



PHOTO: PAUL ZIZKA


LEAD TOURISM FOR GOOD

**10-YEAR VISION FOR TOURISM
IN BANFF AND LAKE LOUISE**



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LEAD TOURISM FOR GOOD: 10-YEAR VISION FOR TOURISM IN BANFF AND LAKE LOUISE

The vision process, Tourism Together, has been designed, supported, and facilitated by idea and strategy agency, Group NAO following a bid for proposals in 2021. The process itself was carried out between August 2021 and the end of 2022. Group NAO's team has been guided by the Tourism Together Steering Committee which is comprised of representatives from Town of Banff, Parks Canada, and chaired by Banff & Lake Louise Tourism. The 10-Year Vision is intended to complement other long-range Plans, such as the Parks Management Plan and municipal plans. Group NAO (groupnao.com) carried out research across the communities, residents, tourism employees and interested parties of both Banff National Park and the tourism industry. Stormy Lake Consulting carried out the qualitative visitor research. Graphic design by StudioFrost.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Banff National Park is stewarded within the ancestral territories of the Îyârhe Nakoda bands of Chiniki, Bears paw, and Goodstoney; the Blackfoot Confederacy of Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani; the Dené of Tsuut'ina Nation; and the Métis Nation of Alberta. We acknowledge the Ktunaxa and Secwépemc First Na-tions, the Peoples and Nations of Treaty 6, 7, and 8, and Inuit and Métis now living here, all who have stories and relationships with this sacred land.

Banff National Park was established a few short years after the signings of Treaties 6 and 7, while Treaty 8 was signed later in 1899 — 14 years after the creation of Banff National Park. These histories are fairly new - these lands

and mountains have much deeper and older names than many of us know, and the People of these territories continue to remember those names and carry those stories, as their ancestors did before them. We humbly thank them for their work and their roles in their communities and families.

We are starting the steps on a journey of several lifetimes, walking on a path of understanding, truth and reconciliation alongside Indigenous Peoples. We are committed to continue learning how to be better relatives and allies. We are creating space within our hearts and minds to listen, consider, and humbly contribute to a future rooted in equity, dignity, and belonging.





FOREWORD:
**BUILDING
FORWARD**

The development of a long-term vision for tourism in Banff and Lake Louise starts from a shared love of the destination and a strong belief in the good of tourism. As our community's core industry, tourism is a force that brings people together, that invites people to enjoy and learn, and that inspires the change needed to leave this place even better than it is now. This vision – a collaboration initiated by Banff & Lake Louise Tourism and supported by strong partnership from the Town of Banff and Parks Canada – is the moment to build forward, a time for us to work together to ensure that tourism is a force for the good of people and park.

Nature rules the park - we are governed by the flow of seasons, the habitats of wildlife, the power of the mountains. As an iconic destination with millions of visitors, we must work together to address and improve the impact of visita-

tion on the wellbeing of nature, communities and the park – ultimately, this will ensure the future quality of the visitor experience and the tourism industry.

This can only happen in recognition and respect of the history and the original inhabitants and stewards of the land; Indigenous Peoples, who have known and cared for this place since time immemorial and long before the national park was established. We must support opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to reconnect to the national park, including working together to create meaningful and authentic Indigenous visitor experiences. We want to learn from their knowledge of the land, and we acknowledge our obligation to honour their role, culture and traditions.

