# 2024 - 2026

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# Land Acknowledgement

In the spirit of respect, reciprocity and truth, we honour and acknowledge the Canmore area, known as "Chuwapchipchiyan Kudi Bi" (translated in Stoney Nakoda as "shooting at the willows") and the traditional Treaty 7 territory and oral practices of the Îyârhe Nakoda (Stoney Nakoda) – comprised of the Bearspaw, Chiniki, and Goodstoney – as well as the Tsuut'ina First Nation and the Blackfoot Confederacy comprised of the Siksika, Piikani, Kainai. We acknowledge that this land is also home to the Rocky View Metis District within the Battle River Territory. We acknowledge all Nations who live, work, play, and steward this land, and honour and celebrate this territory.

## About Tourism Canmore Kananaskis

Tourism Canmore Kananaskis (TCK) is the official not-for-profit Destination Management Organization for the area's tourism industry. Our goal is to increase overnight visitation, especially during the spring, fall and winter seasons by promoting the destination to highvalue(s) visitors. We promote attractions, accommodations, restaurants, events and businesses in the area directly to consumers, while also leveraging international travel trade and media channels.

Our organization is voluntarily funded by hotel and activity partners as well as associate membership sales from activity, food & beverage, retail, and professional services in the area. TCK works closely with Travel Alberta, Destination Canada, Indigenous Tourism Alberta and the Tourism Industry Association of Alberta, as well as the Town of Canmore, the Kananaskis Improvement District (KID) and Alberta Parks to extend our reach.



# Community-Wide Vision in Canmore and

# Kananaskis

The Canmore Kananaskis Community Tourism Strategic Plan was developed in 2019 through the hard work of the organization and community stakeholders. The plan was adopted by the Town of Canmore as a planning document and sets the direction for tourism development in the region through to 2029. A major focus of the strategy is committing to a triple bottom line approach to ensure sustainable tourism development in the future. The triple bottom line approach considers economic (Profit), environmental (Planet) and social (People) factors to develop a more holistic accounting of sustainability. While TCK will take a leading role in implementing the plan's initiatives, we require the power of partnerships, especially with stakeholders at the Town of Canmore and Alberta Parks to fulfill our vision. The strategic plan will be updated in 2024 to keep it relevant beyond its half-way mark.

#### **5-year Vision**

Together, we will be implementing a highly successful sustainable tourism program that will have captured the imagination of visitors and stakeholders.

By 2024, Canmore Kananaskis will be fully committed to a triple bottom line approach to tourism development, and this will be well received by visitors. A high degree of trust will have been built up between stakeholders and several high priority sustainable tourism development goals will have been achieved.

#### **10-Year Vision**

We will be seen as a leader in sustainable tourism development:

By 2029, Canmore Kananaskis will be seen as a leader in sustainable tourism development and visitors will be fully engaged in the brand. All stakeholders will be working as one cohesive unit and enjoying the rewards of a destination that has truly embraced a triple bottom line approach including high quality of life for residents, strong income for businesses and a commitment to environmental sustainability.

# **Purpose and Promise**

The community-wide vision for tourism development is a critical driver for TCK. Led by extensive research, our brand supports and defines our raison d'etre.

#### **Our Purpose**

**To transform the way we live in our world**: At TCK, we believe travel can be transformative. We are dedicated to curating and promoting authentic, sustainable adventures that not only showcase our destination but also contribute to a positive impact on the environment, communities, and well-being of all involved. We strive to refine the possibilities of tourism, leaving a lasting legacy of inspiration and sustainability that transcends travelling.

#### **Our Promise**

**Astonishing adventures that nourish your soul**: We are the leading force in creating transformative experiences that not only captivate but also feed the human spirit, fostering a deep connection with nature, culture and community. Our commitment to suitability and the triple bottom line pave the way for a destination where every astonishing journey is a testament to responsible tourism, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts and souls of travellers we touch.

#### **TCK Values**

We are:

- A highly **competent and effective** organization that creates value for its members. We understand that we have a duty of care to invest our members' money wisely. We are experts who work hard and smart to build trust and position TCK as the go-to organization for tourism development in Canmore and Kananaskis.
- An organization that is **humble**. We understand the gift of being able to live, work and recreate here. We respect and appreciate our Indigenous neighbours. We value and respect all audiences, and treat everyone as equals.
- **Confident** community **leaders**, driven by a passion for sharing our knowledge and love for our destination. Anchored in our convictions, we stand resolute in our brand purpose and promise. Our commitment to transparency with our members and community is unwavering, as we believe that earning and maintaining their trust is key to our shared success.

#### **Partners**

TCK recognizes that realizing our vision and achieving our goals will be reliant upon consistent and proactive collaboration with the community. We will work with a sense of cooperation versus competition and will communicate openly and honestly and be accountable to each other. Together, we can realize our shared vision for tourism in the Canmore Kananaskis region.

