



# **SKAGIT VALLEY**

**DISCOVER *the* MAGIC of SKAGIT**

**SKAGIT TOURISM BUREAU**

**WORK PLAN 2026**



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## SKAGIT TOURISM BUREAU MISSION STATEMENT

Skagit Tourism is dedicated to sharing Skagit Valley's authentic story with reverence and pride. We celebrate and preserve the integrity of our vibrant communities, where all visitors are welcome to experience our charm and wonder. We are the leader in all tourism related activities and support economic growth through sustainable tourism. We promote the Skagit Valley for overnight stays and unforgettable experiences while maintaining our quality of life for residents and protecting our natural resources.

## SKAGIT TOURISM BUREAU VISION STATEMENT

To be a premier, diverse destination with a robust tourism economy, a strong and vibrant community, and excellent year-round visitor experiences.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Skagit Tourism Bureau (STB) is dedicated to promoting Skagit Valley as a premier destination, enhancing visitor experiences, and supporting local businesses. This work plan outlines our strategic initiatives for the upcoming year, focusing on marketing, advertising, film initiatives, data collection and reporting, sports tourism, and organizational operations.

Despite industry-wide challenges, STB continues to deliver strong results with a highly effective team of just four staff. Together, we manage countywide marketing, coordinate major campaigns, attract sports events that generate multi-night stays, act as the official film liaison for Skagit Valley, maintain a robust digital presence, and provide timely, data-driven reporting to stakeholders. Our programming has proven its ability to convert resources into measurable economic impact, consistently increasing overnight stays, supporting local businesses, and advancing Skagit County's tourism brand.

Looking ahead, one the biggest and exciting opportunities for Skagit Valley is on the horizon. Skagit Valley is positioned between match host cities in Seattle, WA and Vancouver, BC, and Fan Zones in Bellingham and Everett. This creates an unprecedented opportunity to attract visitors to the county and boost our local economy. However, external pressures make local investment more critical than ever. A 65% cut to the Washington State Tourism budget will eliminate grant opportunities in 2026 and dismantle many current co-op programs and pause most statewide advertising efforts. In addition, Senate Bill 5814 will significantly increase our operating costs by requiring sales tax on all services and advertising. These changes place greater responsibility on local marketing efforts to sustain visibility and protect recent gains. Local TPA and lodging tax funding will be essential to maintain our momentum—sustaining proven marketing strategies, protecting the county's tourism brand as it matures, and ensuring that our community continues to benefit from year-round visitation and a resilient tourism economy.



## TPA COLLECTORS OF LODGING CHARGES

TPA Collector	Address	Rooms
<b>Anacortes Lodging Collectors</b>		
Anacortes Inn	3006 Commercial Ave	44
Fidalgo Country Inn	7645 State Route 20	50
Majestic Inn & Spa	419 Commercial Ave	64
The Marina Inn	3300 Commercial Ave	52
Fidalgo Bay RV Resort	4701 Fidalgo Bay Rd	139
Pioneer Trails RV Park	7337 Miller Rd	161
Total		<b>510</b>
<b>Burlington Lodging Collectors</b>		
Candlewood Suites	1866 S Burlington Blvd	83
Cocusa Motel	370 West Rio Vista Ave	63
Comfort Inn & Suites	500 E George Hopper Rd	83
Hampton Inn & Suites	1860 S Burlington Blvd	102
Holiday Inn & Suites	900 Andes Rd	75
La Quinta Inn & Suites	1670 S Burlington Blvd	104
KOA Holiday	6397 N Green Rd	102
Total		<b>612</b>
<b>Mount Vernon Lodging Collectors</b>		
Clarion Point	300 W College Way	65
Days Inn	2009 Riverside Dr	65
Quality Inn	1910 Freeway Dr	68
Tulip Inn	2200 Freeway Dr	40
West Wind Motel	2020 Riverside Dr	40
The Windgate by Wyndham	2300 Market St	120
Skagit Valley RV Park	305 Stewart Rd	120
Town & Country RV Park	324 W College Way	160
Total		<b>678</b>
<b>Sedro-Woolley Lodging Collectors</b>		
The Kulshan Hotel	807 Trail Rd	49
Three Rivers Inn	210 Ball St	40
Total		<b>89</b>
<b>La Conner Lodging Collectors</b>		
La Conner Channel Lodge	205 N 1st St	40
La Conner Marina RV Park	420 Pearle Jensen Way	66
Total		<b>106</b>
<b>Skagit County Lodging Collectors</b>		
Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott	9384 Old Hwy 99 N	78
Skagit Ridge Hotel	18444 Bow Hill Rd	41
Total		<b>119</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2114</b>



