



## STAFF REPORT

To: Electoral Area Services Committee

Date: 2026-04-09

From: David Urban, Deputy Director of Regional Services

File No. 6900-01-General

**Subject: Tourism Ch'illiwack Municipal & Regional District Tax Renewal**

**Reviewed by:** Stacey Barker, Director of Regional Services/Deputy CAO  
Jennifer Kinneman, Chief Administrative Officer

---

### RECOMMENDATION

**THAT** the Fraser Valley Regional District Board **provide support for Tourism Ch'illiwack's application** for renewal of their 2027 to 2031 Municipal and Regional District Tax Program.

### BACKGROUND

The Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) program was introduced in 1987 by the Provincial Government to provide funding for local tourism marketing, programs, and projects. The MRDT is jointly administered by the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport, and Destination BC (DBC). The MRDT is a tax with an allowable maximum of three percent applied to sales of short-term accommodation provided in participating areas of British Columbia. Authorized expenditures for MRDT must be directed to tourism marketing, programs, or projects and should contribute to the increase of local tourism revenue, employment, visitation, and economic benefits. Tourism Ch'illiwack<sup>1</sup> collects a three percent MRDT.

**Tourism Ch'illiwack operates as the destination management organization responsible for** strengthening the tourism economy in the City of Chilliwack, the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) Electoral Areas (EA) E & H, and the Cultus Lake Park Board area. In 2022, Tourism Ch'illiwack expanded its boundary into EA E & H to align with their destination marketing and development strategies that have in the past included these areas outside of their current boundary. Through this successful MRDT boundary expansion process, they were able to work more collaboratively with these two EAs on tourism issues and fund destination management strategies to help deal with the issues faced by our EA communities as visitors explore our natural assets. This boundary expansion created an opportunity to leverage a collective voice and advocate together for positive change, which in turn has created a better experience for both our residents and visitors.

**A part of Tourism Ch'illiwack's 2027 – 2031 MRDT renewal requirements** is the submission of a new five-year Strategic Plan, please see the attached draft plan. This plan will guide the future of tourism in

---

<sup>1</sup> The name Ch'illiwack is derived from the Halq'eméylem word "Ts'elxwéyeqw" which means "going back upstream, as far as you can go in a canoe." Tourism Ch'illiwack gives honour to the origin of their name with this accent.

Chilliwack and the surrounding area. It outlines target markets, marketing approach, and key opportunities for sustainable growth, while creating a shared roadmap for industry partners.

## DISCUSSION

**Tourism Ch'illiwack's** application to renew the MRDT is due on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026. With the previous inclusion of EA E & H within **Tourism Ch'illiwack's** boundary, **FVRD Board support is required for Tourism Ch'illiwack's** application for renewal of their upcoming 2027 to 2031 MRDT. This program tax is not a tax to the accommodation providers; rather it is a cost collected from the visitors through the **accommodation providers and distributed back to Tourism Ch'illiwack** by way of the Province. There are no traditional accommodation providers in EAs E & H; however, there are online accommodation providers who currently have this tax collected.

Over the past **five years, Tourism Ch'illiwack has provided** direct destination management support to EA E & H with provincial authorities (e.g. Recreation Sites and Trails BC and BC Parks). In addition, they have developed **marketing initiatives to promote "Leave No Trace", "Pack In, Pack Out" and "Adventure Smart"**. Also, they expanded their Community Ambassador Program which set up at trailheads and other key locations during peak season and in partnership with BC AdventureSmart.

**To guide Tourism Ch'illiwack forward** over the next five years, a draft strategic plan has been completed. The plan reflects extensive stakeholder consultation, regional alignment, and evolving expectations around responsible tourism management. Over the past decade, the Chilliwack area has developed a strong reputation as a destination known for outdoor adventure, agritourism, cultural experiences, and sport tourism events. As visitation grows, several challenges have also emerged e.g. increased demand in natural areas, traffic. The draft plan recognizes these realities and positions **Tourism Ch'illiwack to** evolve from primarily a marketing organization into a stronger destination management and development partner. The plan emphasizes stewardship, responsible tourism growth, collaboration with Indigenous partners, and continued alignment with regional priorities.

## COST

The cost to the FVRD would be for the continued staff time spent participating on the Tourism Ch'illiwack Board and providing guidance on implementing various destination management initiatives. Tourism Ch'illiwack has five Board meetings a year, which amount to approximately ten hours of meeting time, and any intervening issues are dealt with by email or special meeting. **In addition, Tourism Ch'illiwack hosts biannual EA E & H Tourism Community Forums, in which staff** participate virtually.

## CONCLUSION

**Tourism Ch'illiwack recognizes that many of the region's most valued visitor experiences are located** outside of the City of Chilliwack, including those within EA E & H and the Cultus Lake Park Board area. As a result, collaboration with the FVRD remains essential to ensuring tourism development, visitor management, and environmental stewardship are coordinated effectively. Over the next five years, **Tourism Ch'illiwack looks forward to continuing to work closely with the FVRD to support responsible**

tourism growth, protect natural assets, and ensure tourism contributes positively to local communities and regional economic development. With the previous inclusion of EA E & H within Tourism Ch'illiwack's boundary, the FVRD Board support is required for Tourism Ch'illiwack's application for renewal of their upcoming 2027 to 2031 MRDT.

Tourism Ch'illiwack recognizes that many visitor experiences lie outside the City of Chilliwack, within EA E & H and Cultus Lake Park Board. Continued collaboration with the FVRD is essential to coordinated tourism development, visitor management, and environmental stewardship. Over the next five years, Tourism Ch'illiwack will work with the FVRD to support responsible tourism growth, protect natural assets, and deliver positive community and economic benefits. With the previous inclusion of EA E & H included within Tourism Ch'illiwack's boundary, FVRD Board support is required for the 2027–2031 MRDT renewal application.