ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

# Rocky View County
# Tourism Sector Profile

**Edited:**
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**Prepared By :**
Floor13

FLOOR13

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# Project Mandate

This report comprehensively assesses Rocky View County's vibrant tourism landscape. Our mandate was to create a detailed tourism sector profile highlighting the County's unique tourism assets, attractions, and exciting growth opportunities, emphasizing its key strengths and exploring areas with the potential for further development.

The report aims to offer valuable insights into the economic impact of tourism in the region. It empowers the municipality to make informed decisions about attracting investment and crafting policies that promote sustainable and prosperous economic growth. If taken into action, the information could also catalyze increased collaboration among local tourism operators, key stakeholders, and the broader community, ensuring that tourism remains a central focus in the County's development.

By showcasing the County's distinctive assets and exploring promising opportunities, this project paves the way for new partnerships with local businesses, regional organizations like Travel Alberta, Tourism Calgary, the Foothills Tourism Association, and potential investors. These collaborations will support marketing efforts, development initiatives, and community engagement while also integrating local perspectives to ensure that entrepreneurs play an active role in shaping the future of tourism in the County.

Key deliverables included in this tourism sector profile are short- and long-term growth recommendations. These recommendations strongly emphasize Bragg Creek, a popular and well-established tourism hub within the County. The report also encourages executing some quick wins (Key Actions) to further support tourism in Rocky View County. Together, these initiatives have the potential to enhance the County's visibility and drive increased visitation significantly.

We are confident that this report will give Rocky View County a deeper understanding of its current tourism landscape and highlight the opportunities for the future. With these insights, the County can better align tourism development with community needs, ensuring strategically informed sustainable growth.

# Floor13 Methodology

To develop this sector profile, we followed the following steps:

**TOURISM SECTOR ANALYSIS**
Gathered data on key characteristics and trends and reviewed tourism strategies that could impact or shape Rocky View County's future tourism sector (e.g., Destination Canada, Travel Alberta, Tourism Calgary, Foothills Management Plan, etc.).

**DESK AND ONLINE RESEARCH**
Conducted desk research about Rocky View County's experiences and tourism operations. (e.g., TDZ report 2023 and other Travel Alberta regional research in the County).

**INDUSTRY CONSULTATION**
Engaged with Travel Alberta and Tourism Calgary leaders on challenges and opportunities in the region.

**ROCKY VIEW TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS**
With the support of the County's Economic Development team, conducted three stakeholder sessions (with a total of 30 operators) and multiple conversations with tourism operators who did not attend the sessions.

**ASSESS ECONOMIC IMPACT**
Leveraged existing Travel Alberta data for the province and region to assess general economic impact, employment, and growth potential. We considered current infrastructure, resources, and policies that support the sector. (market demand)

**UNDERSTAND MARKET DEMAND AND TARGET AUDIENCE**
Identified key demographics or consumer groups interested in the sector, assessed regional and national implications/viability, and ensured alignment with Travel Alberta's 10-year strategic growth plan.

**ANALYZE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**
Assessed the County's strengths, such as location, experiences, or infrastructure, which make investing appealing or competitive.

**EXPLORE GROWTH, CHALLENGES, AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**
Researched niche areas for development in the sector, identified gaps or challenges in the market and infrastructure, and benchmarked against emerging trends the County could/should leverage.

**IDENTIFY MARKET-READY PRODUCT**
Researched (online or in person) market-ready experiences.

**SYNTHESIZE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**
Summarized all key insights to provide the County with recommendations for strengthening or capitalizing on the sector's potential (short and long-term). Included is an infographic for public information.

# Tourism in Rocky View County

## Current State

Rocky View County is a hidden gem that seamlessly blends rural charm with breathtaking natural beauty, offering visitors a peaceful escape from city life. With stunning views of the Rocky Mountains, serene lakes and rivers, and expansive open spaces, the County provides the perfect backdrop for relaxation and adventure. Whether it's fly fishing, hiking, exploring working farms in the summer, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, or enjoying family-friendly attractions, Rocky View County has something for everyone looking to connect with nature. Its warm, welcoming spirit and authentic experiences—from outdoor activities and local markets to seasonal festivals—make it an inviting destination.

Bragg Creek is a key tourism hub within the County, serving as a focal point for Rocky View's tourism story. The town's unique character, scenic location, and vibrant community make it an ideal anchor for the region's tourism offerings. Bragg Creek's mix of outdoor activities, artistic culture, and local businesses presents a perfect gateway for visitors, inviting them to explore all the treasures the wider County offers.