# 2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Marketing & Advertising

- Delivered a successful multi-channel marketing program with strong results and high ROI. Successfully tracked KPIs and metrics such as gross booking revenue, visitor spend, and room nights booked.
- Launched a brand-new redesigned website, with new features such as stakeholder listings, interactive maps, itineraries, and a calendar of events, enhancing visitor engagement and stakeholder promotion.
- Established and launched a CRM database for stakeholders to login and upload/update information at any time.
- Expanded partnerships, including with **I Love Skagit**, to publish the official Skagit Valley visitor guide and strengthen local advocacy and visibility.
- Designed, created, printed, and distributed a Visit Skagit Valley brochure and a birdwatching brochure to highlight seasonal attractions and create brand recognition.
- Distributed QR codes to hotel partners to provide visitors resources to plan their trip.
- Designed new Skagit Valley merchandise for online sales.
- Transitioned social media management in-house with the addition of a part-time staff member.
- Aligned all social media handles and links for brand alignment and cohesiveness.
- Received media coverage in over 80 publications.
- Hosted writers from over 11 different publications for future coverage stories and features.
- Attended travel trade shows to showcase Skagit Valley to international and domestic inbound tour operators at **GoWest Summit**, **IITA**, and **IPW**. Attended the **Northwest Travel Writer's** conference to secure leads for media coverage.

## Film

- Hosted several film location managers, responded to requests for filming
- Hosted the **History Channel** for docuseries
- Set to host film location managers for a **WA Filmworks** FAM in November 2025.

## Data & Research

- Launched a new data platform (**Datafy**) providing improved visitor insights and media attribution.
- Published new monthly data analysis reports for stakeholders including resources on national trends, lodging, and marketing.



## Sports Tourism

- Established the **Skagit Valley Sports Commission** and hired a new staff member to lead initiatives.
- Adopted **Playeasy** platform for sports event management and joined **Sports ETA** network.
- Attended **Sports ETA Symposium** to meet with 27 tournament directors.
- Conducted an inventory of fields and facilities to better market Skagit Valley to sports organizers.
- Formed an active **Sports Commission** committee to drive collaboration.
- Responded to multiple RFPs and advanced new sports tourism opportunities.
- Initiated an indoor sports complex feasibility study and hosting a community **Sports Tourism Workshop**.
- Hosted the **D1 and D3 Ultimate Frisbee Tournaments** which attracted 7500+ visitors and received ESPN coverage. The estimated economic impact of these tournaments was ~\$1M.
- Formed the county wide **FIFA Planning Committee** to plan and prepare for the upcoming World Cup and created/published web-based stakeholder and visitor resources. Worked in collaboration with neighboring counties, state leaders, and other partner organizations such as the Seattle Sports Commission.

## Destination Development & Grants

- Secured and managed multiple successful grants, totaling \$75,000 with an additional in-kind amount of \$115,000, including those funding:
  - Professional video content creation.
  - Enhanced data and **Economic Impact Calculator (EIC)** tools.
- Recipient of the **Rural Tourism Support (RTS) Grant** to create a **Destination Development Plan** and begin the **indoor sports complex feasibility study**.

## Advocacy & Workforce Development

- Actively engaged on advocacy issues including tourism-related legislative bills.
- Monitored and provided feedback during the legislative session.
- Engaged in **North Cascades National Park** visitor planning and engaged and supported other local partner tourism initiatives such as the planned Anacortes Event Center.
- Executed the “**Always Here**” Canadian visitor campaign to welcome Canadian visitors, published local stakeholder resources and messaging toolkit.
- Strengthened workforce development partnerships with **Skagit Valley College**, **NWCTA**, and **Washington Hospitality Association** to ensure hospitality representation in regional education.
- Implemented an **LTAC Rubric** and data reporting system to improve consistency and decision-making.

## Organizational & Strategic Development

- Completed a **Crisis Management Plan** to strengthen organizational preparedness.
- Partnered with the **Department of Emergency Management** and attended the **FEMA** class.
- Registered the **Visit Skagit Valley** DBA to enhance brand recognition and cohesiveness.
- CEO successfully completed the **Certified Destination Management Executive (CDME)** classes and will graduate the CDME program upon completing the final exam.
- Hosted the first ever **Skagit Valley Tourism Summit** to provide updates and trends in the tourism industry.
- Engaged with three local tribes to form and build relationships.
- Featured presentations in speaking engagements across the county at local chambers, service organizations, city councils, and events.



