

THE ASCENT PLAN

Tourism Squamish Strategic Business Plan 2025-2027

FINAL: April 28, 2025

Prepared by

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Vardo Creative



1 Acknowledgement

We humbly acknowledge that Tourism Squamish is located within the traditional territory of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation). It is in recognition that we are all visitors on these traditional territories and have a responsibility to stewardship of the lands and waters.

Thank you to the Tourism Squamish Board of Directors for the valuable input and direction:

- Adrian Blachut – Brackendale Art Gallery
- Anthony Lamb – Executive Suites Hotel & Resort
- Jason Fullerton – Cheakamus Centre (Secretary)
- Jeremy Roche – VentureWeb (Chair)
- Ken Bailey – Squamish Canyon
- Kirby Brown – Sea to Sky Gondola
- Mark Enright – Sandman Hotel & Suites
- Rebecca McCleery – Canadian Coastal Sailing
- Rodney Wilson – Airhouse Sports Academy (Vice Chair)
- Shaun Veltkamp – The Hive Mediaworks Inc.
- Toran Savjord – Capilano University (Treasurer)

This strategy was developed with the facilitation of Susan Rybar, Vardo Creative.

2 Letter from the Executive Director & Board Chair

Dear Partners, Members, and Community,

Tourism is more than a visitor transaction—it's a relationship. It's built on shared experiences, economic opportunity, community pride, and our collective responsibility to steward this place we call home. *The Ascent Plan* is our roadmap for the next three years—a practical, focused strategy to grow Squamish's visitor economy with purpose and care.

This plan arrives at a time when Squamish is facing complex pressures and remarkable possibilities. Our natural beauty continues to attract visitors from around the world, yet our infrastructure, workforce, and accommodation capacity are under real strain. Our role, as Tourism Squamish, is to lead with balance: to support a thriving year-round tourism economy while safeguarding the character, values, and livability of our community.

This strategy was shaped by the voices of our Board, our members, and our partners. It builds on the foundation laid in *Vision 2029* and outlines the tangible steps we must take now to move that vision forward. It's clear-eyed about the work ahead and honest about the resources we need to get there.

Over the next three years, we'll focus on driving seasonal growth, securing the future of the Squamish Adventure Centre, deepening our partnerships with government and the Squamish Nation, and ensuring tourism continues to contribute positively to the lives of our residents.

Thank you to our members, our community, and our partners for your continued trust. With this plan, we aim to work better together—on the trails, in council chambers, on the water, and around the board table.

Lesley Weeks

Executive Director, Tourism Squamish

Jeremy Roche

Chair, Board of Directors

3 Executive Summary

The Ascent Plan reflects our ambition to lead the visitor economy in Squamish with care, clarity, and purpose. With 1.9 million annual visits, tourism plays a pivotal role in shaping local identity, supporting businesses, and enhancing the quality of life for 24,000 residents. This plan sets the direction for how Tourism Squamish will navigate the next three years through a balanced focus on opportunity, responsibility, and readiness.

It is a call to action to:

- Strengthen the year-round visitor economy;
- Support meaningful employment and entrepreneurial growth;
- Build collaborative relationships across the region;
- Protect the places and experiences that make Squamish unique;
- Ensure tourism contributes to a thriving community, not just a busy one.

This three-year strategy supports the longer-term *2024–2028 Vision 2029: A Roadmap for Tourism in Squamish* and identifies four organizational goals:

2. Drive seasonal growth of the visitor economy;
3. Prepare Squamish for sustainable, long-term tourism growth;
4. Strengthen local support for tourism and build stewardship credibility;
5. Deliver value to members, residents, and partners through transparent, collaborative leadership.

Eight key priorities will guide our work:

1. Marketing Campaigns & Activation
2. Squamish Adventure Centre
3. Tourism Master Plan & Long-term Planning
4. Destination Development
5. Value of Tourism & Resident Sentiment
6. Local Government Relations & Advocacy
7. Destination Stewardship
8. Organizational Excellence

4 Introduction

Tourism Squamish is poised at a pivotal moment of growth and opportunity as we embark on the next three years of implementing the aspirations set out in the *Five Year 2024-2028 Vision 2029: A Roadmap for Tourism in Squamish*.

