

Tourism Industry Association of BC

# 2022 Municipal Election Toolkit



# About TIABC

The Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia (TIABC) is the province's leading advocacy organization for the tourism industry, representing businesses, destination management organizations, sector associations, Indigenous tourism operators, and communities across British Columbia.

For 50 years, TIABC has served as the collective voice of British Columbia's tourism industry, working with all levels of government to advance policies, investments, and initiatives that strengthen BC's visitor economy and support the long-term success of the industry.

A key part of TIABC's role is providing tourism sector interest holders with practical resources that strengthen their advocacy efforts and help them engage effectively with decision-makers.

This Municipal Elections Toolkit is one of those resources. It has been developed to help tourism businesses and organizations build productive, non-partisan relationships with municipal election candidates, communicate the value of tourism in their communities, and encourage policies that support a vibrant, sustainable visitor economy across British Columbia.



PHOTO CREDIT KOOTENAY ROCKIES TOURISM/MITCH WINTON

*TIABC respectfully acknowledges that our work takes place across the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of First Nations throughout BC. We honour the Indigenous Peoples and communities who have cared for these lands and waters since time immemorial and remain grateful for the opportunity to live, work, and welcome visitors throughout the province.*

# The Toolkit

As a tourism sector interest holder, you have a direct stake in municipal elections because local governments make decisions that shape the strength of visitor economies, including decisions related to planning, infrastructure, transportation, recreation, economic development and community investment.

By engaging with candidates, tourism businesses and organizations can help ensure the value of tourism is understood and reflected in future municipal priorities.

This toolkit provides a 3-step process that includes the practical information, key messages and engagement resources needed to support informed, constructive conversations with candidates and to help keep tourism firmly on the local agenda.



## 3 Steps to Make Tourism Count

This toolkit is designed to guide you through three steps that will help you engage confidently and effectively throughout the municipal election campaign.

1

### Learn

Learn about the key issues affecting tourism, understand the value of the visitor economy and identify the priorities that matter most in your community.

2

### Prepare

Prepare by gathering the facts, developing clear local messages and creating a practical plan for candidate engagement.

3

### Engage

Engage by educating candidates, asking informed questions and encouraging meaningful commitments that support a strong and sustainable local visitor economy.

# Step 1: Learn

Effective advocacy begins with understanding the facts. This section provides key messages about the importance of tourism, a one-page value of tourism in BC overview, information about the Province's Look West Tourism Sector Action Plan, and a resource list with links to local tourism facts and figures. Together, these resources will help you understand tourism's contribution to B.C.'s economy, build your knowledge of tourism in your own community, and explain why municipal candidates need to consider tourism when making decisions about the future.

## Resource Links

**Tourism Industry Association of BC**

<https://www.tiabc.ca>

### **DestinationBC - Value of Tourism**

<https://www.destinationbc.ca/who-we-are/the-power-of-tourism-bc>

2024 value of tourism data, released in February 2026, demonstrates the economic powerhouse that is tourism in BC.

### **Look West Tourism Sector Action Plan**

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/look-west-strategy/diversifying-markets-and-growing-targeted-sectors/tourism-action-plan>

A strategic roadmap launched by the BC government to double the province's tourism revenue to \$48 billion by 2036.

### **BC Destination Management Organization Association**

<https://bcdmoa.ca/bcdmoa-members/>

A list of local Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), along with contact information for each organization. Your local DMO will be able to assist you with tourism information about your community.



## Step 1: Learn

# Key Messages – Economic Impact



### Tourism Generates Tax Revenue That Supports Communities

Tourism-generated tax revenues help fund the public services and infrastructure such as roads, public spaces, transit and emergency services that communities rely on. The BC tourism industry generates approximately **\$2.1 billion in combined provincial and municipal tax revenue annually**.