While Rocky View County's natural beauty and authentic experiences are exceptional, it has yet to gain the visibility it deserves. Many people are unaware of the County's offerings, mainly due to limited proactive marketing and a lack of a unified strategy. The County has been developing its tourism organically, without a coordinated approach to sharing its story with a broader audience. However, with its prime location near Calgary and Banff, Rocky View County has the potential to become a top day-trip destination. To realize this potential, it is essential to understand its current tourism landscape better and the opportunities available for growth and promotion.

Rocky View County tourism creates jobs and stimulates the local economy, but it also presents challenges, such as rising living costs and increased pressure on infrastructure. A balanced approach that considers both community well-being and tourism growth is crucial to address these challenges. With the right strategy and actions, the County can prioritize tourism, ensuring the region thrives as a sought-after destination while preserving its unique charm and quality of life for residents. Tourism takes time to develop and has many facets which come into play when a destination decides to engage. Nevertheless, establishing the base, knowing your strengths and opportunities, and investing smartly can set the right direction for tourism to thrive.

# SWOT Analysis

## Strengths

- The County is experiencing significant growth, driven by diverse industries and an influx of new investment.
- Proximity to Calgary – Close to a major urban center, offering easy tourist access.
- Natural Beauty – Scenic landscapes, including mountains, parks, and rural charm.
- Outdoor Activities – Hiking, biking, fishing, and winter sports opportunities.
- Unique Heritage – Rich history and cultural attractions, including historical sites and events.
- The Bragg Creek Area Structure Plan, set for presentation in September 2025, highlights the need for infrastructure to support tourism growth in the BC Area.

## Weaknesses

- There are limited export-ready products/ accommodations for leisure travelers. The area is mainly a day trip, with visitors in Calgary accommodations.
- Limited Awareness & Marketing –There is a lack of awareness of what to see and do.
- Access to Amenities – Some areas lack wayfinding, public transportation, and sufficient tourism support facilities, such as rest areas and restaurants.
- Municipal Commitment – While tourism is a focus for the County, skilled destination management resources may be a gap within the organization.

## Opportunities

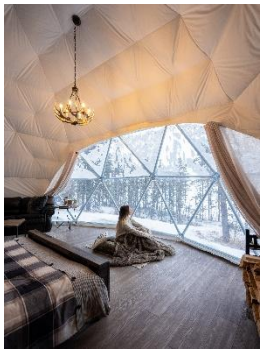
- Leverage the Foothills Tourism Destination Plan, Travel AB marketing spend, and Tourism Calgary for itinerary creation and promotion.
- Local stakeholders support tourism growth.
- Bring stakeholders together for annual industry forums to drive collective tourism development.
- Expand tourism products and experiences by tapping into agritourism, a potential differentiator.
- Capitalizing on Canadians staying home due to tariff disputes.
- Foster regional growth through community collaboration, to labour access from Calgary and nearby areas.
- Strengthen connectivity with Bow Valley to diversify the visitor mix and build travel trade linkages.

## Threats

- Potential municipal policies and regulations could limit growth in key tourism areas.
- The municipality may not have sufficient knowledge or resources to develop a successful tourism strategy.
- Bragg Creek would like an infrastructure master plan before further promotion. Health and safety risks of accidents, fire, overtourism, etc.
- Potential Political Shifts – Changes in municipal leadership or priorities could impact the long-term direction of tourism efforts.
- The County must manage tourism growth effectively with the right safeguards and planning in place to ensure long term sustainability.

*leveraging Travel Alberta Discovery Report 2023

# Market-Ready Product



“Market-ready” for Rocky View County means offering well-developed, accessible, and appealing attractions and services that meet the desires and expectations of local visitors. It reflects the County’s ability to provide the necessary infrastructure—well-maintained roadways, clear signage, welcoming spaces, pull-off areas, local accommodations, and organized experiences—that make it easy for nearby residents to enjoy a quick getaway or day trip. These offerings cater primarily to regional visitors looking for authentic, homegrown experiences convenient and engaging, typically accessed by those travelling in their own vehicles.

