



**HARRISON HOT SPRINGS**

*Naturally Refreshed*

Village of Harrison Hot Springs  
**Resort Development  
Strategy 2025/26 – 2027/28**



Cover image taken by Mavic Air

The Village of Harrison Hot Springs gratefully acknowledges that we are situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of Sts'ailes.

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Background

- Village of Harrison Hot Springs
- Sts'ailes
- Tourism Context
- Key Attractions
- Market
- Completed RMI Projects

Vision

Goals

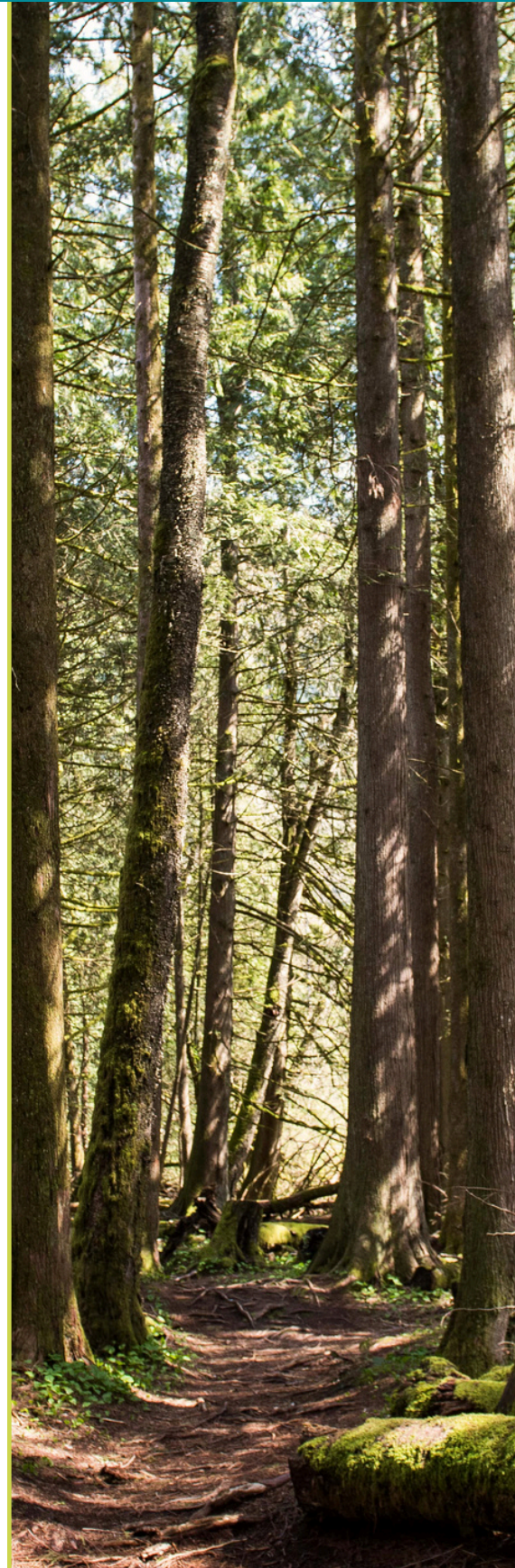
Community Consultation

Linkages to Other Plans

RMI Project Overview

Three-Year RMI Financial Plan

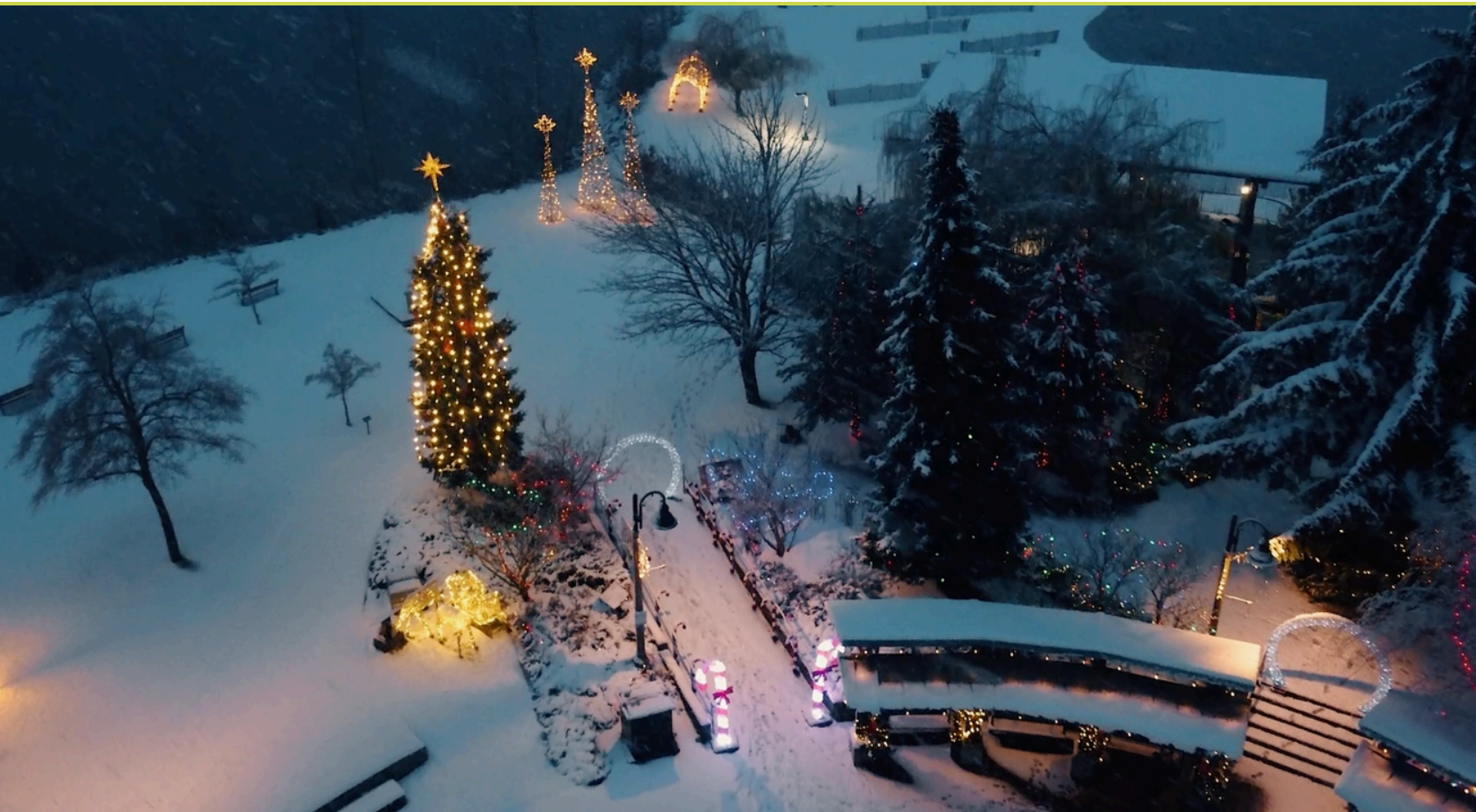
Appendix



# Executive Summary

The Village of Harrison Hot Springs' Resort Development Strategy (RDS) has been developed to outline the use of Resort Municipality Initiative (RMI) funds for the next three-year term.

Harrison Hot Springs is a tourism-based municipality, and the upcoming RDS will focus on increasing tourism based programs and services to further develop our tourism economy. While often regarded as a summer destination, our primary focus in this RDS term is to increase visitation during the shoulder and winter seasons.



# Background

## The Village of Harrison Hot Springs

The Village of Harrison Hot Springs is located on the south shore of the beautiful, glacier fed Harrison Lake in the eastern reaches of the Fraser Valley, approximately 140 km from Vancouver. Today, the Village has a population of approximately 1,900 and covers an area of just over 5 km<sup>2</sup>. The Village has spectacular views of the Cascade Mountains, Mount Cheam, and the Miami River which flows through the community. Our climate is warm in the summer and mild and rainy in the winter.

