

What We Heard



TIABC PROVINCIAL TOURISM ROUNDTABLES 2025-2026



Land Acknowledgement

The Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia (TIABC) respectfully acknowledges that the provincial tourism roundtables informing this report took place on the traditional territories of First Nations throughout BC. Over the course of this engagement process, TIABC travelled to communities across the province and had the privilege of gathering on the ancestral lands of Indigenous Peoples whose stewardship, cultures, histories, and connections to place have shaped these lands since time immemorial.

We recognize and honour the diversity of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples across BC and acknowledge the important contributions Indigenous communities, businesses, and tourism leaders make to the province's visitor economy.

As we look toward the future, TIABC remains committed to fostering respectful relationships, and working collaboratively with Indigenous partners to help build a strong, inclusive, and sustainable visitor economy for all British Columbians.



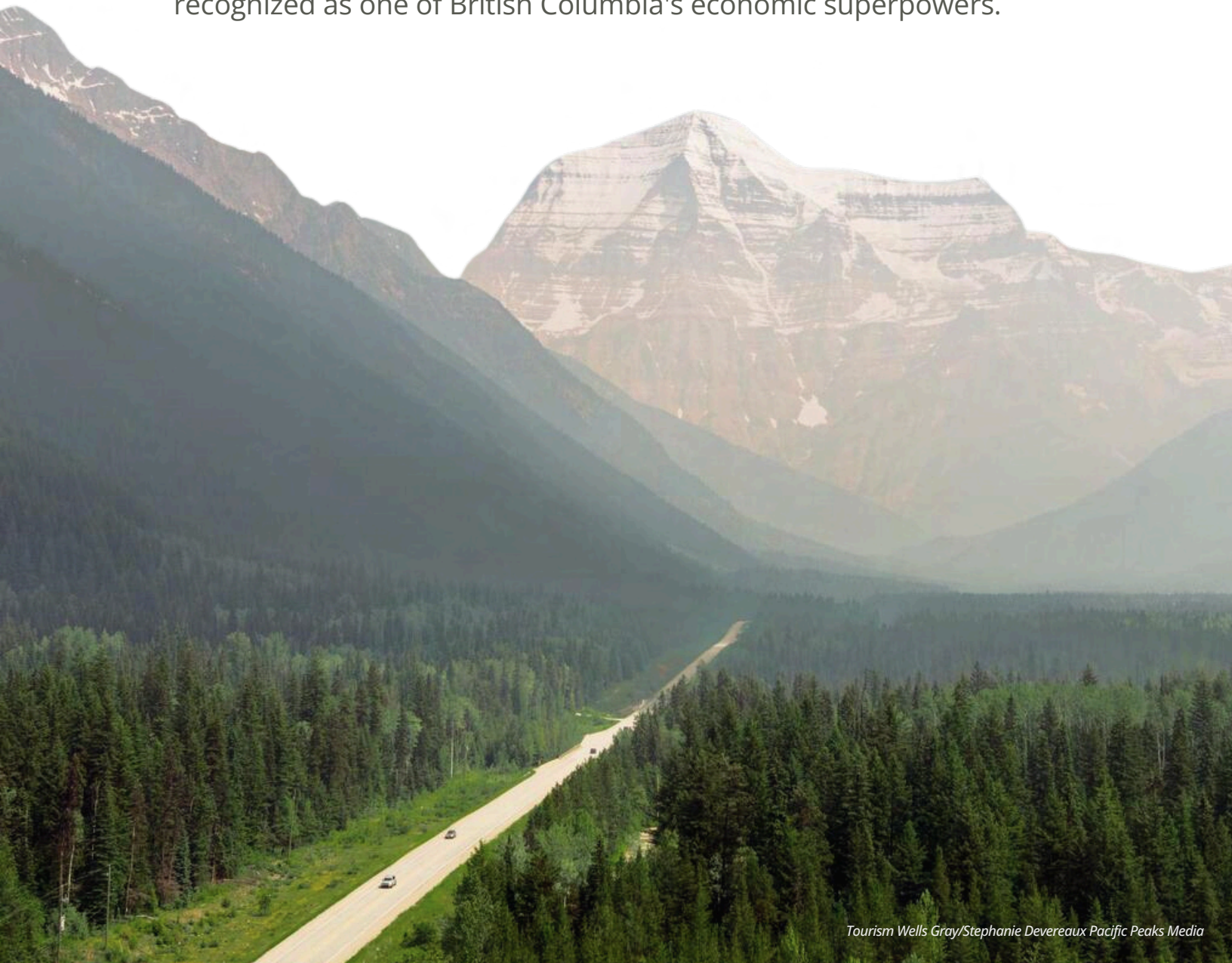
Thank you

TIABC extends its sincere appreciation to all participants, partners, hosts, and community leaders who contributed their time, expertise, and perspectives throughout this process. Their willingness to engage openly and constructively has helped create a stronger understanding of the issues facing the sector and will support a more coordinated and effective approach to advancing British Columbia's visitor economy.



Findings

The findings contained in this report represent what we heard from tourism interest holders across the province. Together, they provide a roadmap for advocacy, policy development, communications, education, and collaborative action as TIABC works with industry and government partners to strengthen BC's visitor economy and ensure tourism is recognized as one of British Columbia's economic superpowers.



Tourism Wells Gray/Stephanie Devereaux Pacific Peaks Media



Introduction

Tourism is one of British Columbia's most important economic sectors. It generates more than \$23 billion in annual revenue, supports a tourism and hospitality labour force of approximately 364,000 people, directly employs more than 163,000 British Columbians, contributes nearly \$8 billion to provincial GDP, and sustains thousands of businesses, communities, and livelihoods in every region of the province. Tourism is not simply an industry. It is a critical economic driver that supports local economies, strengthens communities, attracts investment, and generates tax revenues that help fund essential public services such as health care, education, transportation, and community infrastructure.

As the provincial voice of BC's visitor economy, the Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia (TIABC) is committed to ensuring that the perspectives, challenges, and opportunities facing tourism interest holders are understood by government decision-makers and the public alike. Effective advocacy begins with listening. To that end, TIABC undertook a series of regional tourism roundtables throughout 2025 and 2026 to hear directly from the businesses, organizations, and leaders who power BC's visitor economy.

Over the course of the year, TIABC leadership travelled to communities across British Columbia including Prince George, Quesnel, the Thompson Okanagan, Nanaimo, Victoria, the Fraser Valley, Metro Vancouver, Fernie, and Invermere. More than 200 tourism operators, destination management organizations, sector associations, Indigenous tourism representatives, local governments, community organizations, and other tourism interest holders participated in these discussions.