While that foundational document outlines our long-term ambition, this strategic business plan focuses on three key questions:

1. What are our most important strategic priorities for the next three years?
2. How will we measure success and remain accountable to our members and community?
3. What can we realistically achieve with the resources available to us?

Nestled between ocean and mountains, Squamish's natural beauty and cultural richness have established it as a premier destination for travellers hardwired for adventure and seeking connection and sustainability. However, as the community of Squamish and the tourism sector evolves, sometimes rapidly, we as an organization must also evolve.

This strategic business plan outlines the **priorities identified to focus on now** to jumpstart the visitor economy aspirations while responding to local challenges and global trends that need to be addressed. It serves as an actionable document to reinforce Squamish's position as a destination of choice, strengthening collaborative relationships with partners and ensuring that tourism benefits both visitors and residents alike.

This plan outlines the priority initiatives identified by the Tourism Squamish Board of Directors for immediate collaborative action. The plan identifies destination stewardship, destination marketing, and destination development initiatives, with the aim of getting everyone passionate about working together towards the same goals. It was developed in context with the District of Squamish and Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw priorities and plans that impact tourism in Squamish.

This plan is not just about adapting to change—it's about leading it. Over the next three years, we are determined to seize the opportunities, mitigate potential risks, and build a stronger, more resilient foundation for the tourism industry that reflects the heart of Squamish. Together, we will ensure that tourism remains a sustainable pillar of the community's social and economic fabric.

This strategic business plan outlines the choices we are making on where to focus our efforts. A strategic plan is not an exhaustive list of everything an organization does; instead, it addresses the most critical priorities that require immediate attention and resources at a given moment to achieve the organization's long-term vision and goals. By concentrating on what matters most, this plan ensures our efforts are directed towards where they can have the greatest impact. This plan intentionally leaves out day-to-day operational details, allowing it to remain flexible and adaptive to changing circumstances.

5 Planning Considerations

1. Global & Industry Context

The tourism industry continues to evolve rapidly. Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) must respond to increasingly complex pressures and expectations—from emerging technologies to climate change, shifting traveller values, and a growing emphasis on local benefits. These trends shape both the strategy and operations of Tourism Squamish:

- **Accelerated Pace of Change:** DMOs must adapt to an ever-widening set of global issues—from AI and personalization to economic disruptions, natural hazards, and visitor inconveniences such as road closures or lack of accommodations. The speed and scale of change demands agility, focus, and increased capacity.
- **Changing Visitor Expectations:** Today's travellers expect deeper connections to place and culture, seamless digital experiences, and sustainability across all touchpoints.
- **Tourism Market Trends:** Relevant themes for Squamish include active transportation, community pride, connection with nature, and Blue Tourism (water-based experiences). Broader trends such as regenerative tourism, community-led tourism, interest in Indigenous experiences, and destination events are also rising.
- **Resident Engagement & Social License:** Residents are important partners in the visitor economy. Maintaining trust and support requires clear communications, transparency, and community-aligned decision-making.
- **Industry-wide Shift to Destination Management:** DMOs everywhere are moving from promotion-only models to more integrated roles that include advocacy, infrastructure planning, and stewardship—balancing the needs of visitors, residents, and the environment.

2. Squamish-Specific Considerations

While Squamish continues to attract high levels of interest as a destination, its ability to accommodate, manage, and grow tourism in a balanced way is increasingly constrained. Several local dynamics have shaped this plan:

- **Accommodation Capacity:** There are only 450 hotel rooms in Squamish, with occupancy rates already high. A significant portion of capacity is being utilized by the Woodfibre LNG workforce, with no fixed end date for when the rooms will once again be open for visitors. This limits potential growth in key markets like group tours, meetings, and sports events—

and affects tourism revenue overall.