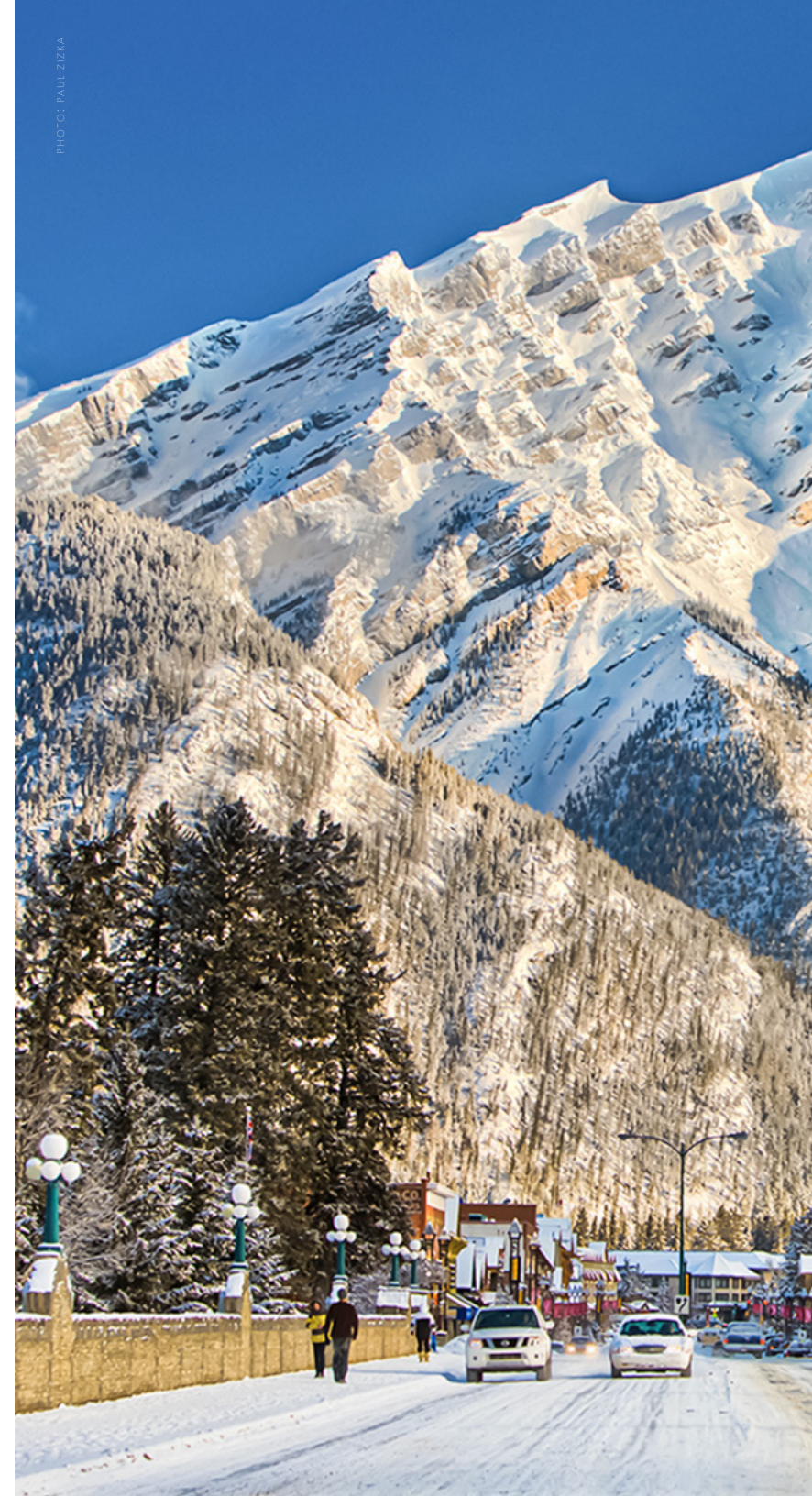
Why this, why now?

The pandemic shook and shifted our focus for a moment in time. Now it's time to come together in setting our long-term focus for a resilient future. We must build forward, towards a sustainable visitor economy that contributes to the health of our natural environment and the wellbeing and prosperity of the communities here.

Our communities exist for the primary purpose of welcoming visitors and as such, tourism supports the livelihoods of most of our residents. It attracts workers and talent from all over the world, and it elevates the vibrancy of our small towns. Tourism affects everyone, whether as a source of income, a career path or via everyday encounters.

That is why it is important for us to work closer than ever, bridging welcome and protection, collaboratively aligning partners, tourism industry, and resident communities around a shared tourism vision and stewardship approach. A vision that champions our core industry as a vehicle for protection of our natural and living legacy, for thriving communities, and for transformational visitor experiences.

Why a separate tourism vision, when Parks Canada already has a vision for Banff National Park in the newly published Management Plan? When Town of Banff has already set ambitious goals in the Environmental Master Plan, and when there are existing municipal community plans? Because in coming together, we





are focusing on the contribution of tourism as a vehicle to achieve the goals set out for park and people. As tourism affects all of us, we need a shared vision to guide our collective and individual efforts in building long-term resilience and a sustainable future with, for and by tourism.