While each region faces its own unique circumstances, the conversations revealed a remarkable degree of consistency in the challenges and opportunities being experienced across the province. Participants highlighted concerns regarding workforce availability, affordability, transportation connectivity, regulatory complexity, destination infrastructure, and investment readiness. They also identified significant opportunities to strengthen tourism's contribution to economic development, community prosperity, Indigenous reconciliation, and regional diversification.



The insights captured through these discussions will play a critical role in shaping TIABC's advocacy priorities and policy recommendations for 2027 and beyond. They provide an important evidence base for engagement with all levels of government and influence-holders and will help ensure that future advocacy efforts reflect the realities experienced by tourism businesses and destinations throughout BC.

The challenges and opportunities identified through these roundtables provide valuable insight into the actions needed to strengthen BC's visitor economy and in turn, support implementation of the Province of British Columbia's Look West Tourism Sector Action Plan and its ambitious goal of doubling annual tourism revenues from \$23 billion to \$48 billion by 2036. Achieving that objective will require a coordinated effort among industry, communities, Indigenous partners, destination organizations, and governments at all levels. The more effectively we can address barriers to growth, improve competitiveness, support investment, strengthen workforce capacity, and build tourism infrastructure, the more likely BC will be to achieve its long-term tourism growth objectives and maximize the economic and social benefits tourism delivers to communities throughout the province.

Most importantly, these conversations reinforced a fundamental truth: tourism is a vital contributor to BC's economic prosperity, community well-being, and future growth. The visitor economy supports businesses large and small, creates employment opportunities in every region of the province, generates significant tax revenues, and contributes to the quality of life enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. As BC looks to strengthen its economy and diversify opportunities for communities, tourism will continue to play an increasingly important role in achieving those objectives.



Tourism Industry Insights

The following section highlights the key themes that emerged through TIABC's provincial tourism roundtables. While the challenges and opportunities varied by region, several common priorities were consistently identified across British Columbia and provide important insight into the issues affecting the visitor economy today.





1. Investment Attraction

Investment attraction is a critical component of a strong and competitive visitor economy. As one of the key pillars of the Province of British Columbia's Look West Tourism Sector Action Plan, attracting private sector investment will play an important role in expanding tourism capacity, enhancing visitor experiences, supporting community development, and creating long-term economic growth. Achieving the Province's goal of doubling tourism revenues to \$48 billion by 2036 will require a policy environment that encourages investment, supports business confidence, and enables tourism businesses and communities to develop the products, services, and experiences needed to meet future demand.

WHAT WE HEARD

Participants consistently emphasized that tourism investment extends well beyond accommodation development. Communities identified opportunities to attract investment into attractions, recreation infrastructure, transportation services, cultural experiences, Indigenous tourism enterprises, waterfront developments, year-round tourism assets, and visitor amenities. Many participants noted that investment attraction requires a coordinated approach involving local governments, Indigenous communities, destination organizations, industry, and provincial government partners.

There was broad recognition that tourism investment should be viewed as economic development. Participants noted that investments in tourism infrastructure and visitor experiences create employment opportunities, stimulate private sector growth, diversify local economies, and generate tax revenues that benefit communities throughout British Columbia.

Several communities also emphasized the need for greater support to help destinations become investment-ready through planning, infrastructure development, streamlined approvals, and tools that help attract and secure private sector investment.

The ability to attract new investment while supporting existing tourism businesses was viewed as a critical component of strengthening British Columbia's competitiveness and achieving the long-term growth objectives identified in the Look West Tourism Sector Action Plan.



KEY CHALLENGES

- Accommodation capacity remains a significant concern in many regions of British Columbia.
- Several communities reported that hotel inventory is fully occupied during peak tourism periods, limiting opportunities for additional visitation and economic growth.
- New hotel and accommodation developments are often challenged by rising construction costs, financing constraints, labour shortages, and lengthy development approval processes.
- Metro Vancouver participants identified a shortage of hotel room inventory capable of supporting large conferences, conventions, sporting events, and other major international events.
- Tourism entrepreneurs reported difficulty securing the capital required to launch, expand, or modernize tourism businesses and experiences.
- Economic uncertainty continues to affect investor confidence and willingness to undertake new tourism development projects.
- High upfront capital requirements create barriers for small business owners, tourism operators, and first-time entrepreneurs seeking to enter the tourism sector.
- Participants expressed concern about British Columbia's ability to remain competitive in attracting visitors and tourism investment relative to neighbouring jurisdictions.
- Several participants noted that British Columbia relies heavily on visitors from Alberta and expressed concern that increased tourism investment and marketing efforts by the Alberta government could influence travel patterns and visitor spending decisions.
- Participants observed that Alberta continues to make significant investments in tourism infrastructure, destination development, and visitor attraction initiatives, while British Columbia is perceived as losing competitive ground in some areas.



KEY OPPORTUNITIES/SOLUTIONS

- Create public-private co-funding partnership models that leverage private capital to support tourism facilities, attractions, and visitor infrastructure projects.
- Encourage a coordinated approach to investment attraction involving local governments, Indigenous communities, destination organizations, industry representatives, and provincial government partners.
- Provide greater support to help destinations become investment-ready through community planning, infrastructure development, streamlined approval processes, and investment attraction tools.
- Develop provincial and regional investment attraction strategies that reflect successful approaches being implemented in competing jurisdictions.
- Improve access to information, market intelligence, and investment resources that help communities identify and attract appropriate tourism investment opportunities.
- Support investment attraction initiatives that encourage year-round tourism development and economic diversification.



2. Labour & Workforce Development

A skilled, available, and sustainable workforce is essential to the success and growth of British Columbia's visitor economy. Tourism businesses across the province rely on a diverse workforce to deliver visitor experiences, support business operations, and drive economic activity in communities large and small. As British Columbia works toward its goal of doubling tourism revenues by 2036, workforce development will remain a critical priority. Ensuring the industry has access to the talent, training, education, housing, and workforce supports needed to meet future demand will be essential to maintaining competitiveness and supporting long-term growth.

WHAT WE HEARD

Workforce challenges were consistently identified as one of the most significant issues affecting the tourism industry across British Columbia. Participants indicated that labour shortages are no longer simply an operational challenge but have become a constraint on business growth, visitor capacity, service quality, and overall sector competitiveness.

Many operators reported that they have the demand to expand operations, extend seasons, increase capacity, and welcome more visitors, but lack the workforce required to do so. This was particularly evident in accommodation, food and beverage, transportation, attractions, and seasonal tourism businesses where vacancies continue to persist despite ongoing recruitment efforts. Participants also noted that limited staff housing availability is increasingly contributing to workforce shortages in many destinations.

