesses, and organizations

MARKETING & BRAND DEVELOPMENT

2018-2021: To create a brand identity and cohesive marketing campaign that inspires and attracts increased visitation to the community, while also generating a sense of pride for local residents.

- ✓ Created a brand identity, Mission & Vision Statement
- ✓ Launched the Tourism Mission website
- ✓ Built social media content, engagement, and audience
- ✓ Produced the first Tourism Mission Visitor Guide

SUCCESSES TO DATE (2018-2021)





SUCCESSSES TO DATE (2018-2021)

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

2018-2021: To cultivate the development of new tourism experiences with the supporting infrastructure to enhance visitor attraction and growth. Create a healthy tourism economy and improve lifestyle benefits for local residents.

- ✓ Supported the Stave West Leadership Team
- ✓ Compiled an inventory list
- ✓ Partnered with Parks & Recreation and the Fraser Valley Mountain Bike Association to develop a kids skills park at Mill Pond
- ✓ Became part of the Fraser Valley Destination Development Working Committee

VISITOR SERVICES

2018-2021: To offer excellent visitor information and customer services through a variety of physical and virtual platforms, including the Visitor Information Centre (VIC), social media, and print materials.

- ✓ Seamless transition of Visitor Services to the City of Mission
- ✓ Hired staff - full time and summer students
- ✓ Added "Live Chat" functionality on the website
- ✓ Installed accessible doors at the Visitor Information Centre

CURRENT AUDIENCE

DAY TRIP MARKET

3

TRAVELLER TYPES

AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCER
CULTURAL EXPLORER
FREE SPIRIT

VISITOR ORIGIN

LOWER MAINLAND
THOMPSON OKANAGAN
ALBERTA

MOTIVATION

ROAD TRIPS
OUTDOOR RECREATION
VISITING FRIENDS & FAMILY
FILM
FESTIVALS & EVENTS



SOCIAL GOALS

AGED 25-34

**67% WOMEN
33% MEN**

**75% CANADA
9% USA
2% UK
2% INDIA**

TARGET AUDIENCE

DAY TRIP MARKET

GOAL: OVERNIGHT STAYS

3

TRAVELLER TYPES

AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCER
CULTURAL EXPLORER
FREE SPIRIT

VISITOR ORIGIN

LOWER MAINLAND
THOMPSON OKANAGAN
ALBERTA
EAST COAST (YXX)
INTERNATIONAL

MOTIVATION

ROAD TRIPS
OUTDOOR RECREATION
VISITING FRIENDS & FAMILY
FILM
FESTIVALS & EVENTS



SOCIAL GOALS

ADD 55-65+

SHOULDER SEASON

CANADA
USA-
WASHINGTON
UK
AUSTRALIA
GERMANY

SWOT

Strengths

S

- Municipal Forest including the Stave West Forest and Outdoor Recreation Area
- Strong Indigenous history and culture
- Access to outdoor recreation
- Fraser River
- Experiences & Attractions – Raceway, Powerhouse
- Historic Downtown, small town vibe, diverse community
- Depth of local talent
- Growing Film/TV reputation

Opportunities

O

- Experience the Fraser
- Creation of new Indigenous experiences led by First Nations
- Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT)
- Mission Waterfront
- Attraction & policy for accommodations
- Development of a fully integrated trail network
- Equipment rentals
- Attraction to new markets via Abbotsford Airport
- Creation of new events and festivals

Weaknesses

W

- Wildlife Interactions
- Lack of accommodations
- Lack of market awareness
- Transportation for those without vehicle - Car Hire, taxi's, Uber
- Lack of tourism infrastructure—roads, parking, amenities
- Staffing levels
- Funding
- Evening experiences

Threats

T

- Wildfire & weather event risks
- Supply and demand/ staffing levels
- Global stability & economic conditions
- Lack of respect for use of lands & waters
- Mission's growing population and impacts to infrastructure
- Resident Sentiment – suspected negative due to overcrowding
- Neighbouring communities offering similar experiences

5 STRATEGIC PILLARS

This strategic plan provides pillars that will oversee the direction and focus for the next five years. Each pillar has an overarching value and goals, with the tactics introduced over the plan's lifespan. There is a detailed Implementation Plan for 2022 (Appendix B), with a new plan to be provided annually, adapting to new challenges and opportunities as needed.

STRATEGIC PILLARS



1. RESEARCH & INDUSTRY SUPPORT

To gain a clear understanding of our visitors and key markets: where they are going, for how long, their motivations and priorities. This will inform marketing and investment opportunities and begin to develop “the value of tourism” for the City.

2. DESTINATION MARKETING

To create a brand identity and cohesive marketing campaign that inspires and attracts increased visitation and economic spending to the community; while also generating investment interest and a sense of pride for residents.

3. DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

To support the realization of Mission’s potential as a tourism destination and enhance the competitive edge through the development of new business and recreational products.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

4. COMMUNICATION & ADVOCACY

To create a network of connected and strategically aligned stakeholders and partners who collaborate with all levels of government and engaged citizen advocates to generate a strong visitor economy.

5. VISITOR SERVICING, EDUCATION & STEWARDSHIP

To offer excellent visitor information and customer service through a variety of physical and virtual platforms. To educate residents and visitors in a mindful way to the importance of the natural resources available .



RESEARCH & INDUSTRY SUPPORT

To gain a clear understanding of our visitors and key markets: where they are going, for how long, their motivations and priorities. This will inform marketing and investment opportunities and begin to develop “the value of tourism” for the City and business community.

GAUGE RESIDENT SENTIMENT

Engage with the community to understand the general climate and any specific “pinch points”.
To share the value of tourism.

UNDERSTAND VISITOR NEEDS

Who is currently visiting, their travel motivators, and satisfaction with experience to align marketing and development opportunities.

SHARE STAKEHOLDER RESEARCH

Partner with stakeholders to gain insight and share information that will inform and encourage business owners to understand and respond to market demands and unfulfilled traveller needs.

ESTABLISH THE VALUE OF TOURISM

Combine all available data from stakeholders regarding attendance, overnight visitation, and economic spending to find a value of tourism baseline and establish workable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

DESTINATION MARKETING

To create a brand identity and cohesive marketing campaign that inspires and attracts increased visitation and economic spending to the community; while also generating investment interest and a sense of pride for residents.

CREATE & PROTECT STRONG BRANDING & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Ensure our brand cannot be utilized without our permission.

ATTRACT FILM INDUSTRY/ FILM TOURISM

Create synergy between filming in Mission and film tourism.

SUPPORT SPORTS TOURISM

Attract sports enthusiasts and events that align with Mission i.e. mountain biking, motorsports, trail running.

MARKETING FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Examine methods to bring in additional funds for marketing the community.

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

To support the realization of Mission's potential as a tourism destination and enhance its competitive edge through the development of new business and recreational products.

ADD TOURISM LENS TO COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Participate in planning discussions related to public and private infrastructure providing a tourism lens on needs and opportunities.

SUPPORT INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Support First Nations communities in their journey to develop Indigenous cultural experiences.

PROACTIVELY ATTRACT TOURISM BUSINESS

Utilize research and economic development role to attract and support tourism-related businesses.

COMMUNICATION & ADVOCACY

To create a network of connected and strategically aligned stakeholders and partners who collaborate with all levels of government and engaged citizen advocates to generate a strong visitor economy.

IMPROVE RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

Communicate and engage regularly with residents, creating two-way dialogue.

CREATE POSITIVE MESSAGING

Work with stakeholders and community members to develop and widely share a resident/visitor code of conduct or pledge to align with Mission's values.

PROVIDE TIMELY TOURISM INDUSTRY ADVOCACY

Ensure that the Tourism Committee can offer support and advocacy in a time appropriate manner.

DEVELOP STRONG STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS

To create partnerships, alignment and information sharing for the betterment of the Mission tourism industry.

VISITOR SERVICING, EDUCATION & STEWARDSHIP

To offer excellent visitor information and customer service through a variety of physical and virtual platforms.
To educate residents and visitors in a mindful way to the importance of the natural resources available and the benefits of responsible tourism.

OFFER A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

Create a welcoming environment across all communication channels including social media, website, e mail, live-chat, phone and in-person.

EASE OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Utilize a variety of methods to share information including website, social media, print publications, advertising and in-person.

CREATE A VISITOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

Create a plan for Mission and work collaboratively with the Fraser Valley to positively influence visitor behaviour and utilize dispersion tactics to minimize negative impacts from tourism.

EMERGENCY PLANNING FOR TOURISM

Ensure a crisis plan and communications support is available to visitors in an emergency situation that aligns with both DBC's visitor network and the City.

EXPLORER QUOTIENT



CULTURAL EXPLORERS

Personality traits: Open, accepting, non-traditional, enthusiastic, spontaneous.

Will seek: constant travel, living history/culture, the beauty of nature, shared experiences.

Demographics:
35-54 43% 55+ 30%
57% - Women 43% - Men

Mainly middle aged with no dependantkids at home.



AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCERS

Personality Traits: Steadfast, understated, responsible, interested, rational.

Will seek: living history/culture, to understand cultural differences, a variety of dining choices.

Demographics:
35-54 31% 55+ 53%
46% - Women 54% - Men

Mainly mature audinece.



FREE SPIRITS

Personality traits: extroverted, driven, open, fun-loving, adventurous.

Will seek: constant comparison travel, rejuvenation, checklist samplers, shared experiences.

Demographics:
18 - 34 40% 35-54 40%
54% - Women 46% - Men

Mainly young families and young with no kids.

THANK YOU



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