*Source: Destination BC, 2024 Value of Tourism: A Snapshot of Tourism in BC*



### Tourism Creates Jobs

Tourism provides employment in communities of every size, including rural, remote and Indigenous communities. It supports careers in accommodation, food services, transportation, attractions, recreation, events and many other sectors. **In 2024, tourism supported more than 113,000 direct jobs in British Columbia and nearly 163,000 full-time jobs when indirect and induced employment was included.**

*Source: Destination BC, Tourism in BC: New 2024 Data Highlights a Growing Economic Engine and Lasting Community Impact*



### Tourism Is One of BC's Largest Resource Industries

BC's mountains, forests, coastlines, lakes, wildlife and outdoor recreation opportunities are among the province's most valuable tourism assets. **Tourism generates \$23 billion in provincial revenue and contributes nearly \$8 billion to BC's GDP; more than other resource sectors including forestry, mining, and oil & gas.**

*Source: Destination BC, Tourism in BC: New 2024 Data Highlights a Growing Economic Engine and Lasting Community Impact*



## Step 1: Learn

# Key Messages – Economic Impact



### Tourism Is One of BC's Largest Exports

When international visitors purchase accommodations, transportation, meals, attractions and other tourism services, they bring new money into British Columbia's economy. **Tourism generates \$5.2 billion in annual export revenue**, exceeding agriculture, mining and quarrying and ranking behind only forestry and oil and gas extraction among the sectors compared.

*Source: Destination BC, The Visitor Economy*



### Tourism Depends on Supportive Public Policy

Municipal decisions related to housing, land use, permitting, infrastructure, transportation, public safety and community investment directly affect the ability of tourism businesses to operate, invest and grow. Nearly **17,000 businesses directly provide services to visitors across British Columbia**, and **77 per cent of residents agree that provincial investment in tourism infrastructure is important**.

*Source: Destination BC, Residents' Perceptions of British Columbia's Tourism Industry*



### Tourism Is Central to BC's Future

The Province's Look West Tourism Sector Action Plan recognizes tourism as a priority economic sector. Achieving its objectives will require coordinated action from industry and all levels of government. The plan sets a goal of **doubling annual tourism revenues to \$48 billion by 2036** by improving destination access, supporting events, attracting investment, strengthening marketing and creating a more supportive business environment.

*Source: Government of British Columbia, Look West: Tourism Sector Action Plan*



# TOURISM: BC'S ECONOMIC SUPERPOWER

Tourism is one of British Columbia's most powerful economic engines, supporting jobs, communities, Indigenous tourism, small businesses, and long term provincial prosperity.

STRONGER ECONOMY.  
STRONGER COMMUNITIES.  
**STRONGER BC.**

## 1 TOURISM BY THE NUMBERS



**\$23 BILLION**

Annual Tourism  
Revenue



NEARLY  
**\$8  
BILLION**

Contribution  
to BC GDP



**16,925**

Tourism  
Businesses



**163,000**

Jobs directly  
supported by  
visitor spending



**340,000**

Tourism & Hospitality  
Workforce



**\$5  
BILLION**

Annual Wages  
& Salaries



**\$2.1  
BILLION**

Provincial & Municipal  
Tax Revenue



**400+**

Indigenous Tourism  
Businesses



**\$1.1  
BILLION**

Indigenous Tourism  
Economic Impact



**\$6  
BILLION+**

Export Revenue  
Generated Annually

• All figures sourced from TIABC Budget Submission 2027. •

## 2 BC'S GOAL

LOOK WEST TOURISM SECTOR ACTION PLAN

TODAY  
**\$23  
BILLION**

Annual Tourism Revenue



GOAL BY 2036

**\$48  
BILLION**

Annual Tourism Revenue



Tourism revenue is projected to more than double through strategic investment and coordinated action.