## **Our Board**

TCK is governed by a board of directors representing hotels, retail businesses, activity providers, and food & beverage providers. Additionally, we rely on the expertise of board appointed representatives from the Town of Canmore, the KID, the financial and legal sectors as well as indigenous knowledge keepers. The board provides strategic direction and financial oversight to the organization. Their combined industry experience and wisdom has been invaluable these past few years.

# **Environmental Scan**

Since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and the slow lifting of travel restrictions around the world, the visitor economy in Canmore and Kananaskis has recovered at a faster rate than the Canadian national average. Overall, visitor spending has surpassed the benchmark 2019 levels backed by strong domestic spending, while international visitation and spending still lag behind 2019. Despite the strong return of tourism, businesses are still reporting difficulty re-paying COVID loans and are expected to need several stronger tourism years to fully recover<sup>1</sup>. This is compounded by rising operational costs that 60 per cent of businesses reported to challenge their operating model.<sup>2</sup> TCK's promotional and destination development efforts will assist all businesses in Canmore and Kananaskis in this endeavor.

Tourism Canmore Kananaskis came out of the pandemic with a strong team and financial position and is well positioned in the short-term to continue promotion of the area. However, the organization will be utilizing its reserves to maintain and enhance its destination management efforts. Therefore, there will be renewed effort to lobby governments on the municipal and provincial level to provide policy updates on destination funding to ensure the organization is able to continue the execution of the community's vision on sustainable tourism as identified in the strategic plan.

Additionally, Tourism Canmore Kananaskis will closely monitor the federal and provincial government's efforts to phase out short-term vacation rentals to boost long-term rental supply. While the affordable housing crisis is very real, especially in Canmore, as an industry we are reliant on overnight guests who spend significantly more than day visitors. Canmore's purpose-built short-term rental units provide local businesses with an approximate visitor spend of \$26.5 million on our retail, restaurants and activities. As members of the Town of Canmore's Livability taskforce, we support recommendations for changing future zoning and to incentivize long-term rental and non-market housing projects.

Furthermore, the tourism economy in Canmore and Kananaskis suffers the same labour shortages as across Canada. Most acute, 32 per cent of management and executive level staff have left the industry since COVID and have not returned, while a whopping 40 per cent of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>https://skift.com/2023/06/21/canadas-tourism-businesses-at-risk-of-shutting-due-to-high-debt/ <sup>2</sup>https://tourismhr.ca/labour-market-information/reports/workforce-strategy/business-intelligencesurvey-report/

workforce does not have the proper skills required to do their job – impacting productivity, retention, service quality and the ability to compete<sup>3</sup>. With this in mind, executing the Canmore Labour Market Recruitment and Retention strategy in partnership with the Town of Canmore and the Canmore Business Alliance (CBA) will be crucial in the years to come.

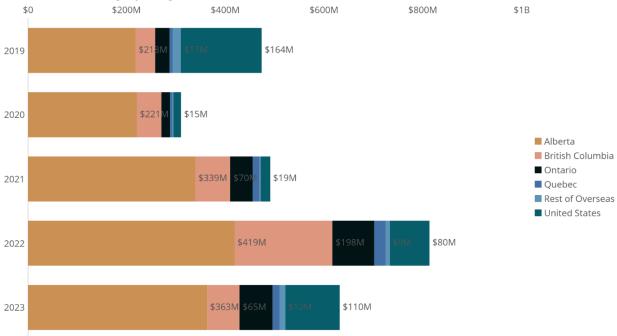
## **Canmore and Kananaskis Visitor Spend**

While spending across all sectors has recovered and is ahead of 2019 levels by 25 per cent, we have seen decreased overall spending in 2023. The forecasted decrease is mainly driven by less spending from Alberta and B.C., which is consistent throughout the Bow Valley region. Unfortunately, while our promotional efforts in the U.S. show consistently strong results, this has not yet led to the recovery of visitor spend from the U.S.: Interborder as well as international spending in Canmore Kananaskis has not yet recovered to 2019 levels and is lagging by 35 per cent<sup>4</sup>.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Tourism HR: Tourism's Double-Barrelled Labour Challenge: Barriers to Employment and Skills Mismatch

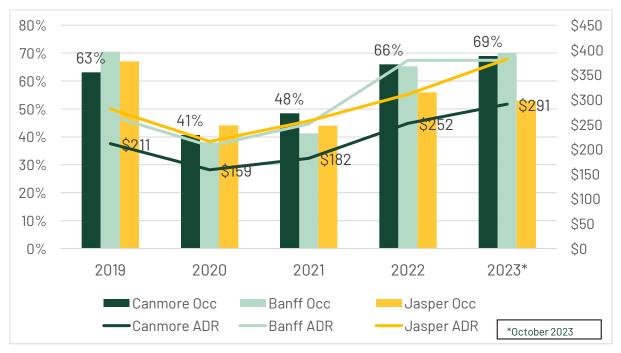
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Destination Canada Visitor Spend Data