Rocky View County boasts over 30+ tourism offerings—likely even higher as the municipality does not yet fully track its operators. Depending on their primary operations, some businesses operate only seasonally or on a limited basis. The County’s website, www.rockyview.ca/local-attractions, highlights several of these offerings, but a deeper dive reveals even more market-ready experiences awaiting attention. From our stakeholder sessions, many of these businesses are eager for additional support and collaboration to help raise awareness of what they provide.

Rocky View County has a fantastic opportunity to make an immediate and impactful difference by expanding its website and sharing a more comprehensive story of what the region offers. By showcasing diverse activities and unique experiences, the County can attract a wider audience of visitors. Highlighting these hidden gems will showcase the richness and diversity of its tourism sector and bring the local tourism industry together, emphasizing the value of collaboration and shared success. This initiative can elevate the County’s tourism profile, making it a must-visit destination for those seeking new and authentic experiences.

## County Major Advantages

- Natural Beauty and Breathtaking Scenic Views
- Rural and Agricultural Experiences
- Local Markets & Food Experiences
- Market-Ready Products (30+)
- Bragg Creek – Established tourism hub
- Proximity to Calgary
- Small-Town Feel & Cowboy Culture
- All-Season Attractions
- Vibrant Arts and Culture Scene

# Visitor Profiles

## Leveraging Destination Canada Segmentation Research

During the stakeholder engagement sessions, we heard local businesses target four general types of travellers that visit the County. These traveller types are summarized below in a general manner. However, we strongly encourage County to align these profiles with the new Destination Canada Segmentation Research, which was recently launched nationally and offers deeper insights into visitor preferences and behaviours. By leveraging this research, the County can refine its marketing strategies and create tailored experiences that resonate with traveller segments. This alignment will enhance the County's ability to attract and engage a broader range of visitors, ensuring a more personalized and impactful tourism experience.

Please refer to the full study for more detailed information on the Destination Canada Segmentation Research and visitor profiles at https://www.tourismdatacollective.ca/segmentation

***We recommend that County focus on the following two of the eight segments. These two correspond well with the subgroups identified below.***

### OUTDOOR EXPLORER

Travellers who like to experience the outdoors. They tend to seek physical activities, connecting with locals and ensuring a positive impact on their environment.

### SIMPLICITY LOVERS

Travellers who seek peaceful travel, easy access, affordable destinations with small town feel, like to stay in their comfort zone and tend to be loyal repeat visitors.

# General Rocky View Visitor Profiles

## Picnic Goers – The Leisure Seekers

**WHO THEY ARE**: These visitors come to the County for relaxation, typically with family or friends. They enjoy getting out of town for a weekend drive (Sat or Sun or midweek in the Summer).

**WHAT THEY DO IN THE COUNTY:** These visitors come to slow down, breathe, and appreciate the region's stunning natural surroundings. They either stop at the market-ready Saskatoon farm, pick up bison meat, eat lunch at Flores & Pine farms or head to Bragg Creek.

## Families – The Adventure Seekers

**WHO THEY ARE**: Families looking to create lasting memories through fun, interactive, and educational experiences everyone can enjoy.

**WHAT THEY DO IN THE COUNTY**: They explore amusement parks, farm-themed attractions, and outdoor experiences like scenic trail rides and mini golf. Whether it's getting hands-on with animals at a local farm, enjoying a thrilling ride at a theme park, or relaxing with a picnic in a beautiful setting, families are drawn to activities that let them spend quality time together.

## Outdoor Enthusiasts – The Adventure Seekers

**WHO THEY ARE:** Whether they're avid mountain bikers, seasoned hikers, or lovers of horseback riding, outdoor enthusiasts flock to COUNTY to embrace the County's rugged terrain and natural beauty.

**WHAT THEY DO IN THE COUNTY**: These adventure-driven visitors constantly explore, from hiking up Moose Mountain to traversing the County's established trail networks. They engage in mountain biking, hiking, and horseback riding, seeking adventure outdoors while embracing the region's untouched beauty.

