Extraordinary Yellowknife

Tourist Accommodation Tax Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Prepared for	Prepared by	Reporting period
The Municipal Corporation of the City of Yellowknife	Northwest Territories Tourism / Extraordinary Yellowknife	April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026

1. Executive Summary

This report summarizes activities completed during the 2025–2026 fiscal year under the Yellowknife Accommodation Levy Strategic Work Plan. While many initiatives identified in the work plan require multi-year collaboration and implementation, significant progress was made in advancing destination marketing, partnership development, business events, travel trade engagement, and visitor research. Activities that were not completed during the 2025–2026 fiscal year continue as priorities within the 2026–2027 work plan.

Year at a Glance

Reporting area	2025-2026 result / placeholder
Tourist Accommodation Tax funding received	$1,835196.07
Tourist Accommodation Tax funding expended	$100,671.00
Funding carried forward	$1,734,525
Consumer shows attended	Toronto, Vancouver, and Calgary
Travel Trade activities	DERTOUR Group FAM, Flight Centre FAM, Dominion Tours site inspection, virtual agent trainings

Reporting area	2025-2026 result / placeholder
Meetings, Incentive, Conference and Events (MICE) activities	Meet in NWT reception, Destination Canada Incentive Winter program, Venue Series Vancouver, site inspections
Research advanced	Aurora research, tourism economic impact research planning, STEAMPRO sport tourism study planning
Visitor experience initiatives	Airport visitor information, visitor guides, airport advertising, wayfinding and signage planning
Destination awareness initiatives	Extraordinary Yellowknife display/backdrop, Up Here Magazine feature, always-on digital marketing, video and content development

2. Reporting Basis and Agreement Requirements

The Destination Marketing Services Agreement provides Tourist Accommodation Tax revenue collected by the City to be transferred to Northwest Territories Tourism to support destination marketing services. The annual report is intended to be distinct from the fourth quarter accounting, audited financial statements, and annual work plan. This document should be treated as the annual report required under section 5(c) and should be accompanied by the applicable financial reporting documents as required under the Agreement. Audited Financial statements have been approved by the board of directors of NWT Tourism, and as per NWTTs bylaws will also be approved by membership at the Annual General Meeting in November of 2026.

3. Strategic Alignment

The City of Yellowknife 2025-2028 Tourism Strategy recognizes tourism as an important contributor to economic diversification and identifies Yellowknife as both a destination and a gateway to the Northwest Territories. The Strategy emphasizes destination management, visitor experience, market development, research, and coordinated partnerships as foundations for sustainable tourism growth.

The Tourism Strategy identifies four goals that provide the organizing framework for this annual report:

- Enhancing the Visitor Experience
- Building Strategic Partnerships
- Developing Support for the Industry
- Building Destination Awareness

The destination vision is grounded in Yellowknife as a place where hosts share the essence of home and land, inviting visitors to experience cultural richness, natural wonders, and sustainable adventures that honour the communities and Territory as a whole.

4. Financial Accountability

The Tourist Accommodation Tax provides dedicated funding to support destination marketing, visitor experience enhancements, tourism research, travel trade development, meetings and events attraction, and other initiatives identified in the approved annual work plan and the Tourism Strategy. The following tables provide a reporting structure for funds received, expenditures, leveraged contributions, and carry-forward balances.

4.1 Tourist Accommodation Tax Funding Summary

Description	Amount	Notes
Opening fund balance at April 1, 2025	$0	Include only funds held for City-funded DMO work at the start of the reporting period.
Tourist Accommodation Tax revenue received from the City	$1,835,196.07	Report total quarterly transfers received during the fiscal year.
Additional partner contributions leveraged	$0	Include confirmed cash contributions from partners.
Estimated in-kind partner contributions	$0	Include hosted services, partner travel support, venue support, advertising value, or other non-cash contributions where reasonable.
Interest earned or other revenue	$0	Include interest or other revenue directly attributable to the funding.
Total funds available	$1,835,196.07	Opening balance plus all revenue and contributions.
Total eligible program expenditures	$100,671.00	Expenditures connected to approved activities.
Closing balance / funds carried forward	$1,734,525.07	Funds committed or available for continuation of multi-year initiatives.