# 2026 OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

## Marketing & Advertising

- **Comprehensive Campaigns:** Launch a multi-platform campaign with consistent branding across all channels to drive overnight stays and extended visitation.
- **Storytelling Focus:** Develop creative that highlights Skagit Valley's authentic experiences (agritourism, cultural attractions, outdoor recreation, and culinary) to appeal to diverse traveler segments.
- **Seasonal Spotlights:** Launch targeted campaigns for each season (spring blooms, summer festivals, fall harvest, winter bird watching) with dedicated press releases, blogs, and social posts.
- **Shoulder Season Emphasis:** Prioritize marketing in spring and fall to drive visitation outside of peak months and an emphasis on mid week travel.
- **Data-Driven Targeting:** Use advanced audience modeling to reach specific groups — outdoor enthusiasts, cultural travelers, families, and sports visitors.
- **Behavioral Optimization:** Retarget users who show interest in Skagit content, offering seasonal and event-driven messaging.
- **Attribution:** Strengthen and increase media attribution by tracking ad-driven visits and overnight stays, ensuring partners see ROI.
- **Digital Asset Management:** Continued additions to our digital asset management platform. Provide local businesses and partners with access to photos, videos, and creative assets for their own marketing.
- **Dynamic International Campaigns:** Collaborate with partners to closely monitor travel sentiment trends and target nearby international markets as appropriate.
- **Stakeholder Co-Ops:** Expand co-op advertising opportunities with local partners to amplify partner marketing while maximizing budget efficiency.
- **FIFA 2026:** Launch FIFA 2026 marketing initiatives including targeted digital advertising and custom FIFA itineraries to position Skagit Valley as a destination and basecamp for international visitors during the games. Continue collaboration with local partners to provide resources and information to visitors and stakeholders.
- **Performance Measurement:** Publish marketing reports monthly for stakeholders with campaign metrics and data.

## Website

- **CRM Integration:** Keep listings, events, and partner profiles updated through integrated CRM to populate the website.
- **Analytics & SEO:** Use Google Analytics 4 (GA4) and SEO optimization to track user behavior and improve organic search visibility.
- **Content Hub:** Continue enhancing blog section highlighting seasonal experiences and itineraries.
- **Maintenance:** Implement regular updates and content refreshes.

## Social Media

- **In-House Expansion:** Build on the 2024 transition by bringing social media in house and increasing posting frequency, expanding video and story content, and cohesiveness with our PR/Marketing content calendar.
- **Community Engagement:** Highlight user-generated content to strengthen local pride and authenticity.



## Public Relations

- **PR Campaigns:** Align press outreach with seasonal campaigns and grant-funded initiatives. Release short and long pitches to maximize coverage.
- **Partnership Amplification:** Collaborate with State of Washington Tourism on PR opportunities to ensure Skagit stories reach statewide and national media.
- **Crisis Communications:** Maintain readiness to manage and respond to issues that impact tourism perception.
- **Media Hosting:** Actively host travel writers, bloggers, and content creators to generate earned media. Attend media shows such as PRSA and TBEX.
- **Travel & Words 2026:** Secured the Travel & Words conference for September 2026, which will bring in over 40 travel writers and other DMOs to Skagit Valley. This is a huge win that will really put Skagit Valley on the map.
- **FIFA 2026:** Promotion and education of World Cup for visitors to promote the Valley during the matches.

## Travel Trade

- **Travel Trade Shows:** Continue representing Skagit Valley at leading travel trade shows—including GoWest hosted by International Tourism Marketing, International Inbound Travel Association (IITA) Summit, and International Pow Wow (IPW) hosted by US Travel—to promote the destination to tour operators and international inbound operators. Participate in Skagit Valley destination booths and engage in one-on-one appointments with tour operators to strengthen relationships and generate future business.
- **International Focus:** Travel Trade Shows such as GoWest, IITA, and IPW create opportunities for Skagit Valley to showcase our offerings and market ourselves to be added to international itineraries including multi-state itineraries, multi-country itineraries, National Park itineraries, road trip (Cascade Loop) itineraries, coastal itineraries, and more.

## Film

- **Film Location Development:** STB is the official film liaison for Skagit Valley. Continue building Skagit's film location database to position the Valley as a film-friendly region.
- **Film Permitting:** Continue discussions to make consistent permitting processes throughout the county when possible.

## Data & Research

- **Advanced Reporting:** Smith Travel-Research (STR) subscription to include demand forecasting tools and weekly reports for hotels.
- **Visitor Flow Analysis:** Use geolocation data to better understand visitor patterns and time spent in communities.
- **Event Reports:** Distribute event reports by request for LTAC applications.
- **Economic Impact Tracking:** Provide EIC reporting for sports and meetings.



