



SPIRIT OF 2010 TOURISM STRATEGY





Message from Premier Gordon Campbell

British Columbia has exceptional people, rich resources and the best location anywhere: We're Number 1 in Canada in job creation. Our economy is growing again. Industries like construction, oil and gas and resort development are booming.

As the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games approach, those opportunities will grow. We want to ensure that communities, businesses and families all across British Columbia are ready to benefit from the opportunities that are being created.

The following paper is one of four development strategies, outlining opportunities in tourism, procurement, labour supply and trade and investment.

Each of these builds on the steps the province has already taken to unleash the Spirit of 2010, including \$1 billion in tax relief, 90,000 regulations eliminated, \$1.3 billion of transportation investments, 25,000 post-secondary spaces by 2010, new international marketing campaigns and reforms to open up every sector of our economy.

I invite you to use this resource, and give us your input for additional steps we can take. Together, we'll keep working to build a future full of promise for us all.

Gordon Campbell

Premier of British Columbia

Message from Minister John Les

Our prosperity as British Columbians is closely tied to how successfully we seize the opportunities and rise to the competitive challenges of the global economy. I believe firmly that we have what it takes to be consistent winners in the international marketplace.

Our Pacific Gateway location, untapped natural resource potential, unrivalled quality of life, and above all, the tremendous skills and creativity of British Columbians themselves, provide almost limitless economic opportunities.

As host to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games, we also have an unparalleled opportunity to accelerate economic development throughout the province, and to market our advantages and business capabilities to the world. The Government is committed to maximizing the economic benefits of this truly unique opportunity for all British Columbians.

Our government's strategy of economic renewal has laid the foundation for a globally competitive economy. The *Spirit of 2010 Tourism Strategy* provides the framework for Government's initiatives going forward to raise British Columbia's global profile as a competitive supplier of goods and services, and as an unbeatable business location, tourism destination, and place to live and work.

As Minister responsible for Tourism and the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, I look forward to working in partnership with the private sector and other stakeholders to help realize the vision for a prosperous and vibrant economy that we all share.

John Les

Minister, Small Business and Economic Development and Minister responsible for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games

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INTRODUCTION

The British Columbia Tourism Strategy is intended to provide a rallying point for the provincial government and the tourism industry to work together to grow tourism throughout British Columbia, and to maximize opportunities created by hosting the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games and other major events. The Olympics represent a “once in a lifetime” opportunity for the Province to attract the attention of the world and focus on British Columbia as an Olympic host thereby creating a legacy of economic activity throughout the entire province. British Columbia will also play host to the 2006 World Hockey Championships, the 2009 World Police and Firefighter Games, and a growing list of other major national and international sporting events.

The tourism sector stands to benefit more from these events, before, during and after their actual occurrences than any other sector in British Columbia.

The provincial government views tourism as one of the most important economic sectors in British Columbia and strongly believes the tourism sector has a high potential to grow at an unprecedented rate. In addition to various initiatives to create an investment friendly climate and to guide development in a sustainable and socially and culturally sensitive manner, the Province has demonstrated its commitment to the tourism industry in many direct ways:

- ▶ \$500 million to build and expand the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre
- ▶ \$600 million for the Olympic Games.
- ▶ Delivering passenger rail service to the BC Heartlands at the request of the tourism industry.
- ▶ Establishing the Resort Task Force to facilitate resort development.
- ▶ Investing \$1.3 billion to ensure a reliable transportation network throughout British Columbia.
- ▶ Launching a national and international ad campaign profiling British Columbia as a place to visit, invest and live.
- ▶ Funding to enable marketing organizations to promote tourism around the globe.
- ▶ Providing much needed infrastructure throughout British Columbia such as upgrades to the Prince Rupert cruise terminal, investing in Vancouver, Victoria, Comox, Prince George, and Kamloops airports, and working toward the expansion of the Cranbrook airport.
- ▶ Working hard with the federal government to address air policy issues (such as airport fees and rents and international airports throughout British Columbia) and meeting infrastructure needs (such as airport expansions).
- ▶ Funding to grow the First Nation tourism industry throughout the province.