Participants expressed significant concern regarding recent and proposed changes to Temporary Foreign Worker and immigration programs. Many operators emphasized that these programs have become essential workforce tools rather than temporary measures, particularly in communities and sectors where domestic labour supply remains insufficient. There was a strong sentiment that maintaining access to these programs will be critical to sustaining tourism operations in many parts of the province.

The future of tourism and hospitality education was also raised repeatedly throughout the roundtable discussions. Participants expressed concern about the reduction or elimination of post-secondary tourism and hospitality programs and the potential long-term consequences for workforce development. Many noted that while tourism is one of British Columbia's largest employers, educational pathways into the industry are receiving less attention and support than other sectors facing workforce shortages.



Participants also highlighted the need to better position tourism as a professional and rewarding career choice. There was broad agreement that greater awareness is needed regarding the diversity of careers available within the visitor economy, including opportunities in leadership, entrepreneurship, destination management, marketing, event management, outdoor recreation, hospitality, transportation, and Indigenous tourism.

Many participants noted that workforce development should be viewed as a long-term economic priority rather than a short-term labour issue. Supporting education, skills development, career awareness, and workforce attraction was viewed as essential to achieving the Province's goal of doubling tourism revenues by 2036. Participants emphasized that without a strong workforce pipeline, the industry's ability to attract investment, grow capacity, improve visitor experiences, and generate additional economic activity will be significantly constrained.

KEY CHALLENGES

- Access to labour continues to be one of the most significant barriers to growth and business sustainability across many tourism sectors and regions of British Columbia.
- Ongoing changes to Temporary Foreign Worker Program policies, caps, eligibility requirements, and processing timelines have created uncertainty for tourism operators that rely on the program to fill critical positions.
- Many operators expressed concern regarding reduced access to Temporary Foreign Workers, particularly for kitchen, housekeeping, food service, and other front-line positions that are increasingly difficult to recruit domestically.
- Labour shortages are not limited to rural communities. Tourism businesses in urban centres and metropolitan areas reported increasing competition for workers from other sectors of the economy, making recruitment and retention more difficult.
- Reduced access to international students and recent changes to immigration pathways were identified as contributing factors affecting workforce availability throughout the tourism sector.
- Participants expressed concern regarding the future impact of changes to Post-Graduate Work Permit eligibility and requirements, noting that these changes may further reduce access to skilled workers beginning in 2026 and beyond.



- Several participants highlighted the reduction, suspension, or elimination of tourism and hospitality education programs at post-secondary institutions across British Columbia.
- Concerns were raised regarding the long-term implications of losing specialized tourism and hospitality educators, industry expertise, and training capacity once programs are reduced or discontinued.
- Participants noted that rebuilding tourism and hospitality programs after closure may prove difficult and costly, creating a future gap in skilled workers, supervisors, and industry leaders.
- Many participants expressed concern about a growing disconnect between tourism education programs and the evolving needs of industry employers.
- Declining enrolment in tourism and hospitality programs was identified as an ongoing challenge, with participants citing perceptions of low wages, seasonal employment, and unclear career advancement opportunities as contributing factors.
- Participants noted that tourism continues to face challenges positioning itself as a long-term career choice despite offering opportunities for entrepreneurship, leadership development, management careers, and employment across a wide range of sectors and communities.
- Affordable housing continues to be a significant barrier to workforce recruitment and retention in many tourism destinations. Participants noted that the lack of housing options for tourism and hospitality employees limits the ability of businesses to attract and retain workers.
- Limited seasonal worker housing was identified as an ongoing challenge in many communities. In some regions, employees are required to commute from neighbouring communities, creating additional barriers due to transportation costs, travel times, and limited transportation connectivity.



KEY OPPORTUNITIES/SOLUTIONS

- Streamline and expand Temporary Foreign Worker Program pathways to improve access for tourism operators experiencing persistent labour shortages.
- Simplify program requirements and processing timelines to help businesses fill critical positions more efficiently during peak operating seasons.
- Continue to advocate for immigration and workforce policies that recognize the unique labour needs of tourism-dependent communities and destinations.
- Increase provincial investment in post-secondary tourism and hospitality education programs to support workforce development and sector growth.
- Explore funding models for tourism and hospitality education that recognize the sector's economic contribution and align more closely with investments currently directed toward skilled trades training programs.
- Strengthen partnerships between industry and post-secondary institutions to ensure training programs remain aligned with current and future workforce needs.
- Promote tourism and hospitality career pathways through K-12 education systems to increase awareness of employment and entrepreneurship opportunities within the sector.
- Develop coordinated provincial awareness campaigns that position tourism as a rewarding, professional, and long-term career choice.
- Support initiatives that encourage young people to pursue careers in tourism, particularly in rural, remote, and resort-based communities where workforce shortages are most acute.
- Explore policy adjustments to the Residential Tenancy Act that help improve housing availability for workers while maintaining appropriate protections for both tenants and property owners.
- Consider approaches that create a more balanced framework for property owners who provide rental housing, helping reduce perceived risks and encouraging additional rental supply that may support workforce accommodation needs.



3. Funding & Resources

Sustainable, stable, and predictable funding is essential to supporting the long-term growth and competitiveness of British Columbia's visitor economy. Funding and resource programs help communities, tourism businesses, destination organizations, and industry partners develop tourism experiences, support destination development, maintain critical assets, and respond to emerging opportunities and challenges. As the Province works toward its goal of doubling tourism revenues by 2036, maintaining reliable funding mechanisms and creating a policy environment that supports long-term planning and investment will be critical to achieving sustainable growth across the tourism sector.

WHAT WE HEARD

Funding and resource availability emerged as a common concern across all regions of British Columbia. Participants consistently noted that while tourism generates significant economic benefits for communities, the funding available to support tourism development, infrastructure, destination management, and visitor experiences is often insufficient to meet growing needs.

The Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) was one of the most frequently discussed funding tools. Participants expressed strong support for the program and noted that, in some communities and organizations, it represents the only source of stable and predictable tourism funding. At the same time, concerns were raised regarding ongoing uncertainty surrounding MRDT, eligible uses of funds, cumbersome reporting requirements, and perceived "scope creep" from some local governments regarding how revenues should be allocated and managed. Participants emphasized the importance of maintaining the integrity, predictability, and long-term sustainability of the program.

Participants also highlighted the decline in available funding programs, increased competition for limited resources, and the growing administrative burden associated with grant applications and reporting requirements. Many emphasized the need for more stable, predictable, and coordinated funding programs that support long-term planning and investment.