Our vision for tourism in the destination has been shaped and informed by more than 2,000 interested and involved parties, and 550+ ideas for a better tomorrow were generated as part of the process. As tourism is inextricably linked to everything else in the park, there are many complexities at play, but also one simple truth that stands out above them all: Everyone who has taken part in shaping this strategic vision – whether living, working or visiting – shares a strong sense of privilege to be here, a deep personal connection to this place and a sense of obligation and responsibility to protect it. This is our starting point, as we set our long-term vision for tourism in the park and how we protect this awe-inspiring place.

The visitor economy was built over the last 120 years. We must now take charge in leading this transformation, addressing the challenges that have arrived from its popularity while building on the opportunities to champion the evolving needs of our visitors and community members alike. We must preserve and protect, reduce and reuse, educate and inspire to ensure that the national park and the communities within it can continue to thrive in delivering world-class experiences and welcome future generations to come live, work and play.

GLOSSARY: WORDS THAT MATTER



In this document, we try to say it as we mean it. Nonetheless, we are using terms and concepts that can have multiple meanings and contextual implications. So, here are the words and meanings that matter, as you continue to read...



Regenerative

By "regenerative", and "regenerative tourism", we are referencing the idea that tourism can be a part of leaving the place better than it is now. It means positively adding to the natural, social, cultural, and economic resources of a place.

Sustainable

We use "sustainability", and "sustainable development", as a reference to the act of balancing and reconciling human needs, economic and social wellbeing with the preservation of natural resources. In some aspect of future development, we aim for sustainable balance, whereas for other aspects we strive for improvement or regeneration.

For good

By using the term "for good", we are building off the idea of leaving the place even better. Here, what is good, is defined by the priorities of park and people, today and tomorrow.

Banff National Park

In all cases, we use the terms "Banff National Park", "the national park" and "the park" to refer to the 6,641 km² geographical area of wilderness and natural landscapes which is home to our communities and businesses, and visited by millions of people every year.

Community

We refer to "community" as a group that shares something – values, culture, passions, or living location. In this document, we refer to specific communities like Indigenous communities, or the resident community within the park, the business community, etc. Yet when simply referred to as the broader community, this refers to all communities within the park - residents, businesses, and employees.

Partners

We use the term "partners" to refer to the organizations behind this vision; this includes Town of Banff, Parks Canada, destination and hospitality organizations, tourism businesses, other local interest organizations and the broader community. It refers to the interested parties who developed and support the vision and strategies of this document.

Stewardship

"Stewardship" refers to a shared sense of responsibility and obligation to protect and preserve, and the actions that support. It involves both the protection of the environmental aspects and living legacy of the park, while it also implies the stewardship of both sociocultural and economic aspects of the destination.

True-to-place

"True-to-place" defines experiences and meetings that are deeply rooted in people, place, and park; not solely informed by the history and culture of place, but also by the living legacy and values of those who bring it to life.

Our long-term vision for tourism in Banff National Park is an aspiration towards a sustainable tomorrow through tourism. We know that no one can realize this vision alone. Unfolding this vision will require collaboration throughout our destination, and beyond.

PHOTO: NOEL HENDRICKSON

VISION:
**WHAT WE WANT
TO ACHIEVE**

LEAD TOURISM FOR GOOD

We must lead tourism for the good of people and park.

This means developing and inspiring new and meaningful ways to enjoy this place and leave it even better than it is now. It means continuously changing and adapting tourism for good because, in a place which is proudly 97% wilderness, we must be wildly innovative within the limits of the remaining 3%. It means collaboratively creating a future where Indigenous Peoples and businesses are present and thriving within the park. It means championing an industry and community that is welcoming, safe and inclusive for those living, working and playing here. A future where this awe-inspiring place continues to be shared in transformative ways that bring out the best in each of us and inspires stewardship in all of us – and in generations to come.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES: HOW WE WORK

Our five guiding principles define how we achieve our shared vision and how we work together in inspiring tourism for good. While strategic actions and plans will necessarily evolve as opportunity and circumstances change, the guiding principles are more solid and guide us in our decision-making along the way towards our long-term vision. The principles have been shaped by the many conversations, surveys and working groups that have been part of the Tourism Together process.