## Sports Tourism

- **Commission Growth:** Leverage the Sports Commission to attract regional and national tournaments. Strategic Plan to be formed alongside the feasibility study.
- **Event Bidding and Coordination:** Submit RFP responses for new sports events. Coordinate between different local agencies and partners to ensure Skagit Valley remains a competitive destination to host sports events and tournaments.
- **Feasibility Study:** Advance recommendations from the indoor sports complex feasibility study with local partners.
- **Networking & Partnerships:** Deepen involvement with Playeasy and Sports ETA to increase visibility.
- **Tournament Recruitment:** Attend sports trade shows and conferences to participate in one-on-one appointments with tournament directors.
- **Marketing:** Work with local sports organizations to assist in marketing event growth.

## Workforce Development

- **Workforce Development:** Strengthen ties with Skagit Valley College (SVC), Washington Hospitality Association (WHA), and local workforce councils to ensure hospitality representation.
- **Advisory Committees:** Member of 2 advisory committees at SVC.
- **NWCTA:** Continue working with NWCTA Hospitality Program.
- **WHA:** Participate in WHA Board of Directors that oversees the Center of Excellence.

## Operational Stewardship

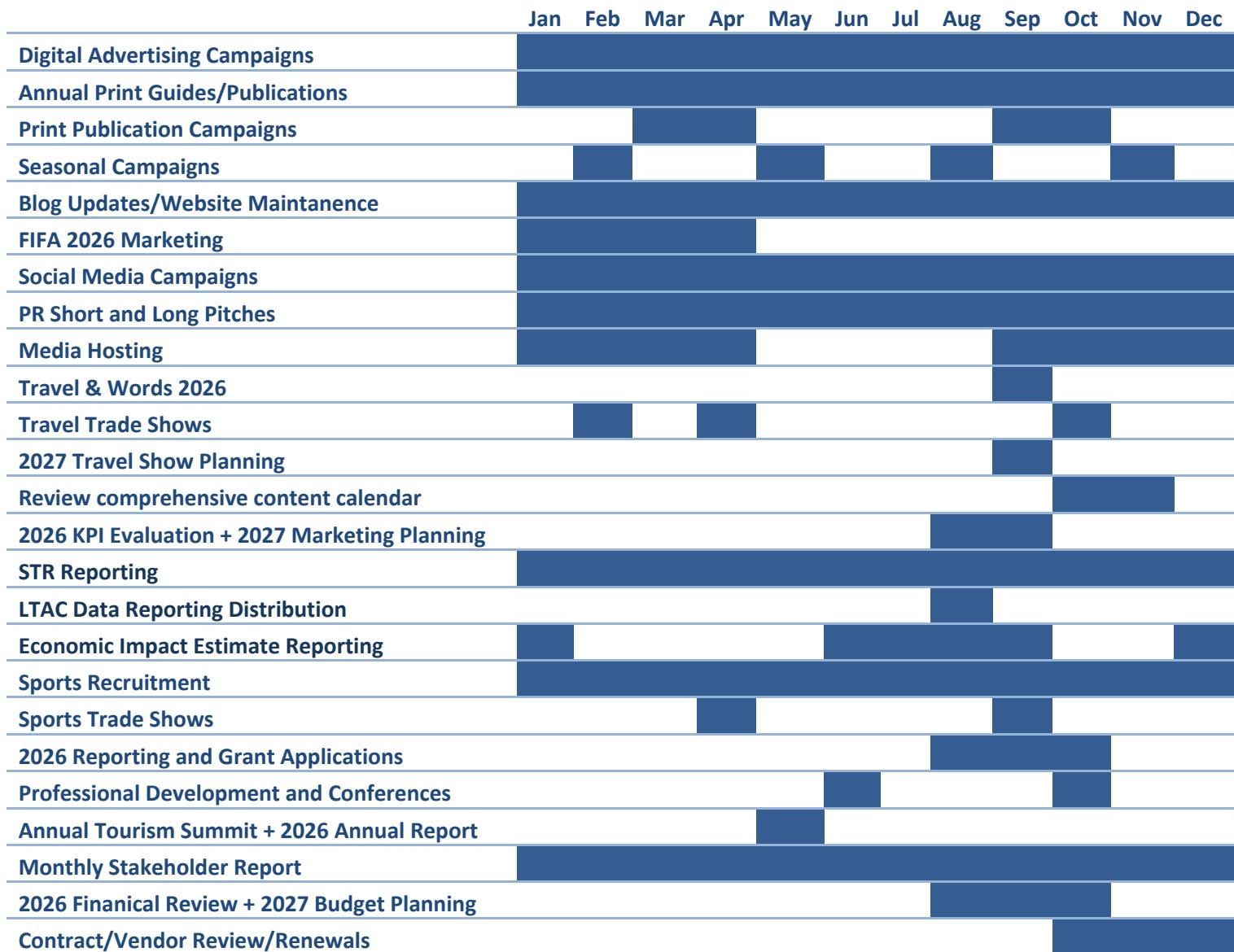
- **Financial Oversight:** Ensure efficient use of lodging tax and TPA revenues, with transparent reporting to LTAC and stakeholders.
- **Professional Development:** Provide staff with conference, training, and scholarship opportunities to increase capacity.
- **Board Engagement:** Continued to strengthen board governance and committee activity (Sports Commission, marketing, finance).
- **Advocacy:** Continue active participation in legislative advocacy on issues impacting tourism and hospitality.
- **Annual Tourism Summit:** Continue hosting the annual Skagit Valley Tourism Summit and publish the 2026 annual report.
- **Monthly Reporting:** Continue reporting monthly to stakeholders for transparency and visibility.