- ▶ Supporting training initiatives to ensure British Columbia's tourism industry has a skilled work force.
- ▶ Investing in, and facilitating the development of, tourism facilities throughout the province, such as the Squamish/Lil'wat Cultural Centre in Whistler, Mount Washington Resort, Canoe Mountain Resort, Kicking Horse Mountain Resort, and Big White.
- ▶ Ensuring that British Columbia's tourism gateways are ready to receive and welcome visitors from other provinces and the rest of the world.

There are a number of federal issues that need to be resolved if British Columbia is to achieve the goal to be globally competitive. In particular, air access, infrastructure (e.g., airport expansions and navigation); airport rents and fees; federal tourism funding; the relationship with the Canadian Tourism Commission; and border issues are British Columbia's main points of focus. While these issues are outside the purview of this strategy, the Government of British Columbia will continue in its leadership role and push to resolve these issues.

The provincial government has invested billions of dollars and has worked hard for British Columbia's tourism industry. The results are showing. New resorts are being developed throughout the province with large-scale investments, spin-off benefits to local communities and much needed jobs. The cruise industry continues to grow and tell us that they

know BC is open for business. There are more aboriginal tourism products and facilities in British Columbia than ever with many more opportunities for the future. The Prince George airport can now accept international visitors. More people are seeing tourism as a viable career opportunity. British Columbia will host the Olympics and many more major sporting events.

The provincial government invites the tourism industry, through the Council of Tourism Associations, to join us as we move forward.

British Columbia has a solid foundation and successful tourism industry due to industry, communities and government efforts to date. There is still much more to do. We view the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games as an important catalyst to grow the tourism industry, rather than final goal. The tourism growth potential involved with the Olympics is starting now, and will carry on well past the Games. It is important for the British Columbia government and the tourism industry to "get out of the gate" as soon as possible and to work toward common goals.

The British Columbia Tourism Strategy is about next steps, and answering the question "where do we go from here?" This strategy sets out a plan of action for tourism partners to work together to continue to stimulate and grow this important economic sector throughout British Columbia.

CONTEXT

Worldwide, tourism is a US \$4.5-trillion industry, directly accounting for 67 million jobs and 3.7% of GDP. The British Columbia tourism industry consists of approximately 18,000 businesses offering a wide array of destinations and experiences. The industry employs more than 114,000 persons directly (7.2% of British Columbia total) and an additional 152,000 persons in tourism-related businesses. In 2003, 21.9 million visitors generated tourism revenues of \$8.9 billion.

Tourism is segmented by geographic origin of visitors (international or domestic), and by purpose of visit (leisure or business). By geographic origin, 31% of visitors are international, and 69% are Canadian. International visitors provide more revenue per visit, representing 44% of revenues. British Columbia residents represent 47% of volume

but only 27% of revenue. Eighty-six percent of visitors come for leisure purposes and 14% for business purposes.

While British Columbia is a prominent tourist destination, there are significant growth opportunities both from current markets (such as Canada, USA, Europe and Asia) and from emerging markets (including China, India and Latin America).

Unique characteristics of the tourism industry require an approach that is different from a resource-based industry. British Columbia's approach to tourism must be diverse, flexible and react quickly to the changing market because of the great diversity of the tourism market, the different "target audiences" for visitors to British Columbia, the multicultural aspects of the province, and the frequently changing preferences and trends of the industry.

OBJECTIVES

The four primary desired outcomes of the tourism strategy are:

1. Increased numbers of visitors, particularly visitors with high spending ability

We believe that satisfied visitors often return to repeat a tourism experience. In order for British Columbia to attract more visitors and grow investment, it is important to fully understand the tourism consumer. A complete understanding of tourist consumer trends should lead to actions that will increase the number of visitors to the province and encourage their return. In addition, it will be important to target marketing and enhance the tourism product so that it caters to visitors with higher spending ability. We also need to encourage all visitors to extend their stay.

2. Increased tourism investment

We believe large-scale tourism investment by the private sector is necessary in order to accommodate the increased number of visitors. This investment will help to stimulate the provincial economy through the creation of jobs and new business. A major objective of the strategy is attracting private sector investment by ensuring a competitive business environment. The capacity to accommodate and facilitate increased visitors through improving transportation corridors and tourism infrastructure is an essential component in this regard. First Nations also have a unique

opportunity for greater involvement in, and increased benefits from, the tourism industry.