## 3 TOURISM INVESTMENT PAYS BACK

DESTINATION  
MARKETING ROI



**\$1  
INVESTED  
=**

**\$23.85**

ECONOMIC IMPACT

DESTINATION  
DEVELOPMENT ROI



**\$1  
INVESTED  
=**

**\$2.25**

ECONOMIC IMPACT

BUSINESS  
EVENTS ROI



**\$1  
INVESTED  
=**

**\$16.4**

ECONOMIC IMPACT



For More Information  
About TIABC  
info@tiabc.ca  
or visit our website  
[www.tiabc.ca](http://www.tiabc.ca)

## Step 1: Learn

# Look West Tourism Sector Action Plan

The Province of British Columbia's **Look West Tourism Sector Action Plan** identifies tourism as a priority industry with the potential to strengthen communities, diversify the economy and create jobs throughout the province. Although the action plan has a provincial focus, its success will depend on decisions made by municipal governments.

Built around a **five-point action plan**, the strategy establishes a goal of increasing annual visitor spending to **\$48 billion by 2036**.

### #1 Marketing: Inspiring the World to Explore BC

Municipal governments support this work by partnering with **Destination Marketing Organizations** and accommodation providers. Protecting the integrity of the **Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT)** ensures visitor-generated revenues continue to fund tourism marketing and destination development

### #2 Destination Access: Widening the Doors to BC

Municipalities contribute by improving local transit connections, roads, parking, sidewalks, cycling routes, signage and access to attractions, downtowns, accommodations and recreation areas. They also have an important advocacy role in securing better air, ferry, highway and intercommunity transportation services.

### #3 Event Hosting: Hosting the World Through Culture and Commerce

Municipal governments are essential partners because they control many event venues, public spaces, permits, and local services. Communities can support this goal by developing event strategies, simplifying approval processes and investing in facilities capable of hosting cultural, sporting, business and community events.

### #4 Investment Attraction: Fuelling B.C.'s Tourism Economic Potential

Municipal governments influence whether investment proceeds through zoning, development charges, servicing requirements, approval timelines and the availability of suitable land. Communities can support investment by identifying development opportunities, providing clear information and creating predictable approval processes. Investors have choices.

### #5 Enabling Growth: Removing Roadblocks to Tourism Growth

Municipalities can advance this work by reviewing outdated bylaws, improving permitting timelines, coordinating municipal departments and consulting tourism operators before introducing new fees or regulations. They can also use reliable tourism data when making decisions about housing, infrastructure, transportation and economic development.

## Step 1: Learn

# Key Messages – Community Impact



### Tourism Enhances Quality of Life

Tourism supports the events, cultural programming, vibrant public spaces, local experiences, and community gathering places that make communities more enjoyable places to live. For residents, this creates more opportunities to connect with one another, celebrate local identity, and feel a stronger sense of belonging and pride in their community.



### Tourism Helps Create Vibrant Downtowns

Visitor spending supports local retailers, restaurants, cafés, galleries, and entertainment venues. For residents, this means more local choices, stronger main streets, fewer vacant storefronts, and a downtown that feels active and welcoming.



### Tourism Expands Recreation Opportunities

Tourism helps build demand and support for trails, waterfront access, cycling routes, sports facilities, and outdoor recreation infrastructure. Residents benefit directly through better access to recreation, healthier lifestyles, and more ways to enjoy their community year-round. These opportunities also contribute to the mental and physical health of residents.



## Step 1: Learn

# Key Messages – Community Impact



### **Tourism Supports Community Amenities**

Tax revenues generated by tourism help support the maintenance and enhancement of community amenities, from sidewalks, parks, and public spaces to museums, conference facilities, cultural venues, transportation services, and recreational infrastructure. These investments benefit residents every day while ensuring communities remain welcoming, functional, and attractive for visitors.



### **Tourism Strengthens Workforce Attraction and Retention**

Communities with strong restaurants, recreation, cultural activity, and a clear sense of place are more attractive to workers and their families. This helps local employers recruit and retain people, while giving residents access to a broader range of services and employment opportunities.