The Village is a member of the Fraser Valley Regional District with our immediate neighbour being the town of Agassiz in the District of Kent. The Abbotsford International Airport is an approximate 40-minute drive (75 km) away.

The Village, and surrounding region, is a popular tourist destination known for the sandy beaches, hot springs, hiking, forest bathing, rock climbing, golfing, bird watching, and more. There are many year-round recreational opportunities for families, retirees, artists and outdoor enthusiasts that bring up 750,000 visitors to town each year.



**Population**

**1,905 (2021)**



**Average  
Population Age**

**51.1 yrs (2021)**



**Population  
Density**

**347.3 per sq. km  
(2021)**

# Background

## Sts'ailes

Sts'ailes are a sovereign Coast Salish First Nation whose ancestors have lived on these traditional lands since time immemorial. The name 'Sts'ailes' is derived from the Halq'eméylem word 'Sts'a'íles', which means "the beating heart". Sts'ailes Xa'xa Temexw includes the entirety of Harrison Lake, Harrison River, Chehalis Lake, Chehalis River, the lower Lillooet River, the northeastern portion of Stave Lake, and the Fraser River between Hooknose and Queens Island. These major waterways are surrounded by ecologically diverse wetlands, estuaries, and floodplains, a multitude of valleys with small rivers and streams, mountain lakes, and glacial peaks. Situated throughout Sts'ailes Xa'xa Temexw were ancestral settlements, which were the nucleus of everyday commercial and domestic activities, and also semi permanent bases, which were used for hunting, fishing, plant gathering, and ceremonial trips.



# Background

## Tourism Context

The Village's tourism industry has primarily relied on the area's natural resources – including Harrison Lake, the beaches, and the hot springs. These attractions are an anchor for tourism and are essential for drawing visitors to the Village, complemented by various festivals and events. However, the Village has much more to offer, and the tourism sector is beginning to acknowledge the potential for growth by adopting a destination-focused, accessible approach to product development, management, and marketing through Tourism Harrison River Valley.

The Village has successfully completed several infrastructure improvements such as the lagoon redevelopment project, completion of the new accessible beachfront playground and shade features project, as well as parks & trails maintenance projects, which have all contributed to making Harrison Hot Springs a more attractive place for tourists. Additionally, the Village is committed to enhancing tourism infrastructure in a way that minimizes barriers to access. The fully accessible Visitor Centre of Tourism Harrison River Valley, is a key component to recognizing Harrison Hot Springs as a suitable destination for all. These improvements seek to increase the overall competitiveness of Harrison Hot Springs as a tourism destination in a way that promotes sustainability, accessibility, and inclusivity.

## Key Attractions



## Market

The primary target markets anticipated to visit Harrison Hot Springs include soft adventure tourists (for day trips or overnight stays), heritage enthusiasts, fishing adventurers, and spa travelers. The COVID-19 pandemic presented significant challenges for Harrison Hot Springs, necessitating public health measures such as travel restrictions, hotel closures, public health orders, and limited events. While there has been a notable increase in visitors from international and transnational locations post-pandemic, the largest demographic continues to be tourists from the Fraser Valley, Lower Mainland, and from across Canada. Future tourism challenges could arise due to uncertainties related to weather conditions, including wildfires, heat domes, and atmospheric rivers or floods.

# Background

## Completed RMI Projects



### Boat Launch Building - Final Phase

The Public Boat Launch building exterior upgrades and concession was completed in March 2025. Washroom improvements will be made later in 2025 and include accessibility improvements.



### Lagoon Redevelopment - Final Phase

The lagoon and surrounding walkway underwent upgrades and beautification to enhance the user experience.



### Accessible Playground and Shade Features

The accessible playground and sunshade project was completed in December 2024.



### Events

Events and festivals are an important offering for visitors during peak and shoulder seasons. Events include: Family Day, Canada Day, Bands on the Beach, Sasquatch Days, Harrison Festival of the Arts, and Lights by the Lake.

Other recent projects of note include the Village Entrance Sign and Carving, Starlight Skating Rink, and the Lagoon Fountain and Aeration Project.