Overall, participants viewed tourism funding as an investment in economic growth, community development, and destination competitiveness. There was broad agreement that sustainable funding models and predictable policy environments will be essential to supporting the continued growth of BC's visitor economy.



KEY CHALLENGES

- Communities and local governments continue to face growing pressure to maintain, upgrade, and expand tourism infrastructure while balancing the costs borne by local taxpayers.
- Participants noted that many tourism-related assets and amenities require ongoing investment, yet available funding often does not keep pace with infrastructure needs or visitor growth.
- There has been a significant decline in available tourism funding programs, creating uncertainty for communities, tourism operators, destination organizations, and sector associations seeking to invest in tourism development and visitor experiences.
- Participants identified funding programs as increasingly fragmented, difficult to access, and administratively burdensome to navigate.
- Concerns were raised regarding reductions in grant funding opportunities across all levels of government, limiting the ability of organizations and communities to undertake tourism development initiatives.
- Reductions to Destination BC co-operative marketing programs were identified as a challenge for many organizations and sectors that rely on partnership funding to reach target markets and attract visitors.
- Limited access to funding programs was identified as a particular concern for sectors such as outdoor recreation, which often depend on grant funding and partnership investments to support product development and visitor experiences.
- The future stability of Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) funding was a significant topic of discussion across multiple regions.
- Participants expressed concern about potential reductions to MRDT revenues and other tourism-related funding sources that support destination marketing, destination development, and industry initiatives.
- The administrative requirements associated with MRDT applications, renewals, reporting, and program management were identified as ongoing challenges for some destinations and organizations.
- Many participants noted that available tourism funding is insufficient to meet current needs, resulting in increased competition among communities, organizations, and sectors for limited resources.
- Communities with economies influenced by resource industries expressed concern about the long-term stability of tourism funding sources if economic activity in those sectors declines.



- Participants expressed concern that the proposed expansion of the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) to additional business services and inputs will create further financial pressures for tourism businesses already facing rising operating costs, labour shortages, inflationary pressures, and increased regulatory requirements. Many noted that the additional costs could reduce competitiveness, constrain investment, and place an additional economic burden on an industry that is already operating within increasingly challenging conditions.
- Participants emphasized the importance of continuing to grow the tourism economy to help strengthen and diversify revenue sources that support destination development, marketing, and tourism-related investments.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES/SOLUTIONS

- Explore opportunities to increase tourism-generated revenues through mechanisms such as enhanced Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) programs, visitor levies, or destination fees that support tourism development and destination sustainability.
- Consider destination funding models that allow a portion of tourism-generated revenues to be invested directly into visitor-serving assets such as trails, recreation infrastructure, waterfront amenities, events, cultural assets, and community facilities.
- Advocate for greater flexibility in the use of MRDT revenues to support destination development priorities, including the maintenance and enhancement of tourism infrastructure and visitor experiences.
- Explore funding approaches that better align tourism-generated revenues with the costs associated with maintaining the assets and infrastructure that support visitation.
- Encourage communities to develop self-generated and locally driven funding solutions that reduce reliance on government grant programs and create greater long-term financial sustainability.



- Establish stable, predictable, and multi-year regulatory and funding frameworks that provide tourism operators, destination organizations, and communities with greater certainty for long-term planning and investment decisions.
- Improve coordination among provincial, regional, and local funding programs to reduce administrative complexity and increase accessibility for tourism organizations and communities.
- Create a dedicated provincial fund to support the maintenance, renewal, and restoration of recreation infrastructure, trails, and visitor-serving assets that contribute to tourism experiences and community well-being.
- Retract the planned expansion of the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) to additional business services and inputs that may increase operating costs, reduce competitiveness, and create additional financial pressures for tourism businesses, tourism-related service providers, and investment projects.
- Support funding programs that recognize tourism infrastructure as economic infrastructure and provide investment accordingly.
- Encourage funding models that support long-term destination competitiveness, tourism growth, and the sustainable development of visitor economies throughout British Columbia.



4. Regulation, Permitting & Policy Environment

A clear, efficient, and predictable regulatory environment is essential to supporting a competitive and sustainable visitor economy. Regulations, permitting processes, and public policies influence everything from business operations and destination development to housing, transportation, and visitor experiences. As British Columbia works to grow tourism and achieve its long-term economic objectives, ensuring that regulatory frameworks are coordinated, practical, and responsive to the needs of communities and businesses will be important to supporting growth while balancing environmental, social, and economic priorities.

WHAT WE HEARD

Regulation, permitting, and public policy were consistently identified as factors influencing the competitiveness and growth of BC's visitor economy. While participants recognized the importance of regulations and oversight, there was a common view that existing processes can be complex, time-consuming, and difficult to navigate.

Participants expressed a desire for greater consistency and coordination across all levels of government, particularly where permitting, licensing, land use, housing, and tourism development policies intersect. Many noted that regulatory requirements often evolve independently of one another, creating challenges for businesses attempting to comply with multiple rules and approval processes. There were also concerns surrounding the uncertainty that DRIPA presents, and the need for a fair and transparent resolution that supports reconciliation.

There was also strong support for a more collaborative approach to policy development and implementation. Participants emphasized the importance of ongoing dialogue between government, Indigenous communities and industry to ensure regulations achieve their intended outcomes while supporting tourism growth, investment, and community objectives.

Overall, participants viewed regulatory modernization, improved coordination, and greater policy flexibility as important opportunities to strengthen the competitiveness of BC's visitor economy and support the long-term growth objectives outlined in the Look West Tourism Sector Action Plan.



KEY CHALLENGES

- Participants identified regulatory complexity as a growing challenge for tourism operators, particularly when businesses are required to navigate multiple levels of government and numerous regulatory agencies.
- Lengthy permitting and approval timelines were consistently identified as barriers to business growth, tourism development, and investment. In some cases, approvals can take several years, creating uncertainty for operators and investors.
- Adventure tourism operators reported challenges associated with overlapping permit requirements across multiple government ministries and agencies, resulting in administrative burdens, delays, and missed business opportunities.
- Businesses often face difficulties obtaining operating permits and licenses due to differing requirements and interpretations across municipal, regional, provincial, and federal jurisdictions.
- Short-term rental regulations were frequently discussed, with participants expressing concern about policy uncertainty, unintended consequences, and the need for regulations that reflect the unique circumstances of individual communities and local accommodation markets.
- Participants expressed concern that some regulatory frameworks do not adequately recognize tourism as a significant economic sector and, in some cases, may create barriers to tourism development and investment.
- Agricultural Land Reserve regulations, land-use policies, accessibility requirements, and other regulatory obligations were identified as areas where operators experience increasing administrative complexity and compliance costs.
- Insurance affordability and liability requirements continue to be significant concerns for many tourism operators, particularly small and medium-sized businesses. Participants reported rising premiums, reduced availability of coverage, and increasingly complex liability requirements.
- Foreign buyer regulations were identified as a concern in some resort communities where participants believe current policies may be creating unintended impacts on tourism investment and accommodation development.
- Participants identified ongoing challenges related to alignment between local government priorities, tourism strategies, and destination management organization objectives, which can create uncertainty and limit opportunities for coordinated tourism development.