#### Annual Spending by Origin Markets 2019 – October 2023

## **Rockies Hotel Performance**

However, hotel performance in Canmore and Kananaskis continues to be strong with occupancy performing stronger than Average Daily Rate Growth<sup>5</sup>:

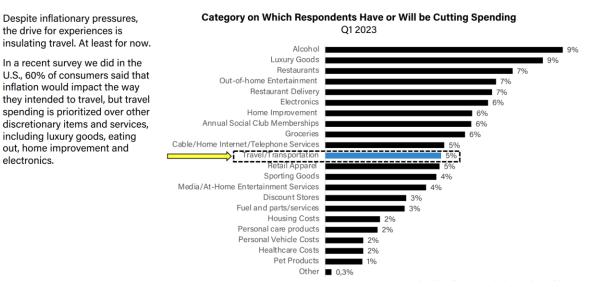


<sup>5</sup> STR Report

#### **Trends**

Since the pandemic, travel is not being taken for granted and escapism and connections with friends and family are not negotiable for many people. Therefore, 48 per cent of Canadian travellers continue to prioritize travel over other purchases, which is a similar trend seen in other target markets. The decoupling of perceptions about the economy and travel intentions that started at the beginning of the pandemic are still being seen when looking into 2024, according to the joint Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC) and Skift Advisory. The same trend is seen in the US:

## **Drive for Experiences Insulates Travel**



6

However, the "revenge travel" period has passed and while travel is a priority, consumers are looking to cut how much they are spending on travel, such as on food and activities, followed by less expensive hotels and flights<sup>7</sup>. User-generated, organic content is now dominating vacation planning sources due to the high degree of trust, along with 3<sup>rd</sup> party booking sites, such as Expedia.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Skift Research: State of Travel 2023, page12/28

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Skift Research: State of Travel 2023, page 2/13

#### Top channels for vacation inspiration are now:

#### 2023

- 1. Social Media (Family & Friends)
- 2. Online Booking Sites
- 3. Destination Attractions
- 9. Destination Website

#### 2020

- 1. Recommendations from Family & Friends
- 2. Online Booking Sites
- 3. Social Media (Influencers)
- 6. Destination Website

These trends make Destination Management even more important, considering social media posts by family & friends and destination attractions offered were the most important channels for vacation inspiration in 2023. Furthermore, destination websites moved down in importance from six to nine. However, we cannot forget that destination websites are still an important tool to drive paid traffic and referrals to our members.

While sustainability is important for Canadian travel consumers, pickup is low. While 67 per cent of Canadian travel consumers would choose a sustainable travel option for a future vacation, only 31 per cent would be willing to pay up to 5 per cent more for a sustainable travel experience with 45 per cent citing lack of credible information on sustainable travel options as barriers to paying more. This lack of consumer confidence in sustainable travel products will need to be addressed in our sustainable destination strategy.<sup>8</sup>

We would be amiss to not talk to the rapid evolution of Al into everyday life, including travel planning. Here, 32 per cent of travellers say they would use ChatGPT to plan their vacation and social media influencers are showing their followers how to plan vacations with ChatGPT2.<sup>9</sup> Considering that it seems none of the popular Al services are using destination websites for reference, this trend will probably change promotional efforts in the next two years significantly as traditional search engines like Google and total website traffic will go down while Al searches will increase significantly.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Local Environment**

The tourism industry as a whole, and especially Canmore and Kananaskis, are experiencing an unprecedented labour shortage compounded by a lack of housing availability and the highest published living wage in Canada. The lack of labour does not only cause businesses to intermittently close or reduce operating hours but subsequently diminishes the visitor experience and destination reputation. Furthermore, it delays recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for smaller businesses.

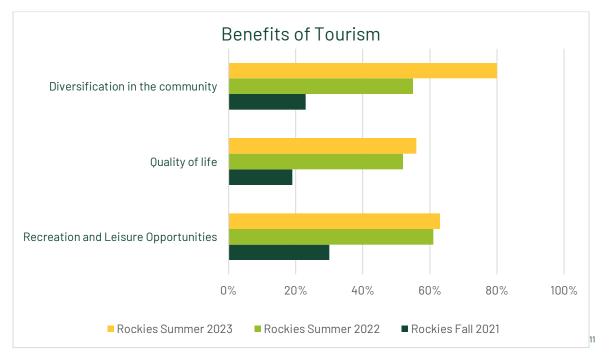
On a positive note, the benefits of tourism in Canmore and Kananaskis are becoming better known to the community at large. TCK has increased its presence in local media to showcase the benefits of tourism. In addition, multiple presentations to council as well as engagement with

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Expedia 2023 Traveler Value Index, page 12

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Skift: Breaking Down the Opportunities and Challenges of Adopting Al in Travel