# Vision

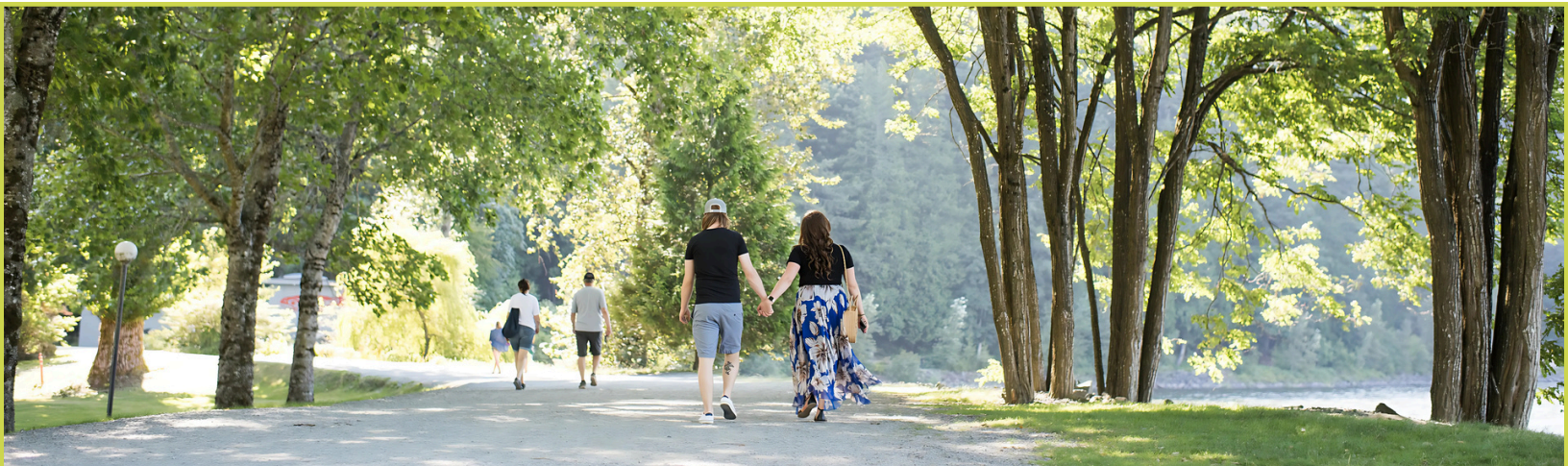
The below outlined community visions provide guidance for this Resort Development Strategy.

## OCP Village Vision

A residential and resort community with an attractive and inviting village core of shops and services. A strong commitment to maintaining the scenic qualities, the environment, the quality of life and the vibrant and cultural life combined with a high standard of development.

## 2025 Council Strategic Plan Vision

A residential and resort community on the traditional territory of Sts'ailes that provides an exceptional quality of life for residents and an outstanding experience for all visitors.



# Goals

The below outlined goals for the Village's Resort Development Strategy reflect the Village's commitment to enhancing the visitor experience by providing diverse, accessible, and sustainable tourism related amenities and infrastructure. These goals will be assessed regularly to track the progress of the Resort Development Strategy.

Performance measurements will include: MRDT monthly revenues and information on length of stays, visitor net promotor score, and visitor satisfaction surveys.

## Goal 1

Enhance visitor experience and satisfaction by improving the quality and quantity of tourism amenities and tourism related infrastructure.

## Goal 2

Diversify the seasonal nature of the tourism industry by developing a new shoulder season event and investing in tourism assets that prolong the tourism season.

## Goal 3

Increase understanding and awareness of local history by making information readily accessible to all visitors.

## Goal 4

Increase the number of accessible/barrier free amenities by auditing existing tourism infrastructure and ensure accessibility concerns are integrated into new tourism related infrastructure plans.

# Community Consultation



The Village of Harrison Hot Springs began creating a Parks & Trails Master Plan in the fall of 2024. Two community engagement sessions were held to gather feedback from the public. The draft version of this report provided insight for the RDS committee and staff to focus on areas that were identified which could increase recreation based tourism offerings in the Village.

