

TOURISM PROFILE  
2016 – 2017



consider yourself  
invited

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## The mood on a beautiful day in Sylvan Lake is celebratory.

The lake is bustling with watercraft, groups of friends and families swimming, and kids building castles on the sandy beach. The spectacular design of the revitalized waterfront promenade and Centennial Park invites picnics, barbecues, and family gatherings from near and far. Golfers enjoy the sunshine on any of the four charming courses, geared to various skill levels from

scratch to hacker. Across from the shore, the many outdoor restaurants and pubs make sure everyone is well-fed, and ready to carry on having fun. Within a short block or two, shoppers enjoy unique retailers, spas, and multicultural eateries. The summer homes that line the Cottage and Marina Districts are busy with folks settled in for relaxation and sunshine.



# overview

Sylvan Lake invites new business ventures to this thriving town to enrich the community, find success, and growth.



**Sylvan Lake receives over one million visitors a year, which contributes \$75 million to the local economy annually. The tourism industry contribution cannot be understated.**

## TOURISM ECONOMY

At a global economic level, the travel and tourism industry is amongst the highest performing sectors, with average growth of 4% and generating over \$1 trillion in annual revenue. This growth translates to an additional 650,000 international visitations to Canada every year, which generates significant economic benefits across several economic sectors in every region of the country. The total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP in Canada was 4.5% of GDP in 2014 and is forecast to rise by 4.6% in 2015. In 2014, total employment contribution was 6% or 1,074,000 direct and indirect jobs. This is expected to rise by 4.2% in 2015.<sup>1</sup>



Tourism is more than just a business sector, it's also an economic driver that crosses multiple industries, and supports growth in a myriad of ways. Tourism contributes more than \$2.5 billion in GDP to the Alberta economy.<sup>2</sup> In Alberta, between 5% and 9% of rural visitors within the last two years have visited Sylvan Lake. The town welcomed over 761,000 visitors in the summer of 2014, creating an economic impact of over \$75 million for the year. Sylvan Lake has a storied history as a popular resort community. Travel and tourism is integral to Sylvan Lake's economy, and has been an economic driver since the town's famous hall dances that were once the big draw after a day by the lake.

## ECONOMIC PROFILE

The 1,200 businesses in Sylvan Lake span all industry sectors. Retail trade is 12% of all employment. Approximately 72 businesses were related to the tourism and recreation sector in the town in 2013. Of the businesses with employees in this sector, 16 had more than 20 employees. The sector is largely represented by full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places – about 46% of the total business in the sector. Further detail on breakdowns for this sector can be found online.

Varied opportunities exist for businesses in Sylvan Lake's thriving tourism industry. Let us show you how you can benefit.

<sup>1</sup> WTTC TRAVEL & TOURISM ECONOMIC IMPACT 2015 CANADA  
<sup>2</sup> ALBERTA CULTURE AND TOURISM 2013

# market access

**Sylvan Lake sits at the centre of the Calgary-Edmonton Corridor, just 18 kms from Alberta's third largest city, Red Deer.**

The community has direct access to an immediate trading area of over 313,000 people. In close proximity to the QEII Highway, Sylvan Lake has further access to a market of over 2.7 million people. The resident population is 14,310.

The town enjoys a healthy, well-established tourism industry due in part to its spectacular location and amenities. Sylvan Lake is nestled on the south shore of a beautiful spring-fed lake with a newly developed waterfront park and 3 km promenade. Situated along the historic David Thompson highway that leads to the West Country, Banff and Jasper National Parks, Sylvan Lake makes an ideal stop on a West Country circle tour, adding a fresh variety of sights and activities.



# visitor profile

As established in the Economic Impact Assessment of Sylvan Lake,<sup>3</sup> in the year of 2014, Sylvan Lake welcomed over one million visitors. The average tourist to the town spent \$35.17 per day. 92.8% of these tourists were from Alberta, 4% from other parts of Canada, and 3.2% were international.

Table 1 shows the average number of nights, average party size, and overall percentage of visitors by origin.

**TABLE 1: VISITOR INFORMATION**

| ORIGIN        | AVG NO NIGHTS | AVG SIZE OF PARTY | % OF VISITORS |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| ALBERTA       | 1.3           | 4.3               | 92.8          |
| CANADA        | 4.8           | 3.7               | 4             |
| INTERNATIONAL | 3.7           | 4.3               | 3.2           |
| ALL VISITORS  | 1.5           | 4.2               | 100           |

As Albertans make up the majority of the tourist visitors to Sylvan Lake, a further breakdown of the spending habits of Alberta visitors is shown below. Table 2 shows the average spending by Alberta visitor parties, broken into spending categories and visitor location. An Albertan visitor party has 4.3 people, and stays an average of 1.3 nights, as described in Table 2.



Central Alberta welcomed 3.01 million visitors in 2014. Just under half (49%) of those visits were for visiting friends and relatives (VFR). Residents of Alberta rank number one for spending in every tourism expenditure category in the Central Alberta Tourism Region. Approximately 37% of all visitor spending, made by residents of Alberta in the Central Alberta Tourism Region, was on accommodation, and food and beverage.