3. Increased use of existing tourism resources

We believe the diverse tourism resources (facilities, organizations, etc) existing in British Columbia should be used to their full potential. A provincial marketing plan for meetings and convention business will help to grow this important sector of the tourism industry. Greater use and expansion of existing tourism operations, including expansion of shoulder season use, will increase revenues for industry and government, and will encourage further investment.

4. Leverage Olympic opportunities

We believe that the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games provide a unique opportunity to build momentum and showcase British Columbia as a premier tourist destination. The benefits of being chosen as Olympic host are available now and will carry on well past the 2010 Games. All parties with a stake in tourism need to pull together, reach a common vision and implement a set of actions that will attract visitors now, during 2010 and after. Specifically, within the next 180 days, a 2010 Tourism Opportunity Strategy will be developed in conjunction with the Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games focusing on Olympic and pre-Olympic events.

Action Plan

In order to meet the Tourism Strategy's objectives, action is required on the following:

1. Market research and targeted marketing
2. Increased facilities and infrastructure to attract expanding and lucrative tourism markets
3. Measures that create an "open for business", competitive investment climate
4. Olympics and Paralympics Opportunities Strategy

MARKET RESEARCH AND TARGETED MARKETING

Tourism expansion must be founded on an understanding of British Columbia's current and potential consumers. Quality tourism research and consumer profiling data, including trends, global demographics, current and shifting demand cycles and research on market reaction to world events will be a key to the success of the strategy.

1.A Increasing Visitors

Historically, marketing to consumers has been undertaken through joint initiatives by Tourism British Columbia, regional / local tourism associations, the Canadian Tourism Commission, and the private sector. This model will continue; however, beyond nesting BC's tourism strategy in the Canadian framework, there are distinct actions that can be implemented to encourage longer visits by more tourists.

Tourism BC and its marketing partners within industry will continue to update tourist consumer profiles. These profiles will be matched with existing and planned tourism products to determine priorities for marketing programs and partnerships.

Tourism British Columbia, and other provincial agencies, other governments, aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities, industry and stakeholders need to work together to further develop untapped or potentially lucrative emerging tourism markets.

Tourism British Columbia is recognized throughout Canada and the world as a marketing success story. The Province continues to recognize and support Tourism British Columbia's distinct role in managing all elements of marketing, as articulated in legislation, as an industry led tourism marketing body for British Columbia. The Province also recognizes the important existing relationships of

the tourism marketing system in British Columbia between and including city and regional destination marketing agencies, communities and sectoral organizations.

Action:

Update tourist consumer profiles and develop key marketing goals.

Through market research, Tourism British Columbia with its marketing partners will be accountable for developing strategies to meet the provincial goals of increased visitation, extended

stays and repeat visitation. The provincial government, tourism industry and Tourism BC must continue to be prepared with adaptive strategies to respond to unexpected events that have negative effects on tourism in British Columbia (e.g., wildfires, SARS, etc).

Outcome:

Dynamic policies and marketing programs that are targeted towards increasing and maintaining visitors to British Columbia.

Marketing programs should be developed that address the three main objectives of:

- A) Increasing the number of visitors who stay longer, spend more, and return for the British Columbia experience;
- B) Bringing new investment to the British Columbia tourism industry; and
- C) Making best use of provincial economic development and lifestyle branding strategies.



1.B Meetings and Convention Business

Conventions, trade shows, and meetings are a major source of tourism and economic development revenue for Vancouver, Whistler, Penticton, Prince George, Victoria and many other locations throughout British Columbia. Governments, the tourism industry and communities have made large scale funding commitments to develop attractive, world-class facilities in these cities. New convention facilities are proposed for Richmond and Nanaimo. The meetings and convention industry is a high yield tourism sector for British Columbia and buffers the seasonality of the industry. In spite of the past two years of global disruption, the meetings and convention industry grew or remained stable worldwide and in British Columbia.

In order to maximize the economic benefits of British Columbia's meetings and convention industry, it must be aggressively marketed worldwide. An opportunity exists to enhance British Columbia's profile with meetings and conventions markets. Under existing legislation, revenues generated by tax streams earmarked for marketing flow to tourism marketing organizations. Tourism marketing organizations and convention centres themselves throughout the province provide varying levels of support for marketing to meetings and convention clients.