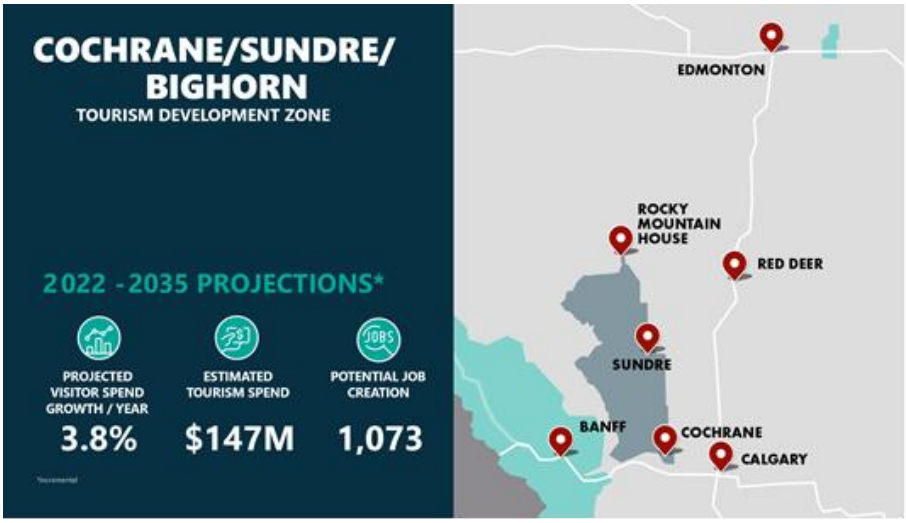
## Shoppers – The Experience Collectors

**WHO THEY ARE**: Visitors who seek more than just material goods are searching for unique, local, and artisanal products that tell the story of COUNTY's heritage.

**WHAT THEY DO IN THE COUNTY**: These visitors frequent artisan shops, farmers' markets, and local festivals, looking for handcrafted jewelry, locally grown produce, and one-of-a-kind gifts. They are drawn to the County's farm-to-table experiences and agricultural tourism, often picking up local products like bison, saskatoon berries, and other unique finds.

# Market Demand and Potential Economic Impact

As you can see from neighbouring communities, the economic impact of tourism can be quite beneficial. While there is no tourism-specific economic impact data currently for the County, similar nearby counties (*Travel Alberta TDZ Report 2023) can give a good idea of the projected spend, estimated tourism spend and potential job creation the area could experience if it grew tourism in the County. Although these two neighbouring tourism zones offer more experience and products, the County can certainly glean the long-term potential of future tourism development.



# Stakeholder Feedback

## Top 5 Takeaways

As part of Floor13 methodology, input was gathered from tourism industry stakeholders, operators, and nearby Destination Marketing Organization's through face-to-face, phone, and group consultation sessions held early in 2025.

Stakeholders were questioned on their impressions of the following questions:

- County's major advantages as a destination.
- Who do they think was their primary visitor, and what was the driving motivation for coming to the County.
- What the current impact of tourism had on the County.
- The challenges and opportunities to growing tourism in the County.

**The following highlights the top five themes that emerged from these discussions and what we heard.**

1. **SMALL-TOWN CHARM & NATURAL BEAUTY:** The County offers a peaceful, scenic environment with diverse, all-season activities, attracting primarily local visitors seeking relaxation and outdoor adventures.

2. **INFRASTRUCTURE & GROWTH CONCERNS**: While tourism growth is desired, stakeholders are concerned about infrastructure limitations, including roads, accommodations, waste management, water reserves, and capacity to manage increased traffic. They would like an infrastructure plan before more tourism promotion occurs (mostly in the Bragg Creek area).

3. **CONTROLLED TOURISM GROWTH**: Stakeholders emphasize the need for careful, intentional development to avoid overwhelming the region. They focus on attracting high-quality, sustainable visitors. They do not want to repeat Banff or Canmore.

4. **COLLABORATION CHALLENGES**: Concerns about regional coordination and a lack of buy-in from all stakeholders, with fragmented interests complicating unified marketing efforts, exist. This could impact investment. Investment works when the sector is united, has a vision, and has buy-in for growth.

5. **OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL TOURISM:** The County has market-ready tourism products that can be promoted, and there's potential for collaboration to create manageable, one-day itineraries to attract visitors while protecting the area's charm.

