Osoyoos and South Okanagan-Similkameen Launches its First-Ever Tourism Master Plan

Osoyoos, BC (November 28, 2025): A first-ever Tourism Master Plan was released on Wednesday, November 26, for Osoyoos and the South Okanagan-Similkameen region after more than two years of intensive research, planning, and community consultations.

The Tourism Master Plan for Osoyoos and the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) Areas A&B was a community-led, grassroots initiative that involved local organizations in arts and culture, tourism, recreation, business, and supporting local and regional governments.

The Plan used a Community Based Tourism (CBT) planning model that emphasizes the health, vibrancy, and sustainability of the destination and community, itself, which ultimately results in a more attractive place to invest, work, and visit.

“Marketing and promotions are still a core part of what we do at Destination Osoyoos, but this is being balanced with ensuring that tourism looks inward at the community and responds to the changing needs of our residents, businesses, and the environment,” states Kelley Glazer, CEO of Destination Osoyoos, one of the project sponsors.

“We’re excited to develop more community-based arts initiatives together - public art crawls, local festivals and arts events that celebrate and support local artists and musicians, connecting visitors with grassroots creative talent, sharing the rich Indigenous creative culture of the region… the opportunities are limitless,” said Roberta Nott, President of the Osoyoos and District Arts Council (ODAC).

With a detailed planning process that spanned more than two years, contributing members of the Task Force were able to use the early research and planning results to begin implementing elements of the plan even before its completion.

The Town of Osoyoos was a key partner supporting the Tourism Master Plan, recognizing its important role in providing much of the infrastructure and public services that tourists and residents rely upon. “We are already acting on many of the priorities in the Tourism Master Plan, such as new recreation infrastructure like the playground at Kinsmen Park, the swim platform at Gyro Beach, and donations to our valued non-profit entities that organize year-round events in the community,” said Town of Osoyoos Mayor, Sue McKortoff, who chaired the third meeting of the Project Task Force and provided significant in-kind support to the project.

Destination Osoyoos is currently mid-way through the development of an agri-tourism program – the South Okanagan Farm Trail – that will connect visitors with the deep agricultural roots of the region, building on the strengths of the winery tour sector and expanding it to farms and orchards. “We are grateful to the Economic Trust of the Southern Interior (ETSI-BC) for funding the Farm Trail project to help diversify local farm incomes through tourism while providing tourists with truly unique and authentic experiences connected to our rich agricultural heritage,” said Kelley Glazer, CEO of Destination Osoyoos.

At the core of this work was a detailed resident engagement process, including a resident survey in late 2022 that

received more than 800 responses, as well as a follow-up questionnaire in 2023 that produced more than 2,300 specific written comments from residents on ways to diversify and grow tourism while addressing their concerns about possible negative impacts of tourism.

Environmental sustainability and even regeneration – which aims to rehabilitate and restore natural ecosystems – are foundational elements in the Tourism Master Plan, led by organizations such as the Osoyoos Desert Centre and the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen. "Osoyoos Desert Centre is proud to contribute to the development of the Tourism Master Plan and to help ensure that sustainable tourism remains a priority for our region. As stewards of one of Canada's rarest and at-risk ecosystems, we believe that meaningful tourism growth goes hand in hand with protecting the natural landscapes that make this place so special. This plan reflects a shared commitment to building a future where visitors, residents, and the environment all thrive together," says Jayme Friedt, Executive Director of Osoyoos Desert Centre.

"Tourism connects people to the heart of our region," said Mark Pendergraft, RDOS chair. "Working collaboratively with Indigenous communities and other partners, the RDOS is committed to shaping a future where tourism celebrates culture and safeguards the natural beauty that defines us."

To view the Tourism Master Plan, **click here**.

Media Contacts:

Kelley Glazer
CEO, Destination Osoyoos
kglazer@destinationosoyoos.com
250.495.5070

Sue McKortoff, Mayor of Osoyoos
smckortoff@osoyoos.ca