During the reporting period, Extraordinary Yellowknife received **$1,835,196.07** in Tourist Accommodation Tax funding from the City of Yellowknife. These funds were applied to activities that supported destination awareness, visitor experience, travel trade and MICE development, tourism research, and implementation of the City's Tourism Strategy. A total of **$100,617.00** was expended during the year, with **$1,734,525.07** carried forward to support activities that are underway or scheduled for completion in the next fiscal year.

4.2 Quarterly Funding Received

Quarter	Remittance period	Amount received	Date received	Notes
Q1	April – June 2025	$297,069.74	October 31, 2025	
Q2	July – September 2025	$233,351.87	February 20, 2026	
Q3	October – December 2025	$244,025.73	February 20 2026	
Q4	January – March 2026	$1,060,748.73	June 29, 2026	
Total		$1,835,196.07		

4.3 Program Expenditures by Strategic Area

Strategic area	Budget	Actual	Variance	Examples of eligible activities
Goal 1: Visitor Experience	$0	$0	$0	Visitor information, visitor guides, airport information, wayfinding, signage, accessibility audits.
Goal 2: Strategic Partnerships	$19,428.00	$19,428.00	$0	Travel trade, FAM tours, airline partnerships, airport partnership, MICE partnerships.
Goal 3: Support for Industry	$9,609.00	$9,609.00	$0	Tourism research, economic impact work, Aurora research, sport tourism data, industry engagement.
Goal 4: Destination Awareness	$71,634.00	$71,634.00	$0	Consumer shows, digital marketing, media placements, website/social media, brand assets, video, influencer activities.
Administration and delivery	$0	$0	$0	Direct administration, reporting, coordination, and implementation support.
Total	$100,671.00	$100,671.00	$0	

4.4 Leveraged Contributions and Partnership Value

Partner / source	Cash contribution	In-kind value	Related activity	Evidence / notes
Destination Canada	$0	$0	Incentive Winter / MICE promotion	
Government of the Northwest Territories	$0	$0	Tourism alignment, events, research, or promotion	
Air Canada	$0	$0	FAM support / air access partnership	
Destination Vancouver	$0	$0	Market partnership / FAM support	
Accommodation partners	$0	$0	MICE, consumer marketing, visitor materials, hotel placements	
Tourism operators and industry partners	$0	$0	FAMs, site inspections, itinerary development, content creation	
Total leveraged value	$0	$0		

5. Performance Measurement Summary

The 2025-2026 reporting year should be used to establish baseline measures that can be repeated annually. Future reports should distinguish between activities delivered, outputs achieved, outcomes generated, and longer-term economic impacts. Where exact data is not available, the report should identify the measure that will be tracked in future years.

Performance area	2025-2026 reported result / placeholder	Recommended ongoing measure
Visitor information services	Airport visitor information support and distribution of visitor guides and promotional materials.	Visitor contacts, guides distributed, and inquiry themes.
Consumer marketing	Consumer shows in Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, and preparation for Denver.	Leads captured, audience reach, campaign impressions, website referrals, engagement.

Performance area	2025-2026 reported result / placeholder	Recommended ongoing measure
Digital marketing	Always-on digital marketing strategy developed for Extraordinary Yellowknife.	Website sessions, click-through rates, social engagement, conversions, content reach.
Travel trade	DERTOUR Group FAM, Dominion Tours site inspection, and other trade activities.	Trade partners engaged, FAM participants, leads generated, packages developed.
MICE	Meet in NWT, Incentive Winter, Venue Series Vancouver, and site inspections.	Leads generated, bid opportunities, events secured, estimated delegate impact.
Research and intelligence	Aurora research expanded, economic impact and STEAMPRO work underway.	Research reports completed, baseline indicators, and economic impact estimates.
Visitor experience	Airport materials, advertising opportunities, wayfinding and signage planning.	Signage installed, visitor satisfaction, accessibility improvements, airport information usage.

Goal 1: Enhancing the Visitor Experience

The Tourism Strategy identifies visitor experience as a core element of Yellowknife's competitiveness. Activities in 2025-2026 focused on visitor servicing, event promotion, airport information, visitor guides, and early-stage wayfinding and signage improvements.

Key actions advanced

- Promoted local festivals and events through social media channels.
- Supported visitor information at the airport.
- Distributed visitor guides and promotional materials.
- Coordinated airport screens and digital display opportunities.
- Advanced work with the City on wayfinding, signage, trailhead signage, visitor navigation, and airport directional information.