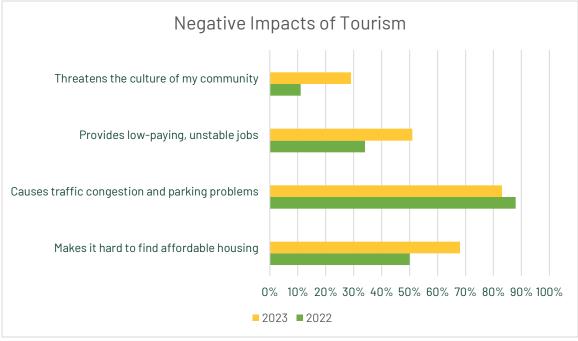
<sup>&</sup>quot;"From your perspective what impact does tourism have on the following in your community?"

other business stakeholders are showing promising signs of a mood change towards recognizing the importance and benefits of the visitor economy for Canmore and Kananaskis. In this Summer's resident sentiment survey conducted by Travel Alberta, 80 per cent (+25) of Rockies residents saw Diversification in the community as a benefit of tourism, a notable improvement to the prior year and 56 per cent (+4) saw a benefit to their quality of life because of tourism.



<sup>&</sup>quot; "From your perspective what impact does tourism have on the following in your community?"





The organization will continue to work towards increasing its advocacy and media presence in the region, partnering with neighbouring communities, to further improve resident sentiment.

#### **Strategic Plan**

The Canmore Kananaskis Community Strategic Plan 2019-2029 was reviewed by the board in detail, and as advised in the plan, we will present an updated version in the fall of 2024.

While the vision to become a leader in sustainable tourism development is undeniably more relevant now than even in 2019, aspects of the plan will be updated to reflect recent developments.

Notably, a sustainable funding model for tourism was not successfully established as of yet. We will increase our efforts to find a model that fits Canmore and Kananaskis and will enable the organization to execute the strategy as well as develop tourism in Canmore and Kananaskis to its full potential.

#### Economy

Stubborn inflation, interest rates, supply chain disruptions and global instability are creating strong headwinds, not only for the economy in Alberta but worldwide. However, the Alberta economy will be able to cope with these headwinds better than other provinces considering the energy sector is expected to keep growing, and Alberta has seen a record population growth that will most likely continue in 2024. Therefore, ATB's forecast for Alberta's real GDP growth for 2024 is 2 per cent and expected to rise to 2.6 per cent in 2025.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Navigating uncertainty: insights for Alberta in 2024.

Looking at our neighbour to the south, the Conference Board predicts 0.8 per cent growth in the U.S. largely due to stagnating disposable income, dwindling pandemic savings and rising household debt. Consumer spend is expected to decline in Q1 and Q2 of 2024, which could further slowdown the return of U.S. visitors to Canmore.<sup>13</sup>

This is similar to the European Economies where projected growth is forecasted to be under one per cent for the U.K. and Germany,<sup>14</sup>. For France, the current forecast is 1.2 per cent due to decreasing inflation and higher private consumption<sup>15</sup>. Nevertheless, tour operators in both Germany and France are optimistic for the 2024 season, whereas U.K. operators see a decline in demand for Canada as it is losing market share to less expensive destinations.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> The Conference Board: Economic Forecast for the US Economy, November 15, 2023

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Deutsche Bundesbank: Monatsbericht November 2023

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> European Commission: Economic Forecast for France, November 15, 2023

### What we do

TCK is the official organization for destination and tourism promotion in Canmore and Kananaskis. The organization takes a leading role in ensuring the Community Tourism Strategic Plan is moving forward in the most effective and cohesive manner. The organization is responsible for completing many of the initiatives in the action plan and will seek collaboration and support from partners when needed.

Our approach to destination management will consider tourism as a holistic, integrated system that affects every aspect of community life. The organization understands the far-reaching impacts that tourism has on Canmore and Kananaskis and will work to maximize the benefits and minimize the negative impacts, working closely with the municipalities of Canmore and Kananaskis as well as with Alberta Parks.

#### **Our Services**

**Social Media** market activation ensures an always-on conversation in each of our markets, growing general awareness of Canmore and Kananaskis while providing real time insights on traveller interest.

**Paid Media** uses digital tactics to target travellers most likely to visit Canmore and Kananaskis. Efforts are measured to better determine the most effective media channels and tactics are adjusted accordingly.

**Travel Trade,** such as tour operators, travel agencies, and online agencies, help increase and diversify Canmore and Kananaskis products available in international markets. By leveraging travel trade, TCK is growing experience and attraction focused awareness in our international markets and here at home.

**MICE** (Meetings, Incentive, Conventions and Events) segment is a strong channel, especially for fall, winter and spring season occupancy. TCK focuses on the Alberta Market and will work on an event strategy to support local event organizers in-destination to elevate their event attendance, as well as increase length of stay and spend for event attendees.