# Balancing Growth and Community Impact

***Thoughtful planning is needed to protect the County's identity while boosting economic benefits.***

## Opportunities for Growth | Immediate Actions for Success

Rocky View County's tourism sector holds tremendous potential for growth, and there are many exciting opportunities to explore right now. By focusing on immediate, actionable steps that align with the region's unique strengths and local culture, the County can set the stage for responsible, sustainable growth while creating lasting value for the community. Based on the valuable feedback gathered from local stakeholders, these initiatives will help foster a thriving tourism ecosystem and meet the community's needs.

| RECOMMENDATION |
| --- |
| **DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE DATABASE OF TOURISM OPERATORS**<br>Creating and maintaining an up-to-date database of tourism operators in the region will streamline communication and collaboration. This resource will facilitate targeted outreach, improve coordination within the local tourism ecosystem, and ensure that all tourism businesses are represented and connected. |
| **IMPLEMENTATION STEPS** |
| ○ **Identify and Catalogue Operators**<br>Gather a comprehensive list of tourism operators, including those on the County's website and others (accommodations, activities, attractions, and retail). Collaborate with local tourism boards and industry associations (e.g., Chambers, municipalities) for additions, alignment, and accuracy.<br><br>○ **Create a Centralized Database**<br>Develop a user-friendly digital database to categorize and update operator information.<br><br>○ **Update the Rocky View County website to ensure all operators are represented.**<br><br>○ **Promote and Engage**<br>Encourage operators to register and update their details through email campaigns, social media, and local partnerships to ensure ongoing participation and usefulness. (This will cast the net wider and help word of mouth to share their operation with you). Include the link on the website so they can see exposure; if you have website data (total visits, etc.) it would be an additional benefit to share. |

## RECOMMENDATION

### FOSTER COLLABORATION THROUGH A TOURISM FORUM

Hosting a tourism forum once or twice a year will be a great way to bring local operators together, encourage knowledge-sharing, and build stronger partnerships within the tourism sector. This forum can be invaluable for networking, best practices, and fostering a sense of community among local tourism businesses. Travel Alberta and/or Tourism Calgary could be key partners in shaping the forum agenda.

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- **Execute the Forum (should be in 2026)**
  Set the date, format, and key topics. Secure avenue and outline the agenda. Decide whether to hire a moderator/facilitator or have the County host the event.
- **Bring the Industry Together**
  Agenda suggestion: Share the sector profile summary report with the industry, thank them for their contributions, and share the decisions the County has made to support tourism as a key priority sector for the County in the short and long term. Host an open-floor session to gather feedback on additional industry needs.
- **Promote and Register**
  Use email, social media, and local networks to promote the forum and streamline registration.

***The Reeve and Council's presence at the forum could be advantageous, demonstrating the sector's importance.***

## RECOMMENDATION

### STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS

Partnering with the Foothills Tourism Association (FTA) will amplify the promotion of County's tourism products. With Bragg Creek already a part of FTA's offerings, collaborating on additional tourism products will increase visibility and visitation. Travel Alberta's support of FTA provides the County with valuable resources and an established destination plan to leverage. FTA and the County can develop engaging travel itineraries to share with Tourism Calgary to help target key leisure, travel trade and business events.

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- **Initiate Partnership Discussions**
  Meet with FTA and Tourism Calgary to explore collaboration opportunities and align tourism goals. Define roles, expectations, and key tourism products to promote.
- **Leverage Travel Alberta's Resources**
  Utilize Travel Alberta's support for FTA to access funding, marketing tools, and strategic guidance. Ensure the County's tourism products are integrated into broader regional plans.
- **Develop and Promote Itineraries**
  Work with FTA and Tourism Calgary to create targeted travel itineraries incorporating County's key attractions. To increase visitation, share these itineraries with travel trade and business events.

## RECOMMENDATION

### ENHANCE ACCESSIBILITY AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Improving accessibility through enhanced wayfinding signage will make it easier for visitors to explore the County. Addressing infrastructure improvements in Bragg Creek will ensure smoother visitor management. These improvements are vital for maintaining a positive visitor experience and supporting sustainable tourism growth.

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- **Conduct Accessibility Assessment**
  Evaluate with the County and Bragg Creek to assess the current wayfinding signage

and identify key areas for improvement, particularly in high-traffic visitor spots (e.g., appropriate signage, rest areas, etc.).

- **Design and Implement Signage Improvements**
  Prioritize high-needs areas and develop clear, easy-to-follow signage to enhance navigation and highlight key attractions.
- **Address Infrastructure Needs**
  Work with local stakeholders to prioritize and address infrastructure improvements in Bragg Creek, focusing on areas such as parking, pedestrian pathways, and visitor amenities to enhance the overall experience.