- While recognizing the importance of reconciliation and meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities, some participants indicated that greater clarity, consistency, and predictability in the application of processes around DRIPA would help support tourism development and investment decisions.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES/SOLUTIONS

- Improve coordination and communication between provincial ministries and regulatory agencies to create a more efficient and consistent permitting environment for tourism operators.
- Strengthen alignment between municipal, regional, provincial, and federal regulations to reduce duplication, conflicting requirements, and administrative burdens on tourism businesses.
- Ensure that tourism-related regulations are developed with sufficient flexibility to recognize the unique circumstances of individual communities, destinations, and tourism sectors.
- Adopt a more nuanced approach to province-wide regulations, including short-term rental policies, that considers local accommodation capacity, housing needs, tourism demand, and community circumstances.
- Develop a centralized digital permitting system that allows tourism operators to apply for permits and licenses through a single platform, improving transparency, reducing duplication, and providing clear timelines and status updates throughout the approval process.
- Establish service standards and performance targets for permit approvals to provide greater certainty for operators, investors, and tourism development projects.
- Conduct regular reviews of tourism-related regulations to ensure policies remain relevant, practical, and supportive of industry growth while reducing outdated, conflicting, or unnecessarily burdensome requirements.
- Increase engagement between government, industry, local governments, and tourism interest holders during the development and review of tourism-related regulations and policies.



- Create formal mechanisms for ongoing dialogue between the tourism industry and government to identify emerging regulatory issues and opportunities for improvement.
- Encourage TIABC to continue facilitating discussions between government and industry representatives to support ongoing communication, issue identification, and policy development.
- Support regular roundtable discussions between provincial ministries, tourism operators, sector associations, destination organizations, and local governments to strengthen collaboration and improve policy outcomes.



5. Accessibility & Transportation

Accessibility and transportation are fundamental to the success of British Columbia's visitor economy. As one of the key priorities identified in the Look West Tourism Sector Action Plan, improving access to and within the province is essential to supporting tourism growth, strengthening regional economies, and enhancing visitor experiences. Reliable transportation networks and accessible tourism infrastructure help connect visitors to destinations, support business operations, and ensure communities throughout British Columbia can fully participate in and benefit from tourism.

WHAT WE HEARD

Participants consistently identified transportation and accessibility as foundational requirements for a successful visitor economy. Across the province, there was broad recognition that visitors must be able to travel to, through, and within destinations safely, efficiently, and affordably if British Columbia is to achieve its tourism growth objectives.

Transportation challenges varied by region but commonly included concerns related to air access, public transportation, road infrastructure, ferry capacity, and access to outdoor recreation areas. Many participants noted that transportation barriers not only affect visitors but also influence workforce mobility, business operations, and investment decisions.

Air connectivity emerged as a particularly important issue. Participants emphasized the role regional airports play in supporting tourism growth and expressed support for investments that improve air service, strengthen regional airport infrastructure, and increase access to domestic and international markets.

Accessibility was also identified as an area requiring continued attention and investment. Participants highlighted the importance of ensuring tourism experiences, facilities, and transportation systems are accessible to all travellers and noted that improving accessibility represents both a social responsibility and a significant opportunity to expand participation in British Columbia's visitor economy.

Overall, participants viewed transportation and accessibility as essential components of destination development.



KEY CHALLENGES

- In some regions, the deactivation of forestry roads has limited access to popular recreation areas, creating challenges for guides, outfitters, and tourism businesses that depend on access to natural attractions.
- Limited public transportation options continue to create barriers for both visitors and workers, particularly in rural and remote communities where access to private vehicles cannot be assumed.
- Participants identified a lack of integrated transportation options and connectivity between destinations as a challenge for visitor mobility throughout the province.
- Ferry capacity constraints and other transportation bottlenecks were identified as barriers to visitor movement and tourism growth in several regions.
- Regional airports were identified as critical transportation assets but continue to face challenges related to funding, infrastructure, regulatory costs, and attracting new air service routes.
- Limited transportation options to and within some tourism destinations continue to affect visitor access, workforce mobility, and business operations.
- Accessibility barriers remain a concern for many tourism operators and communities. Participants noted that funding is needed to upgrade tourism facilities, infrastructure, and visitor experiences to better accommodate travellers with disabilities.
- Restrictions and permitting requirements associated with certain transportation and access routes were identified as barriers for some tourism operators and visitors seeking access to outdoor recreation experiences.
- Participants noted that transportation challenges often extend beyond visitor travel and can also impact workforce attraction, employee mobility, and access to essential services in tourism-dependent communities.



KEY OPPORTUNITIES/SOLUTIONS

- Develop and implement a coordinated provincial transportation strategy that improves connectivity between communities, tourism destinations, and transportation hubs.
- Restore and maintain critical access routes, including forest roads and trails that provide access to tourism experiences, outdoor recreation opportunities, and visitor attractions.
- Expand air service opportunities by supporting regional airports, attracting additional carriers, and increasing flight frequency to tourism-dependent communities.
- Increase investment in accessible tourism infrastructure and facilities to improve travel experiences for people with disabilities and support inclusive tourism growth.
- Improve public transportation options in rural, remote, and resort communities to support both visitors and workforce mobility.
- Review transportation-related regulations and access requirements to identify opportunities to improve visitor access while maintaining safety and environmental stewardship.



6. Climate & Stewardship

British Columbia's natural environment is one of its greatest tourism assets and a primary reason visitors choose to travel to the province. As tourism continues to grow, climate resilience, environmental stewardship, and responsible destination management will become increasingly important to ensuring the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of BC's visitor economy. Protecting natural and cultural assets, managing visitor impacts, and adapting to changing environmental conditions are essential to preserving the experiences, landscapes, and communities that support tourism throughout the province.

WHAT WE HEARD

Participants consistently emphasized that British Columbia's natural environment is one of the province's most valuable tourism assets and that protecting it is essential to the long-term success of the visitor economy. There was broad recognition that tourism growth must be balanced with environmental stewardship, community well-being, and the capacity of destinations to manage visitors sustainably.