**Market Specific Media** such as public relations and media relations help us tell the story of the destination in target markets and gives travellers a bird's eye view of Canmore and Kananaskis. In addition, TCK will focus on educating the community on the benefits of the visitor economy in Canmore and Kananaskis. To enhance recovery efforts, we will put additional resources into this channel: In 2024, TCK will enter into a co-op matched funding agreement with Travel Alberta to hire the FINN Media Agency in the U.S. to pitch stories to U.S. based media outlets and journalists.

**Networking, Collaboration and Education:** TCK is providing front-line training through the Peaks Academy, an online-learning portal free to TCK members. The course covers topics from customer service to destination knowledge to human-wildlife interactions and cultural awareness. In addition, we will provide in-person networking and training events in 2024 including topics like environmental stewardship and Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI).

**Advocacy**: TCK uses its position to represent the interests of its membership to governments, partners and the community on matters important to the tourism economy in our region. Consolidating the tourism sector's voice through TCK allows us to have greater influence.

**Visitor Service**: TCK manages and operates the year-round visitor information centre in Canmore. This facility presents an excellent opportunity to promote our region to visitors who are in-destination, educate them on desired behaviours, and to gather market intelligence from visitors.

# Benefits of Membership

## Leveraged Marketing Investments Through Local Business Contributions

TCK leverages investments from local businesses to promote Canmore and Kananaskis as the destination of choice for visitors who embrace the authentic mountain town experience and vast wilderness that Canmore and Kananaskis have to offer. As more businesses become engaged and membership in TCK increases, the pool of resources available for promotion will grow, and the destination's market reach will expand even further. Through economies of scale, considerable value will be created by consolidating marketing resources through TCK.

Through TCK, investments from members will be leveraged even further - through cooperative marketing campaigns offered by Travel Alberta, contributions from partner organizations and other grant funding. Leveraged marketing investments will create enhanced value by generating economies of scale that will allow for an expanded reach.

## Benefits: The power of an effective DMO

- 1. **Dedicated, professional team of marketers**: Together, we will continue to drive the visitor economy, including occupancy, visitor spending, aggregate hotel gross sales, year-round average rate growth, and shareholder confidence and satisfaction. We will execute a direct, effective multi-dimensional approach, and be an always-on content publisher. As the success of our community is reliant on the success of tourism, we continue to aim for 100 per cent business community participation.
- 2. **Leveraged funding**: Businesses' marketing dollars will be leveraged many times by the mutual investment of dozens of participating business partners. Businesses will benefit greatly from increased exposure and media and be included in continuous promotions and marketing campaigns.
- 3. **World-wide reach**: Businesses will be listed on the TCK website and mentioned in social channels where appropriate; will be involved in promotional initiatives which will reach audiences with breadth and depth; and promoted via the visitor information centre. We will turn interested prospects into repeat visitors who become destination champions.
- 4. **Effective partnerships**: Our efforts will be multiplied many times over due to our relationships with Travel Alberta, Tourism Industry Association of Alberta, Indigenous Tourism Alberta, Tourism Industry Association of Canada, Destination Canada,

Destinations International and others. We will maximize personnel and resources on local, provincial, national, and international stages.

## **Traveller Segmentation & Target Markets**

Canmore and Kananaskis continues to benefit from its strong brand reputation within the Alberta market. However, since borders have re-opened, Alberta visitor spend has declined and we will need to enhance our promotional efforts in Ontario, English-speaking Quebec and in the U.S. states of California, New York, Washington and Texas. This is especially important as TCK is targeting the high-value(s) travellers that stay longer, spend more money in-destination and like to learn and immerse themselves in the communities they travel to.

With these campaigns proving to be very successful, and some outperforming our competitors, we will expand and enhance these efforts into 2024 and beyond. As highlighted in the graph below, the United States are forecasted to recover fastest, followed by Mexico, Germany and the United Kingdom.