### **Tourism Helps Create Places Where People Want to Live**

Tourism encourages investment in a community's identity, appearance, accessibility, and overall experience. For residents, that creates greater local pride, stronger neighbourhoods, and a community that is more attractive to businesses, workers, families, and future investment.



PHOTO CREDIT DESTINATION BC/REUBEN KRABBE

# Step 2: Prepare

Effective engagement starts with knowing who your local candidates are, what they stand for and how they can be reached. This section includes ideas and resources to help you research candidates, understand their priorities and identify opportunities to connect with them through campaign events, community forums, social media, email and direct conversations.

✦ **FIND YOUR LOCAL CANDIDATES BY VISITING ELECTIONS BC** ✦  
<https://elections.bc.ca/local-elections/2026-general-local-elections/>

There are several ways for you to be directly engaged in the lead-up to the municipal election to ensure tourism's voice is loud and clear in the debates, discussions, and within party platforms. Here are some examples:

- ✦ Attend or organize an all-candidates' debate.
- ✦ Invite candidates to an event you are hosting or to visit your business...or if time permits, invite them for an in person meeting.
- ✦ Share the TIABC Tourism Sector Information Package with your local candidates. Provide candidates with an overview of your tourism business and its social, economic, environmental, and employment contribution to your community.
- ✦ Write an email or send a social media message to your candidate with your ideas.
- ✦ Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper explaining the importance of electing municipal governments that support tourism in your community.
- ✦ Become a spokesperson on behalf of your sector/business and make yourself available to media to discuss various tourism issues.



# Step 3: Engage

This section provides key tourism issues and practical questions to help guide your conversations with municipal candidates. Use these resources to explain how local decisions affect tourism, raise the priorities that matter in your community and encourage candidates to make informed commitments that support a strong visitor economy.

## **ISSUE: Build Safe, Accessible & Welcoming Communities**

Visitors and residents value the same things: clean public spaces, safe streets, accessible facilities, clear signage, working washrooms and well-maintained parks, downtowns and waterfronts. Municipal investments in accessibility, public safety and community amenities improve the visitor experience while making communities better places to live.

### **Questions to Ask Candidates**

How will you improve the safety, cleanliness and accessibility of public spaces used by residents and visitors?

Will you support accessibility audits of municipal facilities, parks, trails, events and visitor services?

How will you address public safety concerns while ensuring vulnerable residents receive appropriate housing, health and social supports?