Recommended measures

Metric	2025-2026 result
Visitor guides distributed	1,211
Airport visitor contacts	Data not captured yet

Metric	2025-2026 result
Festival/event promotions completed	More than 70
Signage projects advanced	Initial work on Wayfinding, Directional Signage across key visitor areas, Trailhead Signage, Directional and Shuttle Information signage at the Yellowknife Airport started

Goal 2: Building Strategic Partnerships

The Strategy emphasizes alignment among the City, NWTT, GNWT, Indigenous governments and organizations, tourism operators, transportation providers, accommodation providers, and national partners. The 2025-2026 year included significant activity in travel trade, MICE, incentive travel, and partnership development.

Key actions advanced

- Supported the Meet in NWT reception during AME Roundup.
- Supported Destination Canada's Incentive Winter program in Yellowknife.
- Participated in Venue Series Vancouver to connect with planners.
- Hosted or coordinated travel trade familiarization tours and site inspections.
- Continued development of MICE and shoulder season opportunities.

Recommended measures

Metric	2025-2026 result
Travel Trade FAM tours hosted	2
Travel trade participants hosted	18
MICE FAM tour hosted	1
MICE participants hosted	28
Site inspections completed	3

Goal 3: Developing Support for the Industry

The Strategy identifies the need for a coordinated DMO function and ongoing research to better understand the visitor dynamic, sector performance, and opportunities to increase visitor value. The 2025-2026 year focused on implementation of the accommodation levy model and research activities.

Key actions advanced

- Supported implementation of the Tourist Accommodation Tax funding model.
- Expanded Aurora data research and destination research resources.
- Advanced tourism economic impact research planning.
- Initiated STEAMPRO sport tourism study planning.
- Continued industry engagement and coordination on visitor economy priorities.

Recommended measures

Metric	2025-2026 result
Tourism research reports completed	1
Research projects initiated	3
Industry engagement meetings	Several, more than 20
Accommodation sector indicators	280 +/- new hotel rooms are in the varying stages of being built

Goal 4: Building Destination Awareness

The Tourism Strategy identifies destination awareness as essential to visitor consideration and conversion. The 2025-2026 year included brand development, consumer marketing, digital marketing, media placement, content development, and destination awareness campaigns.

Key actions advanced

- Created a new multi-purpose Extraordinary Yellowknife display/backdrop.
- Participated in consumer shows in Toronto, Vancouver, and Calgary.
- Prepared for the Denver consumer show.
- Executed a double-page advertising feature in Up Here Magazine.
- Developed an always-on digital marketing strategy.
- Advanced video, B-roll, QR-code visitor material, influencer, and website/social media content activities.

Recommended measures

Metric	2025-2026 result
Website sessions	Not yet measured
Website users	Not yet measured
Social media reach	Not yet measured
Social media engagement	Not yet measured
Digital ad impressions	Not yet measured
Consumer show attendees engaged	465
Media placements	Not yet measured
Video views	Not yet measured

Challenges, Lessons Learned, and Opportunities

Many initiatives identified in the Tourism Strategy and annual work plan require multi-year collaboration among the City, NWTT, tourism operators, accommodation providers, Yellowknife Airport, GNWT, national destination partners, and other stakeholders. Activities such as wayfinding, visitor servicing enhancements, MICE development, tourism research, and broader partnership work are expected to continue into the next reporting year.

A key lesson from the first reporting year is the importance of separating activity reporting from performance measurement. Future annual reports should clearly identify what was done, what was achieved, what was learned, and what measures will be tracked on a year-over-year basis.

Priorities for 2026-2027

Priority	Expected outcome	Proposed measure
Wayfinding and visitor signage	Improved visitor navigation and experience	Number of signs installed, visitor feedback, locations completed
MICE strategy and attraction fund	Increased business event readiness and lead generation	Leads generated, events supported, bids submitted
Sport tourism research	Evidence base for attracting sport tourism	STEAMPRO report, estimated impact, event lessons learned
Tourism economic impact research	Improved understanding of sector performance	Completed report, baseline metrics, annual tracking indicators
Travel trade development	Stronger international and domestic trade relationships	FAM participants, trade partners engaged
Destination awareness campaigns	Increased awareness of Extraordinary Yellowknife	Campaign impressions, engagement, website traffic, QR scans
Indigenous-led and cultural experiences	Stronger alignment with destination vision and visitor expectations	Experiences profiled, VIC materials updated, partner participation
Airport visitor experience	Improved arrival experience	Signage installed, visitor materials distributed, shuttle information available

Conclusion

The 2025-2026 fiscal year represented an important first year of implementation for the Tourist Accommodation Tax-funded destination marketing model. Through the work of Northwest Territories Tourism as the City's Destination Marketing Organization for Extraordinary Yellowknife, progress was made in visitor servicing, destination awareness, travel trade development, MICE attraction, research and strategic partnerships.