- **Squamish Adventure Centre Uncertainty:** The Adventure Centre remains a critical asset for visitor servicing, cultural storytelling, and revenue generation. However, its long-term management structure remains unresolved. Securing a long-term agreement is a strategic priority.
- **Seasonal Growth Potential:** While summer is nearing capacity, shoulder and winter seasons offer growth opportunities. Marketing, product readiness, and infrastructure support will be needed to drive year-round economic benefit.
- **Daytrip Market Management:** Metro Vancouver daytrippers are an important segment but place significant strain on roads, parking, trails, and amenities. A strategy to increase visitor yield while managing infrastructure impact is essential.
- **Resident Sentiment:** Although 86% of residents recognize the value of tourism, concerns about crowding and livability remain. Proactive engagement and communications are needed to maintain public support.
- **Role Shift in Economic Development:** With the District of Squamish scaling back its economic development activities, Tourism Squamish is increasingly called upon to fill this role—despite limited resources and formal authority.
- **Waterfront Development:** As the waterfront evolves, tourism needs—such as marine access, public space activation, and placemaking—must be represented in planning. There is risk if tourism’s role is overlooked in long-term infrastructure decisions.
- **Advocacy & Local Government:** Tourism Squamish often advocates for infrastructure and planning improvements that support tourism and community benefit. This work is time-intensive and requires a deep understanding of intersecting local issues.
- **Stewardship and Sustainable Tourism:** Tourism Squamish is committed to responsible recreation, visitor education, and managing tourism’s impact on nature and community life. These efforts are informed by our geography within the Átl’ka7tsem/Howe Sound UNESCO Biosphere Region and our position on the traditional territory of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw.
- **Organizational Capacity:** The team at Tourism Squamish consistently delivers high-impact work with limited resources. While this efficiency is a strength, it is not sustainable long-term. Strategic prioritization and increased resourcing are required.

6 Vision and Mission

The Tourism Squamish Vision and Mission were updated to reflect the stronger need for supporting the community and an expanding role in multiple aspects of Destination Management.

Tourism in Squamish Vision

Be the premier adventure destination in British Columbia—celebrated for our Sea to Sky experiences, deep cultural roots, and tourism that enriches the lives of residents and visitors alike.

Tourism Squamish Organizational Vision

Tourism Squamish will be a leading Destination Management Organization, recognized for championing sustainable growth, exceptional experiences, and meaningful community engagement. Our work will support members, strengthen partnerships, and ensure tourism contributes positively to the social, cultural, and environmental fabric of Squamish.

Mission

We exist to:

1. Work collaboratively with partners to execute strategic marketing and sales programs that deliver both more visitors and higher yield visitors to Squamish businesses throughout the year, with a focus on the shoulder seasons;
2. Support exceptional, inclusive visitor experiences that celebrate and steward the natural environment, share cultural heritage with permission, and secure broad benefits to residents of Squamish; and
3. Provide long-term destination management and industry leadership, building meaningful relationships, working collaboratively with community partners, and creating awareness within the community of the value of tourism.

7 Organizational Model

Tourism Squamish is evolving into a full-service Destination Management Organization, bridging marketing, development, and stewardship roles to better reflect the complex, interconnected needs of our community, visitors, and natural environment.

To meet this expanded scope, we've adapted our internal model to focus on three core functions. Across all three functions, Tourism Squamish is committed to advocacy, research, industry leadership, and meaningful partnerships. Our organizational model is flexible by design—focused on responding to evolving community needs and sustaining the shared benefits of tourism.

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT		
Destination Marketing • Explore Squamish website • Integrated marketing • Digital marketing • Travel Media Relations • Travel Trade Relations • Cooperative marketing • Seasonal growth strategies	Destination Development • Infrastructure, access & amenities • Experience development • Investment attraction • Sea to Sky Destination Management Council • Community collaboration • Advocacy • Visitor services • Emergency management • Tourism workforce	Destination Stewardship • Destination Stewardship Program • Responsible recreation education • Resident sentiment • Capacity management
Cross organization: Research and analytics, Industry engagement, Capacity management		

8 Goals

Four goals were identified for Tourism Squamish to focus on between 2025 and 2027:

Goal	Measures & Milestones
Drive Seasonal Growth of the Visitor Economy	• Increase occupancy and room revenues during off-peak seasons (October–May). • Increase tourism-related business revenue in off-peak periods. • Increase partner participation in cooperative marketing programs. • Increase traffic to consumer website traffic in target markets. • Improve conversion and engagement from consumer communications.
Prepare Squamish for Sustainable, Long-Term Tourism Growth	• Complete the development of the Tourism Master Plan and begin implementation. • Finalize and share results from the Accommodation Needs Assessment. • Finalize and share results from the Economic Impact Study. • Secure a long-term management agreement for the Squamish Adventure Centre. • Regular, meaningful engagement with local government relations. • District of Squamish and partner planning decisions reflect tourism priorities. • Meaningful engagement, collaboration, and shared planning with the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw.
Strengthen Local Support for Tourism and Build Stewardship Credibility	• Improve resident sentiment scores through regular measurement. • Increase community engagement through destination stewardship communications and initiatives. • Highlight the benefits of tourism in visible, relatable ways. • Increase visibility and understanding of tourism’s benefits via targeted communications.
Deliver Value to Members, Residents, and Partners Through Transparent, Collaborative Leadership	• Maintain or improve member satisfaction ratings. • Maintain or improve community partner satisfaction ratings. • Consistently demonstrate leadership in advocacy, communications, and collaboration.

9 Markets

Tourism Squamish will continue to focus its marketing efforts on core geographic markets that offer the most potential for responsible, high-yield visitation. These markets are prioritized based on proximity, travel behaviour, and alignment with seasonal growth goals.

Geographic markets (in order of priority) will remain the same. It will be important to continue baseline marketing with priority markets for immediate off-peak visitation and longer-term consideration:

- The 75,000 residents that live within a 40 km (25 mile) radius of Squamish
- Visitors passing through the area
- The 2.5 million residents within an 80 km (50 mile) radius
- The 3.6 million residents within a 160 km (100 mile) radius
- Washington State residents (6.9 million) – with a focus on overnight stays
- Oregon State residents (3.9 million) – also garnering additional overnight stays

Primary drivers of visits that will be focused on will be adventure-oriented and family-oriented.



10 Priority Initiatives

The following eight strategic priority areas represent the key focus of Tourism Squamish’s work over the next three years. Each is supported by specific initiatives and performance indicators to guide implementation.

1. Marketing Campaigns & Activation

Marketing plays a pivotal role in the success of Tourism Squamish, serving as the foundation for supporting members, attracting visitors and creating responsible tourism growth. To remain competitive in an ever-evolving landscape, Tourism Squamish needs to continue to prioritize marketing efforts that generate responsible off-peak and mid-week visitation, support the brand positioning, leverage available cooperative marketing funds and adapt to real-time disruptions and opportunities as needed.

Priority Initiatives	Timing	Measures
1.1 Execute off-peak (Oct-May) and mid-week marketing campaigns to address seasonality and encourage increased length of stay.	Ongoing	Increased off-season occupancy Website traffic growth Increase click-through-rate (CTR) and conversion rates
1.2 Leverage cooperative marketing partnerships to extend reach and destination awareness.	Ongoing	Valued partnership marketing participation Increased ROI
1.3 Align marketing efforts with provincial and regional partners to maximize reach and resource efficiency.	Ongoing	Strategic alignment and campaign coordination with DBC, VCM, and others
1.4 Use all marketing channels to promote responsible tourism and stewardship values of the Squamish community.	Ongoing	Increase engagement through destination stewardship communications and touchpoints Improved visitor awareness of responsible travel practices

2. Squamish Adventure Centre

The Squamish Adventure Centre is a vital community and tourism asset. It stands as an important cornerstone of Tourism Squamish's long-term vision, playing a key role in shaping the region's identity and visitor experience as a beacon for adventure, discovery, storytelling, and visitor services. It is an essential hub for connecting travellers, businesses, and the local community and providing revenues to Tourism Squamish.

For over four years, Tourism Squamish has been in discussions with the District of Squamish to enable long-term stewardship and management of the Adventure Centre to ensure a unified approach to promoting the area's extraordinary assets. Securing long-term management rights and optimizing the space for community and economic benefit is a key organizational objective.