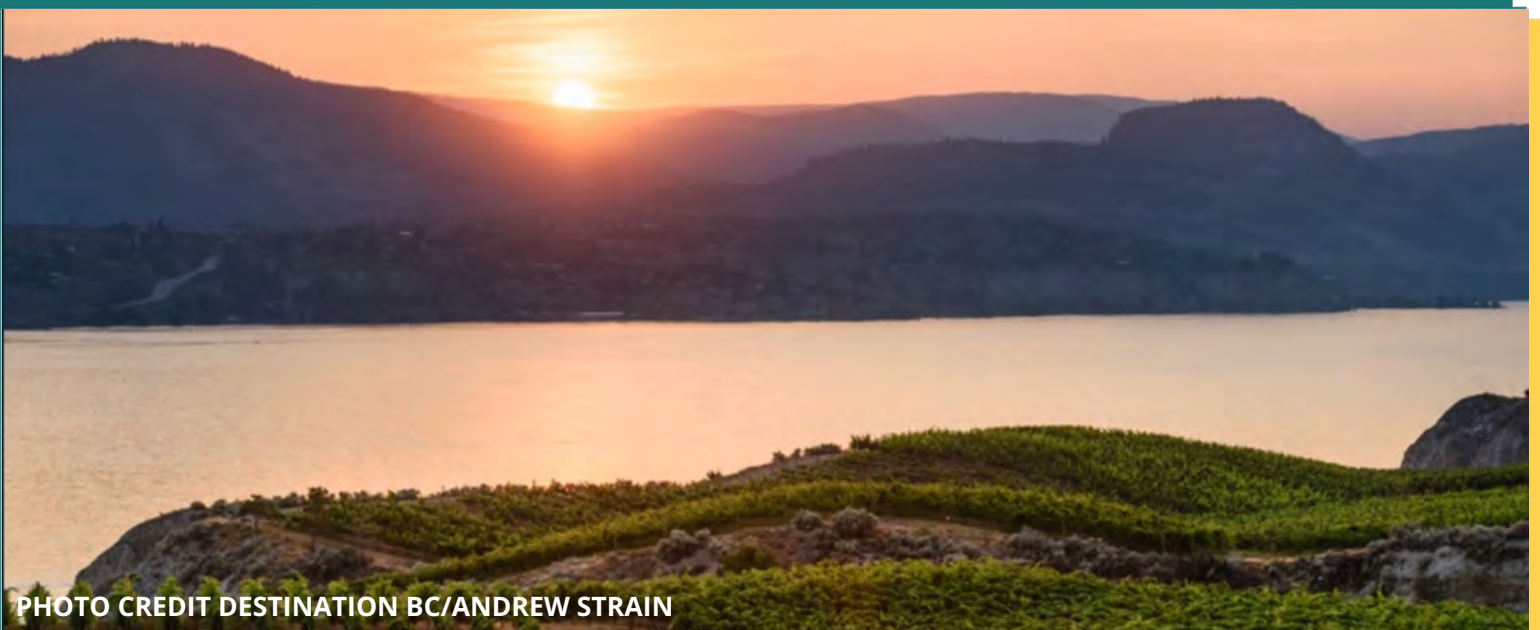


PHOTO CREDIT DESTINATION BC/ANDREW STRAIN

## ISSUE: Create the Conditions for Tourism Investment

Tourism businesses need predictable rules, reasonable timelines and clear municipal processes. Investment stalls when permits are delayed, bylaws conflict or applicants cannot get a straight answer from municipal departments. Communities that are prepared for investment are more likely to attract new accommodation, attractions, restaurants, events and visitor services.

Municipalities influence land use, zoning, development fees, business licensing, servicing requirements and approval timelines. Investors compare communities before committing capital. Municipal certainty matters.

### Questions to Ask Candidates

Will you establish clear timelines and service standards for permits, inspections, rezoning applications and business licences?

How will you reduce unnecessary duplication and delays affecting tourism businesses?

Will you support a tourism investment-readiness plan that identifies suitable land, infrastructure capacity and development opportunities?



PHOTO CREDIT TOURISM KELOWNA/DANICA LEE

## ISSUE: Ensure Tourism Workers Can Live in the Community

Tourism businesses cannot operate without workers, and workers cannot remain in communities where housing is unavailable or unaffordable. Municipal housing plans should include the needs of tourism workers, seasonal employees and other people who support the local visitor economy.

Local governments control important housing decisions through zoning, density, development approvals and land-use planning. Housing, workforce stability and visitor accommodation should be considered together rather than treated as unrelated policy files

### Questions to Ask Candidates

How will you increase attainable rental and workforce housing in the community?

Will you support staff housing, seasonal housing and other appropriate housing models?

How will you balance the need for permanent housing with the need for legitimate visitor accommodation?

Will Short Term Rentals impact staff housing in our community? if so, what will you do to ensure that the impact is minimized?



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## ISSUE: Include Tourism in Community Planning

Tourism should be included in official community plans, economic-development strategies, transportation plans, emergency plans and municipal budgets.

Municipal plans influence where tourism businesses can operate, where investment can occur and what infrastructure will be available. Early tourism-sector involvement produces better decisions and fewer expensive surprises later.

### Questions to Ask Candidates

Will you recognize tourism as an economic sector in the official community plan and municipal strategic plan?