CONNECTED BY NATURE

In Banff National Park, tourism partners, visitors and community agree: We share a deep connection to the natural landscape that surrounds us, and from that follows a strong sense of caring and stewardship to keep it safe.



BETTER TOMORROW

As our core economy, we are guided by our belief, that when done right, tourism can be an impactful regenerative vehicle for a better tomorrow – for people and park.



LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Banff National Park is a national treasure, a global icon and World Heritage Site – but we must never take our position for granted. It's not about the accolades and awards. It's about living up to our unique global legacy and becoming the world model of destination leadership and meaningful visitor experiences.



WILDLY INNOVATIVE

We are immensely proud of, and are committed to, protecting and preserving the 97 percent of the park that is wilderness, and we want to prosper and thrive within the boundaries of the remaining 3 percent. To do so, we must be wildly innovative, persistently creating an abundance of experiences and opportunities within the limits of nature and to the full extent of our potential.



TOURISM TOGETHER

Tourism in our destination is a team sport without opponent. Tourism is so deeply entwined in the many different aspects and corners of park and community, business and experience that everyone has an important role to play and voice to share in rebuilding tourism for good. Our shared progress depends on our ability to partner and build meaningful relationships within and beyond the park.



PROCESS:

WHAT WE DID TO GET HERE

“Tourism Together” was the name of the process of engagement and consultation that informed and shaped the vision for tourism in our destination.

The process was initiated by Banff & Lake Louise Tourism (BLLT) and was developed with close partnership from the Town of Banff, Parks Canada and several key tourism partners. International destination and tourism consultants, Group NAO, were commissioned to design and implement the process in close collaboration with project partners and a Steering Committee. The process was designed around three core questions: Where are we today? Where could we be? How do we get there?

Over 2,000 residents of Banff National Park, including representatives from community groups, tourism partners and businesses, local decision makers and officials, as well as regional and national interest holders, participated.

The process included:

- A review of existing data and research, as well as an extensive mapping of current strategies and plans relating to Banff National Park’s tourism and visitor ecosystem.
- One-on-one interviews with close to 45 key tourism partners, as well as several seminars and workshops with the Steering Committee and BLLT Board members.

- Formation of six Working Groups, consisting of 10-15 community members and tourism partners, addressing Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Future Destination Brand & Values; Indigenous Tourism; Innovating Tourism; Live, Work & Community; and Sustainability.
- A larger working session, Future Forum, held in June 2022 where recommendations were shared. Note: The Indigenous Tourism Working Group shared recommendations in Fall 2022.
- Three surveys of:
 - Tourism businesses in the park, and partners of our destination
 - Residents of Banff National Park
 - Tourism employees working in the national park

Finally, Stormy Lake Consulting conducted explorative and qualitative visitor research, which provided valuable input in shaping the vision and plan.

FINDINGS: WHAT WE FOUND



Throughout the Tourism Together process, we have heard a strong shared interest and understanding of the main issues and challenges faced, and even to some degree the solutions required.

That is where our shared vision for the future comes into play; agreeing on priorities, the scope and scale of solutions, and roles and responsibilities is the first step.

In the following pages, we have summarized the main findings from the Tourism Together process. The survey results and Working Group recommendations are available in full length on the Tourism Together website.

HERE FOR NATURE

People in the park - whether visiting, working or living - are here for nature, and find kinship and connection in their love and appreciation of natural beauty and outdoor life.



92% of residents value living close to nature as important to their quality of life.

“I gotta go somewhere where I can move, be active and enjoy natural beauty. This is the best place in the world for that.”

—Traveller



PHOTO: SHANNON MARTIN



PHOTO: NOEL HENDRICKSON

BALANCING GROWTH FOR COMMUNITY AND PARK WELLBEING

We must redefine success and innovate within the limits of what we have; we must work to address the key issues impacting local quality of life and the shared experience of the park.