Priority Initiatives	Timing	Measures
2.1 Complete the updates and revitalization of the Adventure Centre , including the new Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Story Exhibit.	2025	Revitalization projects are complete Upgrades are complete and District of Squamish commitments have been met
2.2 Secure a long-term agreement for the management of the Adventure Centre.	2025	Long term agreement is in place with the District of Squamish Increased traffic to the Adventure Centre measured through year-over-year comparisons Increased revenues (sales)
2.3 Develop an Asset Optimization Plan for expanded community use of the Adventure Centre. (Consider Squamish Nation, transportation and emergency management, etc.)	2025-2026	Asset Optimization Plan is complete
2.4 Create a sustainable management and revenue model to support operations of the Adventure Centre under the new agreement.	2025-2026	New staffing and budget model developed Model activated upon execution of long-term agreement

3. Tourism Master Plan and Long-term Planning

This plan will guide coordinated, sustainable growth for the destination and align with the District of Squamish's Official Community Plan and broader infrastructure planning. A forward-looking Tourism Master Plan (TMP) provides a framework to align community, industry, and visitor needs, enabling a balanced and thriving visitor economy. Critical future forecasting components such as an updated Economic Impact Study, Accommodation Needs Assessment, scenario planning, competitive reviews, and a Comprehensive Hospitality Report will act as invaluable inputs into the plan, offering data-driven insights to address current challenges and anticipate future opportunities. In a small town, such assessments can be especially important to address unique challenges like limited land, fluctuating populations, aging infrastructure, labour workforce, or smaller budgets.

By investing in a TMP, Tourism Squamish reinforces its commitment to thoughtful planning, empowering local partners and enhancing the region's appeal as a premier destination.

The TMP will build community support and input into the Official Community Planning work being done by the District of Squamish, which will increase collaboration and resident sentiment.

Priority Initiatives	Timing	Measures
3.1 Develop a Roadmap to outline the best approach to moving the planning needs ahead.	2025	Board has agreed on the approach as outlined by the Joint Engagement Committee
3.2 Develop an Advocacy Plan to build groundswell support and participation from partner organizations and community members.	2025	Advocacy Plan complete and being implemented
3.3 Continue to advocate to the District of Squamish to endorse the development of the TMP and allocate funds for plan development.	Ongoing	District of Squamish endorsement and partnership confirmed Funds allocated (\$100,000 or more) to the TMP development in District of Squamish 2026 budget
3.4 Conduct an Accommodation Needs Assessment that evaluates the current and future demand and scenarios for fixed-roof accommodations in the area. Include strategic shifts for market considerations: leisure, VRF, MICE, events, etc, and recommendations for community policies and zoning opportunities.	2025	Assessment complete by November 2025 Results inform TMP and District policy decisions Assessment used by District of Squamish to reduce red tape and support new accommodation builds

3.5 Conduct a Comprehensive Hospitality Report on accommodation capacity, service gaps, infrastructure, and visitor experience.	2025	Report complete and integrated into TMP planning
3.6 Complete an updated Economic Impact Study .	2025	Economic impact study is complete and used as foundational input into the TMP
3.7 Develop the Tourism Master Plan .	2026	TMP finalized by November 2027 Recommendations ready for phased implementation

4. Destination Development

Continuing destination development efforts is vital for Tourism Squamish to strengthen its position as a premier gateway to adventure, culture, and natural beauty. We will continue to be a strong voice for tourism, advocating for improved infrastructure and amenities and championing experience development to meet the evolving expectations of visitors while safeguarding the region's unique character.

As part of this shift, Visitor Services will formally transition from a marketing-led function to a destination development focus—recognizing the vital role the Squamish Adventure Centre and 1:1 visitor touchpoints play in managing the visitor experience.

We will continue to work with community partners on the implementation of the Sea to Sky Destination Development Strategy, workforce development, emergency management, and other destination development priorities.