How will tourism operators and Destination Management Organizations be included in planning and policy decisions?

What measures will you use to assess whether tourism is benefiting the community?



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## ISSUE: Invest in Infrastructure and Visitor Access

Tourism depends on reliable roads, water and wastewater systems, broadband, cellular service, public transit, parking, trails, recreation facilities, washrooms and signage. A community cannot promote visitor growth while ignoring the infrastructure required to support it.

Municipalities may not control highways, ferries or air service, but they control many local transportation connections and have a strong advocacy role with senior governments. Infrastructure used by visitors also serves residents and local businesses

### Questions to Ask Candidates

What infrastructure investments are needed to support tourism growth in this community?

How will you ensure that accessibility considerations are part of infrastructure and community planning?

How will you improve connections between downtowns, accommodation, transportation hubs, attractions and recreation areas?

Will tourism demand be included in the municipality's long-term infrastructure and asset-management planning?



PHOTO CREDIT DESTINATION BC/MITCH WINTON

## ISSUE: Partner with Indigenous Communities

Tourism development should be planned in partnership with the First Nations on whose territories communities are located. Effective partnerships may include shared planning, infrastructure, signage, events, visitor information and investment opportunities. These relationships require early engagement, respect and a willingness to listen before decisions are made.

Indigenous tourism must be Indigenous led. Municipalities have an important role as respectful partners in planning, investment, events, infrastructure and destination development

### Questions to Ask Candidates

How will you strengthen relationships with local First Nations?

Will Indigenous governments and tourism businesses be included in tourism planning and economic-development discussions?

How will the municipality support Indigenous-led tourism opportunities without speaking on behalf of Indigenous communities?



PHOTO CREDIT DESTINATION BC/ABBY COOPER

## ISSUE: Plan for Emergencies Year-Round

Good municipal planning supports tourism growth in ordinary times and protects the community when conditions change quickly. Communities must be prepared for wildfires, flooding, extreme weather and transportation disruptions that affect visitors and tourism businesses.

Visitors may not know local geography, evacuation routes or where to find accurate information. Tourism businesses and destination organizations can assist with communication, preparedness and recovery, but they need to be included before an emergency occurs.

### Questions to Ask Candidates

How will tourism operators and destination organizations be included in emergency planning and exercises?

Does the municipality have clear visitor communication, evacuation and economic-recovery plans?



PHOTO CREDIT DESTINATION BC/KARI MEDIG

## **ISSUE: Protect Tourism Funding & Strengthen Local Partnerships**

The Municipal and Regional District Tax, or MRDT, is an important source of funding for local tourism marketing, destination development, visitor services and other initiatives that support the long-term health of the visitor economy. The MRDT is paid by visitors and is intended to support tourism marketing, programs and projects that strengthen the local visitor economy.

Its integrity depends on municipalities working in genuine partnership with Destination Management Organizations and accommodation owners when setting priorities, approving plans and determining how revenues will be used.

### **Questions to Ask Candidates**

Will you protect MRDT revenues and ensure they continue to be used for their intended tourism purposes?

How will you work with destination management organizations and accommodation owners when developing MRDT plans and tourism priorities?

Will you support transparent decision-making, clear performance measures and regular reporting on how tourism revenues are invested?

Will you consult tourism partners before proposing changes to the use, administration or governance of MRDT funds?



# Contact

You know your community, your business and the realities of working in British Columbia's tourism industry. That experience gives you a credible and important voice during the municipal election. By learning the issues, preparing carefully and engaging directly with candidates, you can help ensure tourism is understood, valued and reflected in future municipal decisions.

Your conversations can shape local priorities, strengthen support for the visitor economy and help elect leaders who recognize the role tourism plays in creating jobs, supporting businesses and building stronger communities.

The next step is yours. Start the conversation, ask the questions and make **BC Tourism Count**.

For further information on TIABC, our policies, or the contents of this toolkit, please reach us using the contact details below:

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