Many participants expressed concern about the growing impacts of climate change on tourism operations, visitor experiences, infrastructure, and destination reputation. Wildfires, flooding, and other climate-related events were identified as ongoing challenges that require improved preparedness, communication, and coordination among governments, communities, and industry.

Participants also highlighted the importance of proactive destination management. There was strong support for strategies that encourage responsible travel, improve visitor education, and help communities avoid the challenges associated with overtourism. Many noted that tourism growth should be pursued in a way that protects the natural and cultural assets that attract visitors while maintaining the quality of life enjoyed by local residents.

Overall, participants viewed climate resilience, environmental stewardship, and sustainable tourism management as increasingly important priorities for ensuring the long-term competitiveness and sustainability of BC's visitor economy.



KEY CHALLENGES

Sustainable Tourism

- Increased visitation to popular outdoor recreation areas is placing pressure on trails, beaches, waterways, parks, and other natural assets, resulting in environmental degradation and increased maintenance requirements.
- Concerns were raised regarding trail erosion, litter, wildlife disturbance, habitat impacts, and growing pressure on sensitive ecosystems, particularly in high-demand destinations and areas near urban centres.
- Increased commercial and recreational use of rivers, trails, and outdoor recreation areas has created concerns regarding environmental impacts, permitting compliance, and resource management.
- The growing use of e-bikes and other emerging recreation activities is creating new stewardship, infrastructure, and management challenges in some destinations.
- Participants emphasized the need to balance tourism growth with the capacity of communities, infrastructure, natural assets, and local workforces.
- Lack of visitor awareness regarding responsible travel practices, including Leave No Trace principles, continues to contribute to environmental impacts and increased management challenges.
- Communities are increasingly seeking tools, data, and strategies to better understand carrying capacity and manage visitor growth in a sustainable manner.
- Participants identified the need for stronger visitor management, visitor education, and destination stewardship initiatives to ensure tourism growth remains sustainable and benefits both residents and visitors.



Climate Change

- Wildfires, flooding, extreme weather events, and other climate-related impacts continue to disrupt tourism operations, damage infrastructure, affect visitor confidence, and create uncertainty for businesses and communities.
- Communication and coordination during climate-related emergencies were identified as areas requiring improvement to support both visitors and tourism operators.
- Participants expressed concern regarding how climate-related events are communicated to visitors, noting that broad messaging about wildfires, smoke, or closures can negatively affect destinations that remain open and accessible.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES/SOLUTIONS

Sustainable Tourism

- Develop destination management strategies that balance tourism growth with community capacity, environmental stewardship, and quality of life for residents.
- Strengthen visitor education and communication programs that promote responsible travel practices, including Leave No Trace principles and stewardship of natural and cultural assets.
- Implement proactive visitor management approaches that help communities understand and manage visitor capacity before overtourism becomes a significant issue.
- Learn from destinations that have experienced overtourism challenges, including international jurisdictions, Parks Canada destinations, and communities within British Columbia, to identify best practices and avoid similar outcomes.



- Expand visitor communication initiatives that encourage travellers to "plan ahead," travel responsibly, and make informed decisions about destinations, activities, and seasonal travel patterns.
- Support tourism growth strategies that encourage visitation during shoulder and off-peak seasons to better distribute visitor demand throughout the year.
- Explore opportunities to position British Columbia as a destination for travellers seeking cooler climate experiences and outdoor recreation opportunities as global travel patterns evolve.

Climate Change

- Integrate emergency notification tools and real-time information systems into tourism websites, visitor centres, accommodation platforms, and destination communications to provide travellers with timely updates regarding wildfires, flooding, air quality, road closures, and other disruptions.
- Strengthen communication protocols during climate-related emergencies to improve information sharing between governments, emergency management agencies, tourism operators, destination organizations, and visitors.
- Foster greater collaboration between tourism, forestry, water, transportation, emergency management, and other government ministries to support coordinated climate adaptation and resilience planning.
- Support investments and policies that help tourism businesses and communities adapt to the long-term impacts of climate change while protecting the natural assets that underpin British Columbia's visitor economy.



7. Infrastructure

Infrastructure plays a vital role in supporting tourism growth, community development, and economic competitiveness. As British Columbia works toward its goal of doubling tourism revenues by 2036, having the infrastructure necessary to support visitors, businesses, and communities will be essential to enhancing visitor experiences, supporting sustainable growth, and maintaining the competitiveness of BC's visitor economy.

WHAT WE HEARD

Infrastructure was consistently identified as a foundational requirement for tourism growth and destination competitiveness. Participants emphasized that communities cannot successfully grow tourism, attract visitors, host major events, or expand tourism experiences without the infrastructure needed to support that growth.

Accommodation capacity emerged as one of the most frequently discussed infrastructure challenges, particularly in communities experiencing strong visitation growth and in Metro Vancouver where hotel capacity constraints may limit opportunities associated with major events, conferences, and conventions.

Participants also highlighted the growing strain placed on aging community infrastructure and the challenges many local governments face in maintaining and upgrading assets while balancing competing financial priorities. Concerns were raised that infrastructure deficits may increasingly limit tourism growth and community development opportunities. At the same time, participants emphasized the importance of protecting the integrity of the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) program and ensuring tourism-generated revenues continue to be directed toward their intended tourism purposes, while alternative funding sources are identified to support broader municipal infrastructure needs.

Digital connectivity was identified as an ongoing issue in many rural and remote regions, with participants noting that reliable cellular service and broadband access are now considered essential infrastructure for visitors, businesses, safety, and emergency response.

There was broad agreement that tourism infrastructure should be viewed as economic infrastructure. Participants emphasized that long-term planning, sustainable funding, and strategic infrastructure development will be essential to for communities to continue to deliver high-quality visitor experiences.



KEY CHALLENGES

- Accommodation capacity remains a significant challenge in many regions of British Columbia. Several communities reported that accommodation inventory is fully occupied during peak periods, limiting opportunities for visitor growth and economic activity.
- Metro Vancouver participants identified a shortage of hotel room inventory capable of supporting major conferences, conventions, sporting events, and large-scale international events.
- Aging community infrastructure continues to place financial pressure on local governments. Many communities are facing increasing costs associated with maintaining and upgrading infrastructure while balancing other community priorities.
- Participants noted that aging infrastructure may limit the ability of some communities to support future tourism growth and respond to emerging opportunities.
- Reliable cellular service remains a challenge in many rural and remote regions of British Columbia. Limited connectivity impacts visitor safety, visitor experience, business operations, and emergency communications.
- Campground management and maintenance were identified as concerns in some regions, with participants noting shorter operating seasons, reduced maintenance, and declining service levels.
- Online travel agencies (OTAs) were identified as an area of growing concern. Participants noted challenges related to cybersecurity risks, fraudulent activity, changing reporting systems, administrative complexity, and the time required to reconcile financial records and tax reporting.
- Several communities expressed concern about the long-term sustainability of tourism products that rely heavily on seasonal weather conditions, particularly winter recreation activities that may be affected by changing climate patterns.
- Participants emphasized the need to diversify tourism experiences and infrastructure to support year-round visitation and reduce reliance on a limited number of tourism products or seasons.