ADDRESSING TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

Solving issues around congestion and private vehicle traffic – especially at certain times of the year – is a top priority to ensure the future sustainable appeal of this place to everyone – living, working and visiting.



“Congestion is a big issue; interconnected destinations should be the future – take a bus anywhere; we should be a great place not to drive.”

– Tourism industry partner



PHOTO: BANFF & LAKE LOUISE TOURISM/JOHN ENTWISTLE

A SUSTAINABLE VISION



A strong ambition to develop and champion a more sustainable destination, alongside tourism development that is data-driven and encourages open innovation. This involves creating a more sustainable visitor experience, which will ensure the long-term resilience of our community, environment and economy.

“We need better data to determine where people go in our park, and where they don’t go. Data and content are hard to find, there are a lot of separate studies, but hard to tell the quality. We need to be more data-driven.”

– Tourism industry partner



PHOTO: PAUL ZIZKA

A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY AND EXPERIENCE

A core focus on welcoming, inviting and educating visitors (and everyone else within the park) to protect and preserve the park and its living, natural and cultural legacy. Developing experiences that are true-to-place and support the future of an authentic and vibrant local community

“It’s easy here to be moved by the world and want to help protect it.”

– Visitor



INDIGENOUS TOURISM

A need for a long-term commitment to nurture and grow meaningful relations with Indigenous communities and Peoples, and for the tourism sector in the park to champion tourism as a vehicle to advance truth and reconciliation, enhancing cultural awareness and training within the sector.

PEOPLE MAKE THE VISITOR ECONOMY OF BANFF & LAKE LOUISE

An urgent focus to develop and strengthen the collective appeal of the park as a destination of work – shorter and longer term. This involves solutions to the provision of affordable housing and addressing issues around work-life balance and safer work environments.



PHOTO: DEIVAN INGRAHAM



PHOTO: PAUL ZIZKA

Shaped by the extensive input and recommendations put forward as part of the Tourism Together process, we have identified five strategic trails to address in leading tourism towards a sustainable future. These key strategic opportunities embody the shared priorities and initiatives we will undertake in leading towards a better tomorrow for, with and by tourism.

ACTION:

TRAILS TO TOMORROW

TRAILS TO TOMORROW



VISITOR EXPERIENCE: INSPIRING EXPERIENCE, TRANSFORMING PERSPECTIVE

In Banff National Park, providing world-class visitor experiences is our collective superpower - we want to support existing and new ways of experiencing and enjoying the park, that are aligned with the values and heritage of people and place.



OUR OBJECTIVE:

Champion innovative, true-to-place visitor experiences that welcome and inspire everyone to take part, supporting local businesses and a thriving economy.



OUR MEASURES OF PROGRESS:

- Net Promoter Score
- Seasonal demand



OUR STRATEGIES:

1. Engage visitors through destination brand messages that support stewardship and inspire responsible behaviour.
2. Support and elevate the development and delivery of innovative, true-to-place experiences that maintain authenticity of place, quality of the experience and inspire appreciation and stewardship of the park and communities within it.
3. Align and strengthen communication to inform and motivate more responsible and respectful behaviours.
4. Raise visitor impact awareness to inspire sustainable choices while in the park, making it both easy, accessible and preferential.
5. Enhance events that reflect the cultures, values and narratives of people, community and park.
6. Stimulate the development of experiences that encourage and motivate year-round tourism.
7. As protocols and interests of Indigenous groups allow, elevate and promote Indigenous tourism businesses, and work together to create, develop and promote meaningful, authentic Indigenous cultural tourism experiences within the park.
8. Support the removal of barriers to ensure a positive, accessible and inclusive visitor experience for everyone.

TRAILS TO TOMORROW

NATURE POSITIVE AND CLIMATE ACTION: BIG IMPRESSION, SMALL FOOTPRINT

Protecting the ecological integrity of the park is a source of pride for all who work, live and do business here. Fostering tourism that enhances the natural legacy of this place is integral. As partners, we want to take leadership in reducing the impact of tourism across all aspects of the health and integrity of the national park's ecosystem and build on the shared benefits of sustainable adaptation and investment towards a regenerative and prosperous future for all.