## RECOMMENDATION

**LEVERAGE TARGETED MARKETING AND VISITOR INSIGHTS. DOWNLOAD DESTINATION CANADA'S SEGMENTATION STUDY AND CONFIRM TRAVELLER SEGMENTS.**

Align with FTA to gather insights into traveller behaviours, preferences, and perceptions to enhance marketing strategies. These targeted efforts will focus on key audience segments, ensuring that the County's tourism initiatives align with visitor interests and Rocky View County's unique experiences.

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- **Learn more about Destination Canada's traveller segments*:**
  https://www.tourismdatacollective.ca/segmentation
- **Partner with FTA for Data Collection**
  Collaborate with FTA to gather traveller behaviour data, preferences, and perceptions through surveys, interviews, or visitor tracking.
- **Analyze Visitor Insights**
  Analyze the collected data to identify key audience segments, their interests, and the experiences they seek in Rocky View County.
- **Develop Targeted Marketing Strategies**
  Outsource or work with FTA (for marketing expertise) and use the insights to create personalized marketing campaigns tailored to specific segments, ensuring the County's tourism offerings align with visitor interests and highlight unique local experiences.

**Destination Canada's tourism data collective was launch in 2024 and categorizes the types of travellers targeted by Canada.*

## RECOMMENDATION

### POSITION BRAGG CREEK AS THE ANCHOR HUB FOR TOURISM

Bragg Creek has the potential to serve as the central hub for tourism in the region, acting as the gateway to all that Rocky View County has to offer. By positioning Bragg Creek as the focal point for visitors, the County can drive tourism across the broader region and create a unified experience that encourages exploration of the County's other hidden gems.

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

- **Create Regional Itineraries**
  Develop travel itineraries that begin in Bragg Creek and some that do not (3-5), leading visitors to other parts of the County, encouraging exploration and cross-promotion of local attractions to drive broader tourism.
- **Marketing should not be initiated until meetings with Bragg Creek and FTA have occurred and there's alignment on a go-to-market strategy. Bragg Creek could be positioned as the Gateway example for the other parts of the County to inspire to.** Use marketing channels to promote Bragg Creek as the central access point to the County's attractions. Highlight key experiences that make it the perfect introduction to the area.

**By seizing these opportunities, Rocky View County can build a solid foundation for future growth and establish itself as a premier destination for regional visitors, while maintaining a focus on sustainable development and community engagement. The time is ripe to cultivate these opportunities and make a meaningful impact in the tourism sector.**

# Opportunities for Growth – Long-Term Vision for Success

## Development of a Detailed Strategy

Rocky View County has tremendous potential to become a sought-after destination for visitors, and with a focused, strategic approach, the County can elevate its tourism sector to new heights. The County has already identified tourism as a priority pillar, and with a clear vision and collaborative effort, Rocky View County can unlock its full tourism potential. While there are opportunities for growth and development, addressing key areas will ensure that the region thrives sustainably, offering an attractive and memorable experience for future visitors.

## Key Imperatives

**Create a Unified Vision for Tourism Development**
To realize its tourism potential, the can increase collaboration and implement a clear, cohesive vision for the sector. The County can increase collaboration, enhance marketing effectiveness, and unlock untapped growth opportunities by aligning regional efforts. A unified strategy will help focus resources, streamline initiatives, and build strong partnerships, setting the foundation for long-term success.

> **How***: The County should, in collaboration with relevant partners develop its own three-year tourism strategy with the municipality government, industry members and local businesses.*

**Invest in Infrastructure and Transportation**
As the County looks to grow its tourism industry, addressing infrastructure needs will be key to staying competitive. This includes expanding accommodation options, improving transportation networks, and providing essential services like water, sewer, and emergency systems. By enhancing infrastructure, Rocky View County can create a seamless visitor experience, making it easier for tourists to stay and explore the region. Focusing on improving infrastructure in Bragg Creek will be a particularly impactful starting point.

> **How:** *Implement infrastructure needs based on the Unified Strategic Vision for the County.*

**Address Workforce Needs and Enhance Mobility**
For Rocky View County to thrive as a tourism hub, it is essential to address workforce challenges and improve mobility, especially given the region's proximity to Calgary. Strengthening partnerships to tackle labour shortages and improve access to transportation options will alleviate the challenge.