Priority Initiatives	Timing	Measures
4.1 Advocate for infrastructure improvements and policy changes that support tourism growth, enhance visitor experience, and benefit residents.	Ongoing	Transportation advocacy and seat at the table for visitor economy lens Tourism lens included in planning discussions Representation in transportation, zoning, and infrastructure processes
4.2 Continue to support implementation of the Sea to Sky Destination Development Strategy and participate in Marine Access, Visitor Management Roundtables, and related initiatives.	Ongoing	Actions from S2S Strategy advanced Funding secured for regional projects

4.3. Continue to deliver a multi-channel approach to exceptional visitor services , including operating the retail outlet in the Adventure Centre.	Ongoing	Visitor interactions tracked Retail performance
4.4 Continue finding new streams of funding to invest into destination development.	Ongoing	Value of funds secured Number of new or enhanced destination development projects supported

5. Value of Tourism and Resident Sentiment

Tourism Squamish believes that the success of tourism development depends on the support and goodwill of the local community. Promoting the value of tourism helps attract workforce, mitigate concerns, strengthen the local identity and ensure the industry evolves responsibly in alignment with community values, priorities, and capacity.

Resident perceptions play a significant role in shaping the long-term success of tourism. If locals view the industry positively—recognizing its contributions to the local economy, infrastructure, and culture—they're more likely to support tourism initiatives, events, and investments.

Squamish's position as a growing tourism hub makes these efforts especially critical for ensuring harmony between the industry and the community and safeguarding the positive reputation of the community in geographic markets.

Priority Initiatives	Timing	Measures
5.1. Continue to monitor and improve resident sentiment through regular surveys and feedback mechanisms.	Ongoing	Year-over-year improvements in resident sentiment ratings
5.2. Develop and implement a Value of Tourism communications plan to educate residents, showcase community benefits, and build support for tourism initiatives.	2026	Communications plan complete Increased engagement and awareness among residents.

6. Local Government Relations & Advocacy

Building strong relationships with local governments and advocating for tourism-related interests are central to Tourism Squamish's mission of shaping a vibrant and thriving destination. Collaborating with key partners—particularly the District of Squamish—has opened doors for meaningful projects that enhance the visitor experience and support the local economy.

As we look ahead, a key organizational priority is to begin building a respectful and intentional relationship with the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation). This includes not only outreach to elected leadership, but also, where appropriate, engagement with Elders whose knowledge, cultural guidance, and connection to the land are foundational to meaningful collaboration.

By speaking up for the priorities of the tourism sector—and ensuring our advocacy reflects a broader range of community voices—we can help ensure that Squamish remains a sustainable and inclusive destination for years to come.

Priority Initiatives	Timing	Measures
6.1 Continue to strengthen meaningful relationships with elected officials and staff from the District of Squamish and build new relationships with the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation) including with leadership and Elders where appropriate to encourage ongoing communication and collaboration.	Ongoing	Increased engagement with District of Squamish staff and Council Initial engagement pathways established with Squamish Nation leadership and Elders Board and staff build foundational knowledge and cultural awareness
6.2 Develop an Advocacy Plan (“Playbook”) and ensure Board members and staff are trained for their roles, including messaging and protocols.	2025	Advocacy Plan (“Playbook”) developed and implemented Advocacy training complete
6.3 Lead and participate in advocacy efforts for tourism-related priorities, including accommodation, marine access, zoning, transportation, and workforce housing.	Ongoing	Tourism Squamish positions are clearly defined and documented Staff and Board are prepared to act on emerging issues

7. Destination Stewardship

Tourism Squamish believes that the success of tourism development depends on the support and goodwill of the local community. We focus on understanding and addressing views on tourism through community meetings, surveys, and feedback. Our aim is to generate positive resident sentiments and ensure our tourism initiatives align with community values and support local businesses. This open dialogue aids in maintaining the social license vital for a sustainable visitor economy.

As part of this work, we also recognize the importance of building future relationships with the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation)—including, where appropriate, Elders and cultural leaders—so that our stewardship efforts reflect the full story of this place and deepen visitor understanding and respect.