OUR OBJECTIVE:

Work together to ensure that tourism actively and ambitiously contributes to protecting our natural capital, not only reducing the footprint of everyone enjoying the park, but creating opportunities to have a positive impact.



OUR MEASURES OF PROGRESS:

- Tourism footprint and impact reduction
- Energy consumption and water usage
- Transportation mode shift



OUR STRATEGIES:

1. Enhance capability and capacity to measure and monitor the environmental impact and footprint related to tourism in our destination.
2. Develop joint action programs to reduce barriers for sustainable adaptation of local tourism businesses.
3. Create and implement climate action plans to reduce tourism industry emissions in support of Parks Canada's and Town of Banff's ambitious GHG reduction goals.
4. Elevate and partner in initiatives that position our destination as a leader in nature-positive tourism and regenerative destination leadership.
5. Promote and support a comprehensive shift to sustainable and multi-modal transportation options when visiting and exploring the park.
6. Collaborate across the destination to make sure the destination is accessible and inviting for everyone.

TRAILS TO TOMORROW

COMMUNITY WELLBEING: A PLACE TO THRIVE



The wellbeing of our community is a strong indicator of the health of our visitor ecosystem, and while a great place to live is a great place to visit, the reverse is not necessarily true. We must continuously work to improve Banff and Lake Louise as thriving places to live, work and visit, recognizing that national park communities have a special and unique responsibility.



OUR OBJECTIVE:

Develop tourism in ways that actively contribute to and empower a thriving, vibrant, inclusive and accessible community with a high quality of life and appealing opportunities to build a career.



OUR MEASURES OF PROGRESS:

- Resident sentiment
- Job vacancies
- Availability of housing



OUR STRATEGIES:

1. Develop initiatives to engage visitors and residents in community activities, and work together to ensure that tourism gives back to local communities.
2. Establish ongoing conversation and monitoring of resident sentiment towards the role and impact of tourism.
3. Celebrate local life, identity and culture through activities, events and experiences that are participatory and appreciative of our history and way of life.
4. Align and strengthen promotion of the destination as an appealing and inclusive place to work.
5. Provide education and training opportunities for employees on hospitality, cultural awareness, stewardship, and creating safe spaces to live, work and play.
6. Work in collaboration with partners to offer world-class education and opportunity within tourism and hospitality.
7. Support a shared culture that aspires to provide a living wage for employees.
8. Within the framework of legislation and policy, collaborate to identify new solutions and develop more affordable, diversified and suitable housing.
9. Advance diversity, inclusion and social equity within our tourism workforce.

TRAILS TO TOMORROW

INDIGENOUS CONNECTIONS: ELEVATE INDIGENOUS TOURISM



Banff National Park exists within the territories of Treaty 6, 7 and 8, and the Métis homeland. Indigenous peoples are the original inhabitants of the lands and are important partners in the stewardship of these heritage places, with connections to the lands and waters since time immemorial. Parks Canada, Town of Banff and many more partners within the park are working to build meaningful and long-term relations with Indigenous Communities and Peoples.



OUR OBJECTIVE:

Champion Indigenous tourism as reconciliation in action. As protocols and interests of Indigenous groups allow, work together with Indigenous Communities, Peoples and Businesses to support market entry and elevate Indigenous tourism for a more enriching visitor experience, building cultural awareness and connection, and a thriving Indigenous tourism economy.



OUR MEASURES OF PROGRESS:

- We will work together to define success.



OUR STRATEGIES:

As the protocols and interests of Indigenous groups allow, we will work together to:

1. Enhance cultural awareness and training within the tourism sector.
2. Address and reduce barriers of entry, and provide support and services to Indigenous Communities and entrepreneurs in building tourism businesses.
3. Enable and support the development of meaningful, authentic Indigenous experiences.
4. Listen, learn and let collaboration be continuously informed, as connections and relations with Indigenous Peoples are nurtured and grow.

TRAILS TO TOMORROW

SMART TOURISM: DATA-DRIVEN DESTINATION

We need to get really smart about how we leverage the power of data to inform and elevate our decision-making – as marketers, as planners, as experience developers, and as businesses. Beyond that, we aspire to an open-source mindset and approach to innovation, inviting new perspectives and ideas to strengthen our destination and further tourism development.