> **How:** *Assess the industry need through forums and one-on-one meetings with industry members and develop a labour plan to support operators.*

**Expand Tourism Products and Experiences**
To keep Rocky View County top-of-mind for visitors, continually expanding and diversifying tourism offerings will be important. This could include exploring Agri-tourism, farm-to-table, and Indigenous tourism opportunities unique to the County. By creating more diverse experiences, the County can attract a broader range of visitors and encourage longer stays, ensuring the region becomes a complete and memorable destination and remains competitive for years.

> **How:** *Hire a tourism training and development firm to help tourism operators enhance their experiences. The County could offer a value-added offering pending budget.*

**Achieve Balanced Growth and Environmental Preservation**
As Rocky View County grows, maintaining a balance between tourism development and environmental preservation will be crucial. With a thoughtful approach to managing growth, the region can continue highlighting its natural beauty while ensuring sustainable tourism practices. Collaborating with stakeholders like Bragg Creek Wild and the Environmental Coalition, who are committed to preserving the area's unique character, will help ensure that the County remains a desirable and well-protected destination for years.

> **How:** *Invite environmental groups to the table to share their ideas with County. Prioritize needs and implement.*

**Overcome Regulatory and Market Challenges**
Addressing regulatory and permitting related barriers will be vital to supporting small businesses and expanding agritourism opportunities. By streamlining these processes, the County can unlock opportunities for small, family-owned businesses to scale and attract more visitors. Overcoming market barriers will create a thriving, diverse tourism sector that will contribute to the region's economic well-being.

> **How:** *Proactive policy and advocacy, stakeholder input and engagement and infrastructure planning.*

## In Conclusion

Rocky View County has a bright future ahead, and with a strategic and collaborative approach, the region can become a recognized and beloved tourism destination. While building a successful tourism industry will take time and investment, the County's commitment to tourism as a priority will drive long-term growth and sustainability.

**By acting on these key areas, the County can position itself as a vibrant, well-protected destination that draws visitors from near and far, creating lasting value for tourists and the local community.**

# Summary | Strategic Recommendations

| FOCUS AREA | RECOMMENDATIONS |
|---|---|
| **Investment in Tourism** | ○ **Build a sector profile database**: Develop and maintain a comprehensive database of tourism facilities to highlight regional offerings and attract investment (e.g., current County website for parks/recreation).<br>○ **Focus on niche areas**: Support unique sectors like agritourism, farm-to-table, and local operators to maintain the County's distinct appeal.<br>○ **Attract sustainable, high-quality visitors**: Target visitors who align with the County's values of relaxation, outdoor activities, and Western heritage.<br>○ **Develop visitor flow guidelines**: Create policies to manage tourism growth while preserving the region's charm.<br>○ **Facilitate government partnerships**: Collaborate with provincial and federal governments to access grants for tourism infrastructure improvements.<br>○ **Prioritize sustainable infrastructure**: Focus on investments that align with the region's existing facilities.<br>○ **Organize a tourism forum**: Fund a 2025 forum to gather stakeholders, share insights, and explore growth strategies. (This could be done with Travel Alberta and the Foothills Tourism Association).<br>○ **Collaborate with regional tourism groups**: Promote the County's experiences by working with Tourism Calgary and the Foothills Tourism Association.<br>○ **Unify marketing efforts**: Streamline promotions through the County or the new Foothills Tourism Association |
| **Improving Permit and Development Processes** | ○ **Ensure consistency in processes:** Address challenges with fluctuating processes during permit applications to provide applicants with a more predictable and reliable experience. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Infrastructure** | ○ **Focus on infrastructure upkeep:** Conduct a full audit of tourism-related operators' needs. Address challenges through investment and ensure regular maintenance and upkeep.<br><br>○ **Implement clear signage and wayfinding systems** to support operator success and enhance visitor experience. |
| **Environmental** | ○ **Assess and ensure garbage and fire safety risks** have an adequate plan/strategy. Proactive environmental management will prevent harm to the natural landscape and community, especially in Bragg Creek or any other highly traffic area.<br><br>○ **Concerned groups in the region may create an eventual anti-tourism movement;** they should be consulted as the tourism development plans move forward. (*Bragg Creek Wild and Environmental Coalition.)* |

Photo credits:

Cover. Campfire and tents, @outbound_elements

Page 5. Winter Mountain Bikers, @outbound_elements

Page 9. Couples walking our of Handle Bar Café in Bragg Creek, @outbound_elements

Page 13. Outdoor Enthusiasts, @outbound_elements

Page 16. Livingstone Golf Course

Page 20. Mountain Bikers, @outbound_elements