Action:

The Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development will work with convention centres and tourism marketing organizations to develop an action plan aimed at enhancing British Columbia's profile as

a top conventions and meetings destination in the world. The development of this action plan would make use of tourism organizations' marketing expertise, and explore new financial tools (see section 3.C) and the creation of marketing partnerships. The action plan will also identify marketing mechanisms that will benefit all major convention locations throughout British Columbia.

Outcome:

British Columbia will be recognized around the world as a top meeting and convention destination.

1.C Marketing / Recruitment for Tourism Investment

Proactive recruitment of local and international tourism investors and operators is required to expand tourism facilities and operations in British Columbia. Recruitment will be based on market research and government's commitment to support tourism development through government investment in tourism infrastructure (as outlined in section 2), enhancing the business environment (as outlined in section 3), better access to land, and facilitating partnerships with First Nations.

Efforts to increase industry investment will need to be co-ordinated with government (federal, provincial, local) investment in tourism infrastructure and the creation of an "open for business" investment climate.

The provincial government recognizes the economic importance of the tourism sector and the high potential for growth; however priori-



ties must be identified. Consumer profile information will be updated and matched with existing and planned tourism products to determine priorities for marketing investment opportunities. Data on what tourism customers expect and want will shape investment priorities. An important example of B.C.'s attempts to attract tourism investment is the work of the Resort Task Force. Future work could focus on marine resorts. Another example of this is recent work that Tourism BC and the Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development are doing with local governments to enhance tourism infrastructure and services for the "Rails to Trails". Another example could be a First Nations tourism initiative focused on the development of First Nations tourism products through joint ventures and partnerships.

Action:

The Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development, in collaboration with applicable provincial agencies and the tourism industry, to develop specific investor recruitment programs and policies aimed at local and international tourism developers and operators to effectively promote new British Columbia product opportunities and ensure an "open for business" investment climate.

Outcome:

A well-founded and widely supported plan for tourism investment programs and policies.

1.D Brand Identity

"Super, Natural British Columbia" has a high degree of domestic and international recognition. In addition, there are a number of other regional brands at the local level throughout British

Columbia. Canada is also marketed as a tourism destination through the Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC).

The Olympics are a unique opportunity for British Columbia to increase its share of the international tourism marketplace. A strategic approach to brand building that builds upon British Columbia's existing identity, includes a number of the Province's economic sectors, and maximizes opportunities presented by the Olympics, is required to meet the unique needs of the tourism sector.

Australia accelerated brand recognition for "Australia - Fun and Games" by 10 years. In addition, they created the broader brand of "Australia - Open for Business" and use the Olympics to accelerate brand recognition by 10 years. Inclusion of the Olympic identity will go beyond traditional logos and Olympic affiliation, weaving the Olympic identity directly in to the brand. The new brand identity will provide transferability and applicability to other economic areas. Other sectors will be able to tailor provincial branding to meet their individual needs.

Action:

The Provincial Government will provide clear policies and guidelines to Tourism BC, its marketing partners, and the tourism industry on the use of the any provincial 2010 branding (such as "Spirit of 2010").

Outcomes:

Improved provincial brand recognition in key tourism markets. Enhanced international brand recognition from association with the Olympics, leading up to, and beyond, the Games.

DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT IN TOURISM PRODUCTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Efforts to expand British Columbia's tourism market will require new and enhanced products and infrastructure. The private sector is expected to take the lead on product development. Governments are primarily responsible for infrastructure and establish policies that guide development. A more coordinated effort between governments and the private sector can result in greater success in growing British Columbia's tourism industry.

For the purposes of this strategy, development and investment priorities are grouped into two categories:

A. New Product Opportunities

– tourism products that directly address emerging, untapped, or under-utilized areas for tourism development. Specific local initiatives can be targeted for priority development and investment in this manner such as Canoe Mountain, Valemount gondola/ski development, and new or enhanced resorts in the Kootenays (Panorama, Fernie, Kimberley, Rossland, Red Mountain, etc.)