KEY OPPORTUNITIES/SOLUTIONS

- Support the diversification of tourism infrastructure and experiences to reduce reliance on seasonal tourism products and strengthen year-round visitation.
- Invest in indoor tourism facilities and experiences, including convention spaces, sport tourism infrastructure, cultural facilities, and other visitor-serving amenities that support four-season tourism.
- Encourage the development of wellness, health, and spa tourism experiences to broaden tourism offerings and attract new visitor markets.
- Promote four-season tourism opportunities that help distribute visitation throughout the year and strengthen destination resilience.
- Expand outdoor recreation infrastructure and trail networks to support growing visitor demand and create new tourism experiences.
- Create public-private co-funding partnership models that leverage private capital to support tourism facilities, attractions, and community infrastructure.
- Improve digital connectivity by expanding reliable broadband and cellular service in rural and remote communities.
- Support digital infrastructure and destination content development that helps showcase tourism opportunities beyond major travel corridors and encourages visitor dispersal throughout the province.
- Protect the integrity of the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) program by ensuring revenues continue to be used for their intended tourism purposes while identifying alternative government funding sources to support much-needed municipal infrastructure projects that benefit residents, visitors, and communities alike.
- Recognize tourism infrastructure as economic infrastructure and support long-term planning that aligns infrastructure development with future tourism growth objectives.



8. Visitor Attraction

Visitor attraction is about creating the conditions that inspire people to choose British Columbia as a destination and encouraging them to return. A strong visitor economy depends on delivering compelling experiences, maintaining a positive destination reputation, and ensuring visitors have memorable experiences that generate repeat visitation and positive word-of-mouth promotion. As British Columbia works toward its goal of doubling tourism revenues by 2036, attracting new visitors while building loyalty among existing visitors will be essential to supporting sustainable growth across communities throughout the province.

WHAT WE HEARD

Participants consistently emphasized that while marketing plays a critical role in attracting visitors, successful visitor attraction also depends on ensuring destinations have the experiences, infrastructure, services, and community support necessary to deliver positive visitor experiences and encourage repeat visitation.

There was broad recognition that British Columbia's tourism offerings are diverse and that opportunities exist to attract visitors to communities throughout the province, including rural, remote, urban, and Indigenous destinations. Participants emphasized the importance of ensuring smaller communities have access to the resources and support needed to effectively promote their destinations and compete for visitors. Participants also highlighted the importance of destination reputation. Public safety, visitor experience, emergency communications, and media coverage were all identified as factors that can influence travel decisions and shape perceptions of British Columbia as a tourism destination.

A strong theme throughout the discussions was the need for greater public understanding of tourism and the value it brings to communities. Participants noted that tourism supports local businesses, creates employment opportunities, contributes to public infrastructure and services, and helps strengthen local economies. Many felt there is an ongoing need to educate residents, community leaders, and future generations about tourism's role in supporting community prosperity and quality of life. Several participants emphasized that tourism advocacy and public education must be ongoing and that building public support will be essential to future tourism growth and development.

Many participants noted that stronger collaboration between tourism organizations, communities, businesses, Indigenous partners, and governments will be necessary to maximize visitor attraction efforts and ensure tourism growth is aligned with destination capacity, infrastructure, and community priorities.



KEY CHALLENGES

- Public safety concerns, including crime, disorder, and perceptions of safety in some destinations, were identified as factors that can negatively impact destination reputation and visitor confidence.
- Seasonality continues to be a challenge for many destinations and tourism sectors, creating fluctuations in demand, workforce requirements, business revenues, and community capacity.
- Limited availability of year-round tourism products and experiences can make it difficult for some destinations to attract visitors outside of peak seasons.
- Signage, wayfinding, and visitor information systems were identified as areas requiring improvement to help visitors safely access destinations, services, attractions, and experiences.
- Smaller communities and destinations expressed concern about their ability to compete for visibility and market share within broader provincial marketing efforts.
- An increasing ‘NIMBY’ (Not In My Backyard) sentiment among community members
- Participants noted that reductions in marketing support and limited access to co-operative marketing funding can make it difficult for some destinations and sectors to reach target audiences.
- Media coverage of wildfires, flooding, and other emergencies can have lasting impacts on destination reputation and travel demand, even when tourism businesses remain open and operational.
- Participants identified a need for stronger collaboration among destination management organizations, business improvement associations, tourism operators, accommodation providers, sector associations, and governments to support visitor attraction efforts.
- Improved alignment between destination marketing, infrastructure development, workforce capacity, and tourism growth strategies was identified as important to supporting long-term visitor attraction and destination competitiveness.
- Participants identified a need for greater public awareness and understanding of the value tourism brings to communities, including its contribution to local economies, employment, public services, and community amenities. Many noted that increasing public understanding of tourism's economic and social benefits is important to building support for tourism growth and development.



KEY OPPORTUNITIES/SOLUTIONS

- Strengthen province-wide destination marketing efforts through Destination BC, regional destination management organizations, and sector associations to support visitor attraction across all regions of British Columbia.
- Increase support for co-operative marketing programs that help communities, tourism operators, and sector organizations reach target audiences and compete effectively in domestic and international markets.
- Develop more inclusive marketing and promotional programs that ensure rural, remote, Indigenous, and smaller communities have opportunities to participate in provincial and regional tourism campaigns.
- Expand the use of data-sharing platforms, visitor intelligence, and market research to improve decision-making, support collaboration, and identify opportunities for visitor growth.
- Enhance visitor communications through clear, timely, and accessible information that helps visitors plan ahead, make informed travel decisions, and have positive tourism experiences.
- Improve emergency communications by utilizing multiple communication channels, including social media and digital platforms, to reach visitors before and during their travels.
- Expand multilingual communications and visitor information resources to better serve international visitors and diverse traveller markets.
- Create tourism-focused zones and visitor precincts within communities that prioritize public safety, visitor experience, cleanliness, accessibility, and wayfinding while supporting local businesses and community well-being.
- Support the development and promotion of year-round tourism experiences that encourage visitation throughout all seasons and help reduce reliance on peak travel periods.
- Strengthen collaboration among destination management organizations, business improvement associations, tourism operators, accommodation providers, sector associations, and governments to create more coordinated visitor attraction efforts.
- Improve alignment between destination marketing, infrastructure development, workforce planning, and tourism growth strategies to support long-term competitiveness and sustainable visitor growth.
- Support ongoing tourism advocacy efforts that communicate the value of tourism and reinforce its importance as a key economic driver for communities throughout British Columbia.



