

TOURISM INVESTMENT
OPPORTUNITIES

Business Profile



LADYSMITH: AN EXPANDING MARKET FOR TOURISM-BASED BUSINESS

One of the Prettiest Towns in Canada

Tourism has long been an important industry in BC, and on Vancouver Island in particular. Over the past few years the industry has continued to grow, despite some challenges. In 2007, revenues from accommodations on Vancouver Island increased by 8.2%, and revenues from food services and drinking establishments increased by 3.8%.

Currently, over 40% of Ladysmith visitors stay in town overnight, with an average of 2.75 nights for each visit.

In Ladysmith, tourism is a large source of economic activity. Our major attractions include:

- A natural 5-mile harbour, which offers spectacular recreational boating opportunities for yachters, kayakers, and power boaters of all kinds. This is the perfect jumping-off point to the Gulf Islands, a popular destination for boaters from around the world
- First Avenue, Ladysmith's main street, with its beautifully restored heritage buildings
- Transfer Beach, a family-friendly beach right in the heart of town, featuring extensive playgrounds and other facilities
- Outdoor recreational activities such as golfing, hiking, mountain biking, bird-watching and more
- The Cowichan Valley, only a short drive away, home to award-winning wineries and known as "the Napa of the North"
- Special events and activities throughout the year

THE BEAUTIFUL TOWN OF LADYSMITH

- Ladysmith is built right next to the ocean. Its natural 5-mile harbour provides excellent boating access to the Gulf Islands.
- Ladysmith's downtown features beautifully preserved turn-of-the-19th-century architecture and a friendly, small-town atmosphere.
- Harrowsmith Country Life magazine named Ladysmith one of the "10 prettiest towns in Canada". The town has also won first place in the popular "Communities in Bloom" contest.



Existing and Planned Tourism Infrastructure in Ladysmith Includes:

- A wide variety of accommodation options, from small B&B's to lodges large enough for weddings and business retreats. An 80-room hotel located on the 49th Parallel is planned for 2010
- Food services ranging from fast food and casual fare to funky cafes and fine dining
- Three marinas, both private and community-owned
- New 50' and 80' boathouses at the Ladysmith Marina, specifically catering to owners of yachts and other large recreational craft

"We're here for the long term, and are really excited about where Ladysmith is going." – Ladysmith restaurant owner

- Ladysmith is located on the east coast of Vancouver Island, right on the 49th parallel. Population: 8,100.

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A SUPPORTIVE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Our province

BC is a great place to run a small business. In 2007, BC had more small businesses per capita than any other province, with 87 small businesses per 1,000 people. Small businesses account for 56% of all private sector employment – the highest rate in the country.

Our community

Ladysmith has been hard at work diversifying its economy. In the last few years, there has been a considerable increase in the number of new enterprises in the community, as both new and current residents establish businesses in our dynamic Vancouver Island setting.

Our strategy

Ladysmith has a vision for a prosperous and sustainable future, which is supported by the Economic Development Commission and its many pro-business initiatives. The EDC is committed to fostering growth through its established strategy for business development.

THE IDEAL WEST COAST LIFESTYLE

- Climate: Ladysmith has a temperate climate with moderate rainfall in the winter. Summers are usually dry and sunny
- Outdoor activities: Ladysmith's natural harbour makes it the perfect location for boating of all kinds. The area also has great hiking, mountain biking, golfing, skiing and much more
- Cultural events: Ladysmith is home to a vibrant arts community and a waterfront art gallery. Two professional theatre companies operate in nearby communities. Special events and celebrations take place year-round
- Schools: Both English and French Immersion streams are available in Ladysmith at the primary level. Vancouver Island University (formerly Malaspina University-College) is located in nearby Nanaimo
- Real Estate: House prices in Ladysmith are relatively affordable in comparison with other locations on the south Island. A new waterfront live/work development will provide an exciting alternative for residents wanting to work from home

“By locating my business in Ladysmith I get to be on vacation every day... and never have it end.” – Ladysmith entrepreneur

A COMMUNITY OF CELEBRATION

Ladysmith is known for its festivals, special events and celebrations. In May each year kayakers come from the Lower Mainland, Washington state and beyond to participate in the Vancouver Island Paddlefest. In June, the Ladysmith Maritime Festival celebrates the area's rich maritime heritage. The fun continues throughout the summer with Canada Day events, Ladysmith Days, and the Arts on the Avenue festival and sale. At the end of November comes the launch of Ladysmith's most famous celebration of all, the Festival of Lights, a spectacular 6-week display of over 200,000 seasonal lights along Ladysmith's main street.