B. Regional / Sectoral Infrastructure Development

– providing the tourism industry with necessary infrastructure to positively develop on a regional / sectoral level. The wine industry in the Okanagan region is an example of a sectoral industry cluster where new entries into the market benefit from infrastructure that is already developed in the area. Other additional sectoral investments that may be considered include

Northwest - Prince Rupert Cruise facility, Rails to Trails, and regional airport expansion (e.g., Cranbrook).

2.A New Product Opportunities –

The provincial government will work with the Council of Tourism Associations, the private sector and community economic development organizations to facilitate the development of priority tourism products. Aboriginal involvement will also be a priority for development.

The Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development will work with Tourism British Columbia, key provincial agencies, the Council of Tourism Associations, First Nations, and other stakeholders to identify projects. This will initially be done on a province-wide basis and then regionally. Projects identified as potential “wins” will be assessed through the Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development’s project assessment process. Eligible projects will be fast-tracked, so opportunities can be realized quickly. The Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development’s regional project managers will assist “on the ground” in the initial identification of economic opportunities and will become the consistent source for local coordination to assist with investment issues for specific tourism products.

Action:

Identify Product Opportunities

The provincial government will bring a “customer focus” to this work. Government, industry and communities will identify



priority projects. Priority projects will be fast-tracked through provincial approval processes and government will work to remove barriers to investment, reduce red tape and facilitate local relationships. The Province will continue to explore viable policy and regulatory changes aimed at improving the tourism investment climate. The Province will continue to work hard with the First Nation tourism industry to expand new aboriginal products.

Tourism British Columbia will play an important role by assisting in identifying new product opportunities based on targeted market research. This will include ensuring product quality, the creation of export ready experiences, integrating distribution channels and improving access to markets for British Columbia's operators through technology.

Outcomes:

Priorities identified and agreed upon by the tourism industry and the provincial government with appropriate action plans to move projects ahead.

2.B Infrastructure Development

Tourism growth opportunities can only be realized with appropriate infrastructure.

Development activities under this category will focus on larger scale infrastructure development

and the development of priority regional initiatives.

Several British Columbia communities report that they have potential opportunities and priorities for tourism development but lack the necessary infrastructure to take advantage of these opportunities. Increased benefits can be realized when tourism initiatives are developed at the local level and when the necessary infrastructure is in place (e.g. forestry roads that may provide access to tourism products and parks).

Action:

Identification of Regional Infrastructure Priorities

The provincial government will work with other ministries, the private sector and communities to encourage tourism development activities in terms of infrastructure needs, large scale investment planning, further development activities, improved investor relations, regional community partnerships and recommendations for community based tourism projects eligible for the provincial Fast Track program.

Outcomes:

The provincial government, communities and the tourism industry to identify infrastructure investment priorities for each region with appropriate action plans.

BUILDING A COMPETITIVE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The tourism industry requires a competitive investment climate in British Columbia. Private sector investment currently faces significant regulatory requirements, often exacerbated by a lack of coordination between various levels of government. British Columbia government staff will provide a positive environment for the development of a competitive, profitable and sustainable tourism industry.

In order to create a competitive tourism business environment, this section of the strategy focuses on the following four areas:

- 1. developing a tourism charter;**
- 2. establishing clear roles within government regarding tourism functions;**
- 3. funding structures for the tourism industry;**
- 4. an approach to develop a skilled tourism workforce.**

The Resort Task Force is working to streamline the approval process for resort development to improve access to land, expedite approvals from provincial agencies, and improve communication between government and the private sector to improve permit assessment times. While each tourism product type may not require a full “task force,” an approach based on facilitating industry initiative should become the standard for British Columbia tourism development.

The actions/deliverables in this section are focused on providing support and service to existing and potential investors and operators to

create confidence that doing business in British Columbia is competitive and advantageous.

3.A Tourism Charter

There is a need to “chart” a course of action to solidify the provincial tourism industry as a key part of the provincial economy and cultural fabric.

Action:

Develop a tourism charter that clearly articulates to audiences outside of government that tourism is a provincial economic and cultural priority. The Charter will also establish fundamental principles to guide provincial agencies to be mindful of the importance of the tourism sector within the context of their individual service areas. A key principle will be that tourism can co-exist with, rather than dominate, other forms of development priorities.

Outcome:

A clear message to visitors and investors that tourism is a crucial component of British Columbia’s economy and that the provincial government is committed to assisting the industry grow. Clearer ministry roles in tourism development and less confusion for industry.