|                  | 2019 | 2020  | 2021 | 2022     | 2023 | 2024  | 2025 | 2026 | 2027    | 2028 | 2029    | 2030   |
|------------------|------|-------|------|----------|------|-------|------|------|---------|------|---------|--------|
| Relative to 2019 | 100  | 50    | 56   | 80       | 96   | 106   | 114  | 120  | 124     | 128  | 131     | 135    |
|                  |      |       |      |          |      |       |      |      |         |      |         |        |
| Domestic         | 100  | 62    | 70   | 92       | 103  | 107   | 113  | 117  | 120     | 123  | 126     | 129    |
|                  |      |       |      |          |      |       |      |      |         |      |         |        |
| United States    | 100  | 13    | 17   | 52       | 91   | 112   | 120  | 130  | 135     | 140  | 144     | 151    |
| Mexico           | 100  | 12    | 14   | 63       | 92   | 120   | 128  | 138  | 145     | 152  | 157     | 161    |
|                  | 100  | 12    | .4   | 00       | 52   | 120   | 120  | 130  | 140     | 152  | 137     | 101    |
| Germany          | 100  | 8     | 11   | 50       | 77   | 104   | 124  | 132  | 138     | 146  | 151     | 155    |
| France           | 100  | 12    | 19   | 63       | 78   | 92    | 114  | 125  | 132     | 138  | 146     | 153    |
| United Kingdom   | 100  | 13    | 13   | 60       | 78   | 95    | 118  | 124  | 129     | 136  | 142     | 148    |
|                  |      |       |      |          |      |       |      |      |         |      |         |        |
| Australia        | 100  | 16    | 5    | 35       | 80   | 110   | 118  | 124  | 130     | 135  | 142     | 147    |
| China            | 100  | 16    | 19   | 18       | 42   | 85    | 108  | 125  | 134     | 144  | 153     | 162    |
| Japan            | 100  | 12    | 14   | 25       | 53   | 83    | 99   | 115  | 122     | 126  | 130     | 134    |
| South Korea      | 100  | 15    | 19   | 27       | 55   | 78    | 97   | 117  | 134     | 142  | 149     | 156    |
| Rest of world    | 100  | 4.4   | 40   | 50       | C.F. | 95    | 111  | 121  | 131     | 407  | 4.40    | 150    |
| Rest of World    | 100  | 14    | 18   | 53       | 65   | 95    | 111  | 121  | 131     | 137  | 143     | 150    |
|                  | 0    | - 50% |      | 50% – 75 | 5%   | 75% - | 100% | 100  | % – 120 | % 12 | 0 % and | higher |

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Destination Canada: Tourism Outlook – Forecast Highlights – Fall 2022:

https://www.destinationcanada.com/sites/default/files/archive/1696-Tourism%20Outlook%20-%20Fall%202022/Tourism%20Outlook%20-%20Forecast%20Hightlights%20-%20Fall%202022%20-%20EN\_1.pdf

# Tourism Canmore Kananaskis 2024-26 Goals

We have created this plan with the research provided to us by our partners at Travel Alberta and Destination Canada and invaluable input from businesses in Canmore and Kananaskis. With the expected growth in membership and resources, we are excited to steward the tourism industry in Canmore and Kananaskis rebound, both responsibly and sustainably.

As laid out in the strategic plan, TCK is adopting a triple bottom line approach to sustainable tourism development that considers Profit, Planet, and People striving to achieve a balance between the three. 2023 was the first year for the organization to account for all three pillars.

#### **First Pillar: Profit**

With business surpassing 2019 levels, there will be an increased focus on spring, fall and winter, helping the industry become more financially sustainable and providing stable, year-round jobs to our employees. We will shift the majority of promotional investment into long-haul Canadian and U.S. markets. Additionally, we are actively seeking opportunities with international tour operators that are looking to expand their itineraries to lesser-known destinations in the US, Mexico, UK, France and Germany.

There will be no significant increases in KPIs in the years to come and decreases are possible not only because of the rise of AI but also because sustainable funding has not been secured yet and it is reasonable to assume that without additional resources, budgets might need to be cut back in the years past 2025.

## **Digital Promotion**

TCK will target high-value(s) travellers that are staying longer and in turn are spending more time and money in-destination. The marketing plans are building upon our success of the past few years and will use the familiar channels of social media and paid digital promotion. In addition, the team will expand our social media channels, growing Pinterest, and continuing to engage with online travel agencies. Utilizing our strong partnership with Travel Alberta and maximizing co-op buy-in opportunities across channels, we are able to more than double our promotional spending.

Please see appendix A for a tactical marketing plan.

## **Business Development**

MICE business will be slower to return than leisure business, as we know building relationships with meeting planners and attracting meetings takes longer lead times. We will continue to engage with MICE opportunities, attracting small-to-medium-sized meetings, mostly from the Alberta market, and expand to national and international markets through our partnership with Destination Canada.

Working with tour operators to include Canmore and Kananaskis in itineraries will ensure a more diverse customer mix, longer booking cycles and a customer that is less dependent on short-term weather patterns. Attracting tour operator FAMs (familiarization tours) to showcase the destination, and attending Rendezvous Canada, Showcase Canada, the Adventure Trade

Associations' Adventure Elevate and the US Tour Operators Association will be paramount to growing demand going forward. Additionally, we will embark on sales missions into our target markets to build relationships and work on a better understanding of our destination by tour operators - from product managers to reservation agents.

## **Media Relations/Public Relations**

There is a need to expand media relations and public relations for the organization. There are opportunities for growth and extended marketing reach with increased resources put towards media relations. In 2024 we will leverage the support and resources provided through Travel Alberta to capitalize on media opportunities, particularly raising our profile in key U.S. markets. Additionally, there is a need to continue to tell our stories and educate the community on the benefits of tourism. In 2022 we were able to make great improvements on resident sentiment but have seen dips in 2023. As community buy-in is important for the success of the organization, we will continue educating our communities, businesses and stakeholders on the benefits of the visitor economy. As a shared issue, we will be working on a Canadian Rockies approach to resident sentiment as we know many residents work in one Bow Valley town but live in another, requiring Bow Valley wide approach to resident communications.