- Develop community engagement and education programs that help build public understanding of how tourism contributes to community prosperity, quality of life, and long-term economic resilience.
- Encourage collaboration among industry, destination organizations, local governments, Indigenous communities, and sector associations to strengthen tourism advocacy and build broader support for tourism growth and development.
- Promote transparent and consistent communication about the benefits of tourism investment and development to help address misconceptions and build community support for future tourism opportunities.



9. Economics & Geopolitics

Tourism does not operate in isolation. Economic conditions, geopolitical events, government policies, currency fluctuations, trade relationships, consumer confidence, and global events can all have a significant impact on visitor behaviour and tourism performance. Many of these factors originate outside the tourism sector and are beyond the control of individual businesses, destinations, and governments, yet they can influence travel demand, investment decisions, operating costs, and destination competitiveness. Understanding and responding to these broader economic and geopolitical forces will be increasingly important as British Columbia works to strengthen the resilience and long-term growth of its visitor economy.

WHAT WE HEARD

Participants consistently acknowledged that many of the factors influencing tourism demand and business performance originate outside the tourism sector and are beyond the direct control of operators, destinations, and governments. Economic uncertainty, geopolitical events, changing travel patterns, and broader market conditions continue to affect visitor behaviour, business confidence, and investment decisions.

A recurring theme throughout the discussions was the importance of building a resilient tourism sector that can adapt to changing circumstances and respond effectively to external pressures. Participants emphasized that strong tourism businesses and destinations require a supportive policy environment, stable taxation frameworks, strategic marketing investments, and continued infrastructure development.

Many participants also highlighted the importance of strengthening the domestic travel market and ensuring British Columbia remains competitive in attracting visitors from both domestic and international markets. There was broad recognition that economic uncertainty creates challenges, but also opportunities to diversify markets, strengthen destination competitiveness, and build long-term resilience.

Overall, participants viewed tourism as a vital economic sector that requires ongoing support, collaboration, and strategic investment to remain competitive in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing global environment.



KEY CHALLENGES

- Rising operating costs continue to place significant pressure on tourism businesses across British Columbia. Increasing wages, food costs, transportation expenses, insurance costs, and other business inputs are affecting profitability and business sustainability.
- Many tourism operators expressed concern that they have limited ability to pass additional costs on to consumers without negatively impacting demand, competitiveness, and affordability for both visitors and local residents.
- Economic uncertainty continues to affect business confidence, investment decisions, and consumer spending. Participants identified concerns related to inflation, economic slowdowns, government funding reductions, and broader global economic conditions.
- Geopolitical events and international market conditions continue to influence travel demand and visitor behaviour in ways that are difficult for individual businesses and destinations to predict or control.
- Declining visitation from key international markets, particularly the United States, was identified as a concern in some regions.
- Border-related complexities and travel friction continue to influence visitor decisions and may create barriers for international travel.
- Rising fuel and transportation costs are affecting both travellers and tourism operators, contributing to higher travel costs and operating expenses.
- Participants noted that external economic and geopolitical pressures can have significant impacts on tourism demand, often with little warning, highlighting the importance of maintaining a resilient and adaptable tourism sector.



KEY OPPORTUNITIES/SOLUTIONS

- Maintain a resilient and adaptable tourism sector that can respond effectively to changing economic conditions, geopolitical events, market fluctuations, and external disruptions.
- Ensure government policies and regulatory frameworks support the long-term competitiveness and sustainability of tourism businesses and destinations.
- Align taxation policies with tourism growth objectives and avoid measures that may increase costs, reduce competitiveness, or discourage tourism investment and business development.
- Increase investment in destination marketing to strengthen British Columbia's position in domestic and international markets and help offset the impacts of economic uncertainty and changing travel patterns.
- Expand marketing efforts aimed at encouraging domestic travel and increasing visitation from Canadian markets.
- Continue investing in tourism-related infrastructure that supports destination competitiveness, visitor access, and community readiness.
- Strengthen collaboration between industry and government to identify emerging economic and geopolitical risks and develop coordinated responses.
- Diversify visitor markets and tourism products to reduce reliance on any single market or visitor segment and improve sector resilience.
- Improve data collection, market intelligence, and forecasting tools to support informed decision-making and help destinations respond to changing economic conditions.
- Ensure tourism remains a priority consideration in broader economic development, trade, taxation, transportation, and investment policy discussions.



Next Steps

The insights captured through these roundtable discussions will play an important role in shaping TIABC's advocacy priorities, policy recommendations, strategic initiatives, and government relations efforts in 2027 and beyond. The themes identified throughout this report provide a clear picture of the opportunities, challenges, and priorities facing British Columbia's visitor economy and will help ensure TIABC's work continues to reflect the needs and realities of tourism businesses, destinations, communities, and industry interest holders across the province.

While this report marks the conclusion of the roundtable process, it is by no means the end of the conversation. In many ways, it represents the beginning of the next phase of work. A consistent message emerged throughout the discussions: tourism advocacy must continue, it must be collaborative, and it must be delivered through a strong and unified voice.

TIABC will continue to work closely with members, destination organizations, sector associations, Indigenous tourism partners, local governments, and tourism businesses throughout British Columbia to advance shared priorities and strengthen the collective voice of the industry. Continued collaboration and alignment across the sector will be essential to building support for tourism and achieving the Province's goal of doubling tourism revenues to \$48 billion by 2036.

Equally important is the need to continue educating not only government decision-makers, but also the public, about the value tourism brings to communities throughout British Columbia. Tourism supports local businesses, creates employment opportunities, generates government revenues, contributes to community amenities and infrastructure, and strengthens the economic vitality of communities in every region of the province. Ensuring these contributions are better understood will remain an important part of TIABC's ongoing work.

TIABC remains committed to advocating strongly on behalf of the tourism sector and working with industry partners to address barriers, identify opportunities, and support policies that strengthen British Columbia's visitor economy. We encourage tourism operators, organizations, communities, and industry interest holders to continue sharing their perspectives, experiences, and ideas. Ongoing dialogue will help ensure that advocacy efforts remain informed, relevant, and reflective of the needs of the sector.

The success of British Columbia's visitor economy depends on all of us working together. By continuing to listen, collaborate, educate, and advocate, we can help ensure tourism remains one of British Columbia's economic superpowers and a source of prosperity for communities throughout the province.