3.B Clarify Government Roles with Respect to Tourism

Governance of tourism varies significantly by jurisdiction with many of the best regions in the



world having good co-ordination among government agencies and close collaboration with the tourism industry. Currently in British Columbia, several provincial ministries and agencies have roles related to tourism in the Province in areas such as parks, recreation, tenures, highways, signage, business development, human resource development, policy and marketing.

The fragmentation of tourism responsibilities confuses operators and potential investors. This fragmentation is an obstacle for tourism to develop to its fullest potential.

Action:

The Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development to work with the Premier's Office to rationalize natural resources management processes to clarify provincial tourism responsibilities.

Outcome:

More efficient provincial tourism delivery model to maximize and facilitate short and long-term tourism revenues from visitation and industry investment. Provides fast tracked approval processes for tourism development.

3.C Industry Funding Sources

If the tourism industry is to grow, additional funding sources will be needed to effectively develop and market key tourism products.

At present two provincial acts have application or provide an example relevant to industry funding: section 3 of the Hotel Room Tax Act (HRTA) which allows for the collection of addi-

tional tax for marketing purposes, and voluntary levies in the Farming and Fishing Industries Development Act (FFIDA) for industry development purposes. Both pieces of legislation allow industry sectors or geographical areas to collect funds to promote their industry. More recently, the province has developed legislation allowing Tourism Vancouver to raise funds for marketing using voluntary levies.

The British Columbia government has heard from some tourism sectors and communities about the need for additional funding for development and marketing. At the same time, the Province has made a clear commitment to balance provincial budgets and to keep tax rates competitive. Any new and creative funding options should be considered within a clear provincial policy framework.

Action:

Development of industry funding option

The Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development, with assistance of Tourism BC, will work with the Ministry of Finance and Council of Tourism Associations to prepare a policy framework and options for additional funding mechanisms available to the tourism industry for product development, marketing and coordination. A current example is the Tourism Vancouver levy.

Outcomes:

Tourism levy legislation for Tourism Vancouver. A comprehensive policy framework and identification of other revenue generation options for Cabinet consideration.



3.D A Skilled Tourism Workforce

It is estimated that between 2007 and 2015, British Columbia will require a minimum of 54,000 new tourism sector jobs. An April, 2003 national study by the BC Human Resources Development Task Force found that businesses in the Accommodation and Food & Beverages services sectors are cutting back on services for tourists and hours of service because of worker shortages, with most cutbacks occurring in British Columbia and Quebec.

A recent report commissioned by the Provincial Government (2010 Winter Games Labour Supply and Gaps Analysis), outlines many of the needs in the service and tourism sectors that specifically relate to the Olympic Games. Clearly, a well-trained labour pool sufficient to meet future needs is necessary for tourism expansion.

“Destinations” is a partnership between provincial government and the tourism industry that has been in place since 1995. The program finds qualified candidates for prospective employers in the tourism and tourism-related industries. To date 20,000 people have been placed through this highly successful program.

In April, 2003 an industry/government (federal/provincial) task force announced a five-year tourism human resource development strategy and the creation of Go2, an industry “owned

and operated” human resources coordinating organization. Go2’s mandate is to provide programs to the tourism industry to recruit, train and retain employees.

Action:

Human Resource Training Action Plan

The provincial government will work with the federal government and the tourism industry to develop an action plan to meet anticipated demands of the industry. This action plan will require the involvement of a number of training and educational institutions in British Columbia, and will work cooperatively with the efforts of Go2 and Destinations.

This work will be informed and integrated with the comprehensive 2010 Human Resource Plan currently being developed by the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour, and the 2010 Winter Games Labour Supply and Gaps Analysis.

Outcomes:

Adequate numbers of well-trained employees to meet the demands of a larger British Columbia tourism industry. Ongoing development of an integrated human resource training consortium for the tourism sector utilising post secondary and technical schools across the province. Reductions in need to import skilled labour and greater ability to accommodate increased numbers of visitors to the Province.

2010 OLYMPICS AND PARALYMPICS OPPORTUNITIES STRATEGY

British Columbia's tourism industry will clearly benefit from the Olympic Games. The challenge is to fully leverage the benefits immediately and over the long term.