# **Visitor Experience**

The Travel Alberta Visitor Centre on Bow Valley Trail welcomes around 45,000 visitors a year, and staff counsels about 12,000 visiting parties. Operations and rent of the centre are currently covered by Travel Alberta. However, service from this location will be discontinued in March of 2026. Tourism Canmore Kananaskis will investigate if visitor services are still relevant going forward and what channels are best suited for brand-aligned engagement. With the current model costing upwards of \$230,000 to operate and no sustainable funding models available, the future of in-person visitor services past 2026 could be in jeopardy. Recommendations will be presented at the end of 2024 and executed in 2025 in order to ensure a smooth transition.

| Strategic<br>Pillar | Outcome                      | Metric                            | Target 2024         | Target 2025 | Target 2026 |  |
|---------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|--|
|                     | Campaign                     | Cost per Click                    | <\$1.50             | <\$2.00     | <\$2.00     |  |
| Profit              | Performance                  | Website<br>Sessions               | 1.1 million 850,000 |             | 500,000     |  |
|                     | Leads to<br>Members          | Online<br>Referrals to<br>Members | 97,000              | 75,000      | 50,000      |  |
|                     |                              | MICE Room<br>Nights               | 11,250              | 11,400      | 5,000       |  |
|                     |                              | Travel Trade<br>Referrals         | 435                 | 435         | 200         |  |
|                     | Destination<br>Consideration | Media<br>Mentions                 | 175                 | 200         | 225         |  |

| Visitor<br>Connections | Number of VIC<br>counselling<br>sessions | 10,000 | 12,500 | 1,000 |
|------------------------|--|--------|--------|-------|
|------------------------|--|--------|--------|-------|

## Second Pillar: Planet

In 2019, the Government of Canada, and in turn the Town of Canmore, declared a climate emergency. The growing calls for a global transition towards a climate neutral, green economy, and international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Glasgow declaration have put travel and tourism under the spotlight.

Furthermore, we know travel is a force for good — it broadens horizons and bridges divides and has the power to transform the way we live in our world. Therefore, our industry has never been more important to this world.

## **Sustainable Business Practices**

TCK is leading the industry into a sustainable future. Sustainability starts small and grows with each of our actions. We evaluate all business practices under the sustainability lens. To ensure we are on our way to becoming a leader in sustainable tourism, we have completed our first Global Destination Sustainability Index that gives us a benchmark and will allow us to compare our efforts with destinations globally. From this assessment, we will be able to enhance the organization's efforts, provide sustainability training to businesses and communicate the advantages of becoming a sustainable business.

## Implementation of Sustainable Tourism Plan

As outlined in the Community Tourism Strategic Plan, TCK will implement a sustainable tourism program. TCK believes strongly in the value of partnerships and collaboration and is looking at existing programs that align well with this aspect of community building. Research shows that travellers only trust sustainable certifications, if done by a third party<sup>17</sup>. TCK has therefore subscribed to the Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS) and was indexed for the first year in 2023. It is our desire to become the most improved destination in Canada by 2025 and we will diligently execute on our sustainability strategy which will be released in Q1 of 2024. However, success of the plan will require full cooperation of our municipality, industry and other leaders in this space. It will be crucial to align and pull in the same direction going forward.

## **Pledge to the Peaks**

The Pledge to the Peaks initiative was successfully piloted in 2020: the pledge was well received by visitors, residents, event organizers and the travel trade. Therefore, we will continue to work with partners and businesses to make the pledge a destination-wide initiative to ensure the community is talking in a unified voice. The desire to educate visitors came out loud-and-clear in the public engagement on tourism and TCK will happily play a leading role in facilitating the engagement.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Skift Research: Sustainability and Remote Work Shaping the Future of Travel, 2022

| Strategic<br>Pillar                         | Outcome   | Metric                    | Target 2024 | Target 2025 | Target 2026 |  |
|---|---|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--|
| Accountability<br>towards<br>Sustainability |   | GDS Index Score           | 45          | 51          | 51          |  |
| Plane                                       | Pledge<br>Implementation                              | Number of<br>Pledges      | 1,200       | 1,500       | 100         |  |
| t   | Sustainability<br>Training                            | Number of<br>Participants | 50          | 50          | 0           |  |
|   | Visitor education<br>on sustainability<br>CK Channels |                           | 15%         | 15%         | 15%         |  |

## **Third Pillar: People**

Destinations do not operate in silos – the destination is made up of community members and it is imperative that the visitor economy provides benefits to the community at large. Our commitment to the community starts with our staff and moves beyond the office and members to residents, our Indigenous neighbours, and government stakeholders.