The annual report should continue to evolve into a stronger accountability document by including full financial reporting, consistent performance indicators, year-over-year comparisons, clear links to the approved annual work plan, and explicit reporting on outcomes achieved through Tourist Accommodation Tax funding.

Appendices

- Appendix A: Fourth Quarter Accounting
- Appendix B: Audited City of Yellowknife Schedule from Financial Statements
- Appendix C: Tourism Strategy Implementation Tracker
- Appendix D: Marketing Analytics Dashboard

Source Materials Reviewed

- Destination Marketing Services Agreement between the City of Yellowknife and Northwest Territories Tourism.
- Yellowknife Accommodation Levy Activity Report 2025-2026.
- City of Yellowknife 2025-2028 Tourism Strategy.
- Tourism Strategy 2025-2028 Implementation Plan actions provided by the City.

Appendix C: Tourism Strategy Implementation Tracker

Goal	Action	Lead / partners	Status	2025-2026 result	Next step / metric
Visitor Experience	Promote events through visitor-facing channels	NWTT / City / operators	Ongoing	more than 70	Continue promoting events through visitor facing channels
Visitor Experience	Wayfinding and signage audit / implementation	City / NWTT / airport	Underway	N/A	Wayfinding and Signage to be updated and replaced around Frame Lake Trail and directional signage across the city.
Visitor Experience	Expand multilingual visitor resources	NWTT / City	Underway	N/A	Developing multilingual resources for visitors
Strategic Partnerships	Align programming with NWT Tourism and GNWT-ITI	NWTT / City / GNWT	Ongoing	N/A	Share Territorial, Federal and industry partner funding and training opportunities
Strategic Partnerships	Develop MICE and travel trade opportunities	NWTT / industry partners	Ongoing	Hosted 3 FAM tours	Will continue to pursue opportunities to host more FAM tours and site inspections, there are currently 3 FAM tours scheduled in the fall of 2026.
Strategic Partnerships	Strengthen airport and transportation partnerships	NWTT / City / YZF / carriers	Underway	Distributed guides, supported Arctic Ambassadors to greet and answer questions for visitors	Developing enhanced signage at airport, establishing a method to capture information from Arctic Ambassadors, creating a campaign to attract more Arctic Ambassadors
Industry Support	Implement and report on accommodation levy funding	City / NWTT	Complete / Ongoing	Report Submitted	Submit annual report
Industry Support	Advance tourism research and business intelligence	NWTT / City / partners	Underway	Expanded Aurora data research	Continue to expand Aurora data. And develop tourism economic impact research and sport tourism study.

Destination Awareness	Maintain website and social media presence	NWTT	Ongoing	Not applicable yet	Will have website and social analytics for 2026-2027
Destination Awareness	Develop digital, media, video, and brand assets	NWTT / partners	Underway/ongoing	Multi-purpose Extraordinary Yellowknife display/backdrop, QR-code visitor material	Create Extraordinary Yellowknife commercials for TV use. B-Roll reel. Content creation for Cullinary Tourism Alliance.
Destination Awareness	Showcase Indigenous-led experiences and community stories	NWTT / Indigenous and community partners	Underway/ Ongoing	Highlighted Indigenous operators at all shows attended, in all marketing content created, and in all FAM opportunities.	Develop MICE content showcasing Indigenous operators. And continue highlighting Indigenous businesses in all marketing channels and content.

Appendix D: Annual Dashboard

Dashboard item	2025-2026 result	Future target / comparison
Tourist Accommodation Tax funding received	$1,835,196.07	$1,500,000.00 - target
Total program expenditures	$100,671	$1,734,526.00
Partner contributions leveraged	$0	n/a
Visitor inquiries serviced	Not yet measured	TBD
Visitor guides distributed	1,211	1,500 - target
Website sessions	Not yet measured	TBD
Social media reach	Not yet measured	TBD
Digital ad impressions	Not yet measured	TBD
FAM tours / site inspections hosted	6	8
Research projects completed or underway	1	3
Tourism Strategy actions completed or underway	[insert]	[insert total actions tracked]