The Olympic Opportunities Strategy will serve to lever benefits throughout British Columbia. Lessons from Australia and other previous Olympic hosts will provide examples of actions that can help to spread benefits throughout British Columbia.

In Australia, the government implemented structural change in the tourism function to effectively respond to unique opportunities presented by the Olympic Games. The result was that the Olympic Games accelerated Australia's tourism economy by five years and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) stated that Australia was the first nation to take full advantage of the Games to pursue nation wide tourism benefits. The IOC also stated they would like to see the 2000 Games used as the "tourism model" for future Olympic events.

Another lesson British Columbia can learn from the Australian experience is the ability to generate and attract convention business into the Province before, during and after the Olympic Games. Australia was able to grow lucrative convention traffic in conjunction with the Games (rather than have conventions "edged out"). The provincial government, destination marketing organizations and convention facilities throughout British Columbia will need to develop an action plan to stimulate convention business throughout British Columbia, and, especially with the expanded Vancouver Convention Centre, slated for opening in 2008.

British Columbia needs to draw on the best practices not only of Australia but also from other recent Games held in Salt Lake City and Atlanta. The Province can draw lessons learned and ideas from these past Olympic hosts, and benefit from their accumulated expertise and success in staging the Games to build a structure for tourism that efficiently and effectively delivers on priorities, clarifies roles, and maximizes opportunities provided by the Olympic Games.

The International Olympic Committee controls many aspects of the Olympic identity (such as branding, marketing of the Olympic Rings, sponsorship, and merchandising). However, the Province will be able to make use of the Olympic profile to aggressively raise British Columbia's profile in the national and international marketplace.

Using many of the lessons learned from previous Olympic hosts, the Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development and Tourism BC will work with the Council of Tourism Associations and other partners to continue to develop an Olympic Opportunity Strategy for all regions of British Columbia. This work will address the three following key areas:

1. Marketing approaches that will optimise the Olympics as a catalyst to further stimulate provincial tourism, and linkages with the targeted marketing measures outlined above;

2. Positive linkages with the convention market to develop and use convention resources for mutual benefit between the games and convention traffic in the lower mainland and throughout British Columbia.



3. Unique tourism products and development areas related to the Olympics (such as sport tourism events / tournaments in anticipation of the Games).

Considerations for the Olympic and Paralympics Opportunities Strategy include:

- ▶ Tourism experiences for Paralympics athletes training in British Columbia and tourists who might attend the Paralympics;
- ▶ Arts and cultural tourism that might be developed based on a Cultural Olympiad starting after the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Turin;
- ▶ A focus on the sustainability principles as recognized by the International Olympic Committee.
- ▶ A focus on First Nations tourism.
- ▶ Tourism experiences associated with the Olympic facilities.

Action:

Olympics and Paralympics Opportunities Strategy

The Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development, in conjunction with Tourism BC, will work with the Council of Tourism Associations to develop an Olympics and Paralympics Opportunities Strategy within 180 days.

Outcome:

An Olympic Opportunities Strategy that will ensure the maximization of opportunities provided by the Olympics and Paralympics, and provide for the inclusion of the Olympic identity in new and planned tourism products and investments throughout British Columbia.

THE WAY FORWARD THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

The provincial government will continue to work in partnership with Tourism British Columbia, and the tourism industry on further developing and implementing the initiatives broadly outlined in the British Columbia Tourism Strategy: The Spirit of 2010 - The Olympics and Beyond. We proposed the following priority initial steps:

1. Work with industry, local government, First Nations and other partners to coordinate efforts.

The Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development will work with Tourism BC, other provincial agencies, Aboriginal Tourism BC, and the Council of Tourism Associations to define areas of responsibility and initial activities for implementing this strategy. The partners will confirm which priority projects should be pursued in order to attract more visitors and grow investment over the next ten years.

2. Develop and implement a Provincial Tourism Charter.

The Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development will work with Tourism British Columbia, other government agencies, Aboriginal Tourism BC and the Council of Tourism Associations to create a tourism charter. The charter will provide a clear message of the importance of tourism to British Columbia's communities and economy.

3. Develop an Olympics and Paralympics Opportunities Strategy

The Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development will establish a joint industry and government team and a process to accomplish this important task by October 29, 2004.