Once the RDS Committee identified their primary projects, staff launched a survey on our engagement platform, *Get Into it Harrison*, to gain insight from residents or tourists who viewed the opportunity to provide input.



There is active consultation taking place regarding the annual planning of Sasquatch Days. This vibrant cultural event, which first began in 1938 and was revitalized in 2012, is collaboratively hosted by Sts'ailes, Tourism Harrison, and the Village. This cultural celebration features canoe races, salmon barbecues, medicine walks, and artisans.

The Village continues its consultation talks with Sts'ailes for a project that aligns with the Village's commitment to reconciliation, as well as educating both visitors and residents about the cultural significance and history of the unceded territory of Sts'ailes.



The Village will continue its ongoing consultations with Tourism Harrison River Valley and other stakeholders who have a direct interest in the planning and implementation stages of local events such as Canada Day, Bands on the Beach, Family Day, Harrison Festival of the Arts, Lights by the Lake, and the development of a new shoulder season event.

# Linkages to Other Reports

## Vancouver, Coast & Mountains Regional Destination Development Strategy 2019–2029

The Village's RDS ties into a number of the 'experience themes' outlined in this regional destination development strategy including:

- Outdoor Adventure, Nature, and Wellness
- Festivals and Events
- Waterways
- Indigenous Tourism / Heritage and Culture



## Regional Growth Strategy for the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD)

The Village's RDS aligns with the Fraser Valley Regional District's (FVRD) Regional Growth Strategy, which seeks to enhance the regional economy by anticipating future demands. This is particularly relevant given the prevalent tourism industry in the area. The Strategy emphasizes that "the abundance of and accessibility to nature, a growing demand for recreation, and our proximity to Vancouver position the FVRD advantageously to increase its share of the local tourism market". Furthermore, a key objective of the strategy is to fully realize the region's tourism potential through initiatives such as "Experience the Fraser," alongside the development of high-value parks and recreational assets that enhance the region's recreational tourism portfolio, while supporting eco-tourism initiatives.



## Indigenous Tourism Accord

The Village's RDS aligns with the Indigenous Tourism Accord, with a focus on the Accords' objective of "contributing to the understanding and revitalization of Indigenous cultures, protocols and languages for both their intrinsic values and as the underpinning of Indigenous tourism activities". This objective will be realized through the continuation of Sasquatch Days and the implementation of interpretive signage throughout the Village, which will increase understanding and awareness of Indigenous culture, language, and traditional history.



# Linkages to Other Reports

## Tourism Harrison River Valley Strategic Plan 2022–2027

The Village's RDS aligns with the focus areas presented in the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan for Tourism Harrison River Valley including:

- Growing winter and shoulder seasons (such as leveraging the success of existing events into expanded experiences).
- Extending tourism experiences across our communities (such as strengthening relationships with First Nations and support their lead on Indigenous tourism development in the region).
- Enhancing the visitor experience (such as continuing to expand events and festival programming).
- Aligning tourism approaches to community values (such as identifying and promoting environmental assets).
- Strengthening community and tourism assets (such as developing more active transportation infrastructure).



## Official Community Plan

The Village of Harrison Hot Springs' OCP contains significant reference to tourism, mainly related to commercial and tourism specific development. The Community Vision refers to tourism through a series of statements that promote the enhancement of the character and economic base of the Village, including the downtown beachfront areas. Tourism is widely acknowledged as the community's primary industry and critical for the economic sustainability of the Village.



## Fraser Valley Destination Development Plan

In alignment with the Fraser Valley Destination Development Plan, which reflects the provincial vision for destination growth, the Village aims to create outstanding visitor experiences that not only attract new guests but also encourage repeat visits year after year, particularly during the shoulder seasons. Over the next three years, our goals seek to enhance visitor satisfaction by diversifying our tourism portfolio, implementing opportunities for learning and engagement for visitors, and boosting the overall contribution of the visitor economy through the implementation of accessible and sustainable tourism related infrastructure.