OUR OBJECTIVE:

Invest in an open-source, data sharing conduit to improve collective decision-making, better address climate action, nurture a thriving community and economy, and evolve our tourism experiences for tomorrow's travellers.



OUR MEASURES OF PROGRESS:

- Access and application of data hub
- Engagement with data hub
(library downloads and uploads of new data)



OUR STRATEGIES:

1. Elevate the digital ecosystem that supports our destination and establish shared digital tools and approaches.
2. Work together as partners to develop and implement a Tourism Data & Insight Hub.
3. Develop real-time, reproducible, and interactive data sets accessible to all.
4. Invite interested parties to connect to the open-access Tourism Data & Insights Hub and strengthen links to citizen science initiatives.
5. Ensure an easy, seamless visitor experience, providing targeted inspiration and information.
6. Support the sustainable and effective management of visitor flows.

VISION: LEAD TOURISM FOR GOOD



GUIDING PRINCIPLES



**CONNECTED
BY NATURE**



**BETTER
TOMORROW**



**LEAD BY
EXAMPLE**



**WILDLY
INNOVATIVE**



**TOURISM
TOGETHER**

TRAILS TO TOMORROW

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

**INSPIRING EXPERIENCE,
TRANSFORMING PERSPECTIVE**

Champion innovative, true-to-place visitor experiences that welcome and inspire everyone to take part, supporting local businesses and a thriving economy.

NATURE POSITIVE & CLIMATE ACTION

**BIG IMPRESSION,
SMALL FOOTPRINT**

Work together to ensure that tourism actively and ambitiously contributes to protecting our natural capital, not only reducing the footprint of everyone enjoying the park, but creating opportunities to have a positive impact.

COMMUNITY WELLBEING

**A PLACE
TO THRIVE**

Develop tourism in ways that actively contribute to and empower a thriving, vibrant, inclusive and accessible community with a high quality of life and appealing opportunities to build a career.

INDIGENOUS CONNECTIONS

**ELEVATE
INDIGENOUS TOURISM**

Champion Indigenous tourism as reconciliation in action. As protocols and interests of Indigenous groups allow, work together with Indigenous Communities, Peoples and Businesses to support market entry and elevate Indigenous tourism.

SMART TOURISM

**DATA-DRIVEN
DESTINATION**

Invest in an open-source, data sharing conduit to improve collective decision-making, better address climate action, nurture a thriving community and economy, and evolve our tourism experiences for tomorrow's travellers.



**NEXT STEPS:
OUR COMMITMENT
TO TOMORROW**



Many organizations and individuals work every day to shape and create a better destination and community. As part of the Tourism Together process, we spent hours together in conversation and ideation on the future of tourism and everything that relates to it here. We have included a lot of the input within this strategic vision. Many of the ideas and recommendations will need further due diligence, elaboration and specification in each partners' individual business and action plans. This is part of the commitment we share in putting forward this vision. Just as our outlined starting points are not an exhaustive list, neither are our measures of progress. Over the coming decade, new data and metrics will become available to us to better assess our impact.

Many ideas raised in this process are outside the scope and leadership of tourism and need a different lead and place to ensure their successful realization. For this reason, we have published all input and ideas as part of the Tourism Together process and outlined relevant strategic synergies. Good ideas still need to get done – even if not directly within this plan.

Banff & Lake Louise Tourism, Town of Banff and Parks Canada collaborated closely during the development of this vision, and are committed to work together as partners, reflecting the importance of tourism in the destination. There are many additional collaborators and interested parties within and beyond the Bow Valley that are working on independent projects and initiatives, in advancement or support of this long-term vision. They are important in making this vision a reality. We want to become better at sharing and championing best practices to ensure the place we are so fortunate to work, live and do business in remains for future generations.

Tourism Together was not just the process that got us here, it is also one of our guiding principles in how we want to progress tourism from this point onwards. This means that the conversation continues, with ongoing resident and visitor consultation and engagement. Twice a year, we will meet to reflect on progress made, what's still to be done, any adaptation needed, and new ideas that have come up along the way.

Let's lead tourism for good towards 2032 and beyond – together.



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada



PHOTO: SHANNON MARTIN



GROUP
NAO