## Staff

To achieve our goals, we will need high-performing staff that are constantly looking for efficiency. We know that diligent use of funds to maximize ROI is a top priority for our members and the organization. We are therefore committed to becoming an employer of choice in the destination and beyond.

Under the destination management approach, it is also important to recognize the current labour shortages. Tourism Canmore Kananaskis will therefore evaluate the role it has to play to help with recruitment of labour and education on retention best practices.

## **Indigenous Relations**

The organization is committed to keeping our Indigenous communities top of mind. We understand our business is build on indigenous lands and are committed to action on the Report on Truth and Reconciliation. We are working closely with Indigenous Tourism Alberta and our Indigenous members to guide us through this process.

## **Destination Stewardship**

"Destination stewardship" is an approach that balances and meets the needs of a destination and its communities and operates with legitimacy and consent under a participatory governance model."<sup>18</sup>

TCK will work closely with the Town of Canmore, KID, and Alberta Parks to form stronger relationships and ensure tourism is top of mind with administration and elected officials. The Destination Stewardship model holds all sides accountable for smarter tourism development.

## **Emergency Preparedness and Recovery**

Extreme weather events are increasing, and it is reasonable to expect Canmore and Kananaskis will face an emergency situation in the future. Emergencies will affect not only residents, but visitors, businesses and staff alike. It is paramount to be as prepared as possible and that recovery efforts start at day zero to ensure the destination's businesses can welcome back residents and visitors as soon as possible. TCK will continue its involvement as a member of the Town of Canmore Emergency Preparedness Task Force to be a voice for the visitor economy for Canmore and Kananaskis

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Stefan Hartman, Bernadett Papp: Towards Destination Stewardship: Achieving Destination Stewardship through scenarios & a Governance Diagnostics framework, July 2021

## **Education & Training**

TCK acknowledges the need for education of both our hospitality staff and community on what the destination has to offer, sustainable practices within the destination as well as education on indigenous culture.

The Peaks Academy will provide an online learning platform that will deliver a unified destination message to visitors while elevating spend in destination and will go hand in hand with Destination Stewardship and the Pledge to the Peaks.

## **Events**

Events are an integral part of a striving community and in Canmore there are many events and passionate event organizers behind them. From World Cup championships to smaller hockey tournaments, from big cultural events like the Canmore Folk Fest to smaller events like band camps, Canmore has a community that stands passionately behind these events. Tourism Canmore Kananaskis provides marketing and financial support if and when events align with our brand and contributes economic impact to the region and our member businesses.

## Membership

TCK's marketing investments help the entire region, including businesses and residents. The organization has been integral to restarting tourism and growing the visitor economy for the region. Therefore, securing sufficient funding for the organization will be essential for industry and the community. While financial challenges will remain a struggle for many businesses in Canmore and Kananaskis due to the pandemic, the affordable membership options with TCK should be every business's priority to ensure further reach.

Also, we will be working with all levels of government to find a sustainable funding mechanism for the organization and enhanced infrastructure funding for the municipality.

| Strategic<br>Pillar | Outcome                                | Metric                                     | Target 2024 | Target 2025 | Target 2026 |  |
|---------------------|--|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|--|
| Peopl<br>e          | ThrivingNumber ofEventsEventssupported |  | 8           | 7           | 2           |  |
|                     | Thriving<br>Membership                 | Number of 2% Members                       | 30          | 32          | 30          |  |
|                     |  | Number of<br>Associate<br>Members          | 90          | 100         | 100         |  |
|                     | Destination<br>Training                | Number of<br>Peaks<br>Academy<br>Graduates | 150         | 200         | 0           |  |

# Appendix A: Paid Marketing Campaigns\*

|  | 2024 |     |       |       |     |      |      |        |      |     |     |     |
|--|------|-----|-------|-------|-----|------|------|--------|------|-----|-----|-----|
|  | Jan  | Feb | March | April | May | June | July | August | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec |
| Google Discovery/<br>Demand Gen, US          |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |        |      |     |     |     |
| Facebook and<br>Instagram, US                |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |        |      |     |     |     |
| Pinterest, US                                |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |        |      |     |     |     |
| Expedia, US                                  |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |        |      |     |     |     |
| Facebook &<br>Instagram Boosted<br>Posts, US |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |        |      |     |     |     |
| Google Discovery/<br>Demand Gen,<br>Domestic |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |        |      |     |     |     |
| Google Search,<br>Domestic                   |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |        |      |     |     |     |
| Expedia, Domestic                            |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |        |      |     |     |     |
| Billboards                                   |      |     |       |       |     |      |      |        |      |     |     |     |

LEGEND: Low Spend Medium Spend High Spend

\* Additional year-round marketing initiatives: Consumer Newsletters, Rack Cards, Organic Social – Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, X (formerly Twitter)