## Metrics for Success

- **Tourism Growth:** Increase in TPA collections, occupancy, ADR, and lodging spend.
- **Marketing Impact:** Year-over-year growth in website traffic, social media engagement, and ad-driven conversions.
- **Film Impact:** Successful hosting of FAM tour with location scouts and new film inquiries generated.
- **Sports Tourism:** Recruit multi-night sports events and tournaments and measurable overnight stays generated.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Increased co-op participation, positive partner feedback, data report usage, event and survey participation.
- **Operational Excellence:** Strategic financial stewardship, high staff satisfaction, and effective grant management with no compliance issues.



## TIMELINE





## PROPOSED 2026 BUDGET OVERVIEW

<b>Revenue</b>		
TPA Income	\$	422,250.00
County Lodging Tax	\$	160,000.00
Burlington Lodging Tax	\$	57,000.00
One Time FIFA Grant Income	\$	40,000.00
Voluntary Contributions	\$	35,280.00
Website Income	\$	8,500.00
Tourism Summit Income	\$	4,000.00
Merchandise Sales	\$	3,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>730,030.00</b>
<b>Expense</b>		
Payroll and Benefits (Taxes)	\$	328,500.00
Marketing & Advertising	\$	263,239.78
Subscriptions (Data)	\$	51,916.60
Sports Commission	\$	32,549.57
Professional Services	\$	32,064.00
Rent (Utilities)	\$	22,620.00
Website	\$	21,669.60
Office Supplies	\$	10,050.00
Professional Development	\$	8,840.00
Travel, Mileage, Meals	\$	6,000.00
Memberships and Dues	\$	4,850.00
Tourism Summit Expense	\$	2,000.00
Administration	\$	1,575.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>785,874.55</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>(55,844.55)</b>



## MARKETING & ADVERTISING BREAKOUT

### Marketing & Advertising

Cascade Loop	\$ 3,258.00
Datafy	\$ 65,160.00
Digital Asset Management	\$ 10,860.00
Epsilon	\$ 59,730.01
Expedia	\$ 21,720.00
Google	\$ 3,909.60
Meta	\$ 1,303.20
NW Travel & Life	\$ 5,430.00
Port of Seattle	\$ 1,200.00
PR	\$ 32,580.00
Scenic WA	\$ 3,801.00
Travel Trade Shows	\$ 23,880.00
WA State Guide	\$ 7,602.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 240,433.81</b>

## TPA COLLECTIONS BY MONTH

Month Invoiced	2023	2024	2025
January	\$ 22,041.72	\$ 21,154.19	\$ 24,209.06
February	\$ 35,281.63	\$ 29,316.75	\$ 28,331.19
March	\$ 22,903.34	\$ 28,126.83	\$ 22,493.61
April	\$ 26,089.49	\$ 28,349.57	\$ 30,813.75
May	\$ 35,308.00	\$ 49,235.70	\$ 31,412.66
June	\$ 40,148.61	\$ 36,069.62	\$ 40,901.60
July	\$ 34,808.30	\$ 39,084.37	\$ 42,993.18
August	\$ 42,933.57	\$ 49,144.34	\$ 50,161.13
September	\$ 38,372.74	\$ 58,791.17	
October	\$ 45,582.30	\$ 48,759.56	
November	\$ 41,166.45	\$ 47,851.03	
December	\$ 30,649.69	\$ 36,580.69	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 415,285.84</b>	<b>\$ 472,463.82</b>	<b>\$ 271,316.18</b>



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