Priority Initiatives	Timing	Measures
7.1 Work collaboratively with the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw and community partners to embed Indigenous perspectives and values into stewardship activities, where appropriate. This includes exploring shared visitor messaging, cultural education, and opportunities for storytelling.	2025 - 2027	Partnership initiatives or pilot programs identified Cultural content or tools developed in consultation with the Nation
7.2 Develop a resident communications plan to showcase Tourism Squamish efforts that enhance quality of life and reflect shared values with both the community and the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw.	2025	Increased Resident sentiment score (points) Increase community communications and improved understanding of tourism's benefits across diverse community groups
7.3 Continue Destination Stewards program at key locations to provide visitor services, promote responsible recreation and safety, and share educational content, including cultural context and Leave No Trace principles.	Ongoing	# of interactions through destination stewards Steward coverage and presence at key sites
7.4 Equip the organization with modern tools to monitor and analyze organisational and destination performance, such as AI, visitor data analytics platforms and environmental impact assessment tools.	2026-2027	New tools embraced Staff training complete Staff feel they have the tools to be efficient and effective

8. Organizational Excellence

Organizational excellence is foundational to Tourism Squamish's ability to lead, advocate, and deliver value to its members and the community. As the organization evolves into a full-service Destination Management Organization, we must also strengthen internal systems, people, governance, and tools.

Maintaining accountability to our funders, partners, and the public—particularly through the MRDT program—requires sound financial oversight, strong Board leadership, and ongoing investment in staff capacity. This section outlines the steps we'll take to ensure the organization is equipped to deliver on its mandate both today and into the future.

Priority Initiatives	Timing	Measures
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8.1 Address staffing needs and conduct skills gap analysis.	2025	Skills gap analysis is complete New organizational structure is in place New staff hired
8.2 Develop a succession plan to ensure long-term leadership continuity and stability.	2026	Succession plan complete and being implemented
8.3 Conduct Board governance review and update policies and procedures as needed.	2026-2027	Board governance reviewed and updated
8.4 Ensure financial monitoring , annual planning and all MRDT reporting is completed in a timely and transparent manner.	Ongoing	Continued stable funding All MRDT reporting completed on time with no compliance issues
8.5 Build a positive workplace culture that supports equity, professional growth, and staff well-being.	Ongoing	Staff engagement and satisfaction scores improved Access to training and development opportunities Increased retention and reduced burnout

11 Risks to Implementation

Multiple possible risks to implementation of this plan have been identified, which should be addressed during implementation planning:

Risk	Description	Mitigation Strategies
Funding Volatility	Changes to the MRDT program or other funding sources could limit the organization's ability to deliver core services or advance strategic priorities.	Diversify funding sources (e.g. grants, partnerships); maintain strong MRDT compliance; advocate provincially through BCDMOA and TIABC.
Limited Organizational Capacity	Current staffing and resources are stretched. Without added capacity, some initiatives may not be achievable within the timeline.	Conduct staffing analysis; prioritize high-impact initiatives; seek additional funding for key roles.
Local Government Shifts	Changes in municipal leadership, political priorities, or staffing could delay or disrupt collaborative efforts.	Maintain regular communication and documentation; build cross-departmental relationships; ensure continuity across election cycles.
Lack of Progress on Relationship-Building with Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw	The absence of a formal relationship could limit opportunities for collaboration or inclusion in key initiatives.	Approach engagement with humility, consistency, and patience; identify shared priorities and build trust over time.
Community Fatigue or Resident Pushback	Negative resident sentiment toward tourism could reduce support for future development.	Invest in clear, ongoing communications; proactively share benefits; involve residents in planning and stewardship.

External Disruptions	Wildfires, climate events, economic downturns, or global trends may impact visitation or tourism investment.	Integrate scenario planning into the TMP; develop flexible marketing and crisis communications tools.
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12 Conclusion

The Ascent Plan sets a clear and focused path for Tourism Squamish over the next three years. It is both an actionable strategy and a call to work together—across sectors, communities, and levels of government—to ensure that tourism continues to enhance life in Squamish.

By staying true to our vision, aligning with our partners, and listening to our residents, we will continue building a resilient, responsible, and year-round visitor economy that benefits everyone who lives, works, and travels here.