**TABLE 2: ALBERTA VISITORS AVERAGE SPENDING PER TRAVEL PARTY**

|                | CALGARY | CALGARY REGION | EDMONTON | EDMONTON REGION | LACOMBE | OTHER   | RED DEER | TOTAL     |
|----------------|---------|----------------|----------|-----------------|---------|---------|----------|-----------|
| TRANSPORTATION | 40.84   | 32.68          | 47.24    | 40.24           | 21.11   | 59.83   | 7.34     | \$ 41.17  |
| FOOD           | 117.46  | 71.43          | 203.49   | 123.61          | 23.22   | 128.17  | 30.34    | \$ 131.47 |
| ENTERTAINMENT  | 4.05    | 3.21           | 6.66     | 0.91            | –       | 11.71   | 0.32     | \$ 5.32   |
| SHOPPING       | 32.45   | 15.74          | 15.58    | 33.48           | 20.89   | 44.95   | 8.71     | \$ 25.45  |
| RECREATION     | 36.55   | 17.86          | 32.81    | 55.15           | –       | 61.01   | 1.61     | \$ 34.74  |
| ACCOMMODATION  | 83.10   | 77.14          | 104.47   | 92.76           | –       | 145.40  | 2.10     | \$ 88.90  |
| OTHER          | 1.18    | –              | 1.33     | –               | –       | \$ 0.71 | \$ 1.61  | \$ 1.05   |

<sup>3</sup> CMBAC TRUSTED ADVISORS, INC DECEMBER 2014

# supporting data

The Town of Sylvan Lake has a great product to offer the marketplace and has made significant reinvestments in infrastructure and major capital projects.

## TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

As part of the Economic Impact Assessment, traffic counters were strategically placed throughout the Waterfront Commercial District (WCD). Traffic to the Lakeshore area averaged 2,623.3 vehicles per day in July of 2014, separate of local traffic in the area. Adding in local traffic, the traffic volume rises to 7,111 as a daily average in July.

TABLE 3: VISITOR TRAFFIC TO SYLVAN LAKE

|                 | ALBERTA | CANADA | INTER-NATIONAL | TOTAL BY VEHICLE |
|-----------------|---------|--------|----------------|------------------|
| MOTORCYCLES     | 5,614   | 244    | 192            | 6,049            |
| CARS            | 48,6522 | 18,205 | 17,342         | 522,070          |
| TRUCKS          | 156,479 | 6,365  | 5,321          | 168,164          |
| RV              | 58,327  | 1,227  | 1,876          | 61,430           |
| OTHER           | 3,286   | 112    | 112            | 3,510            |
| TOTAL BY ORIGIN | 710,227 | 26,152 | 24,843         | 761,223          |

## PEDESTRIAN COUNTS

As a snapshot, over 5,000 people per day were counted at two beachside corners in Sylvan Lake, indicating the area is a very popular pedestrian-friendly destination for beachgoers.<sup>4</sup>



## OTHER DATA AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Annual visitor intercept surveys results conducted by the Town visitor service staff

- Visitor Information Centre (VIC) statistics tracked May – September of each year
- Things to See & Do, Places to Eat, Places to Stay
- Visitor Friendly Assessment program recommendations
- Retail Gap Analysis - clearly identifies many small business opportunities
- Hospitality Feasibility Study investment prospectus

Details regarding the permitting process and historical development data can be found online.



<sup>4</sup> 2014 PEDESTRIAN COUNT REPORT FOR THE TOWN OF SYLVAN LAKE

# investments in tourism

## The progressive Town Council of Sylvan Lake understands the value the tourism industry has to the local economy.

Council invests in infrastructure improvements and recreational opportunities, and continues to develop and promote local festivals.

Summer is currently Sylvan Lake’s busiest season; however, the Town is developing winter, as well as shoulder season festivals, events, and tournaments. With capital investments of over \$66 million, for the new waterfront infrastructure and NexSource Centre recreational facility, Sylvan Lake is committed to growth and investment in the community.

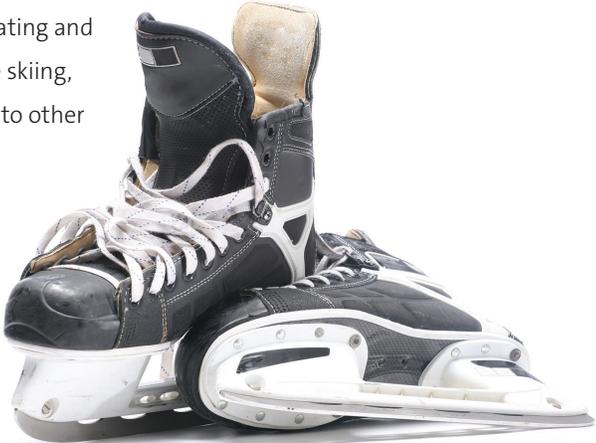
The NexSource Centre will now welcome more sports and recreation enthusiasts to its two NHL-sized arenas, aquatic centre, five-sheet curling rink, as well as a seniors centre, walking track, meeting space, and children’s activity centre.

Sylvan Lake’s vibrant lakeshore area transforms the downtown into a Christmas-like village during the snowy months. Spectacular fireworks shows entice crowds year-round during event weekends. Ice fishing tournaments, skating and hockey on the lake, snowmobiling, kite skiing, and other events already bring vitality to other seasons in Sylvan Lake.



### Named in the “Top 50 Small Towns to Visit in Canada” FLIGHT NETWORK 2016

Upholding the motto, Brilliant all year, Sylvan Lake is the host to many year-round events such as Winterfest, 1913 Days, Half Iron Man Triathlon, the International Speed Skating Marathon, Shake the Lake and Jazz at the Lake Festival to name a few. Visitors enjoy activities ranging from water sports and golfing to snowmobiling and hockey. The town is also home to Alberta Flyboard and the international Sylvan Lake Hockey Camp.



# infrastructure + opportunities

## INFRASTRUCTURE

A significant yearly commitment is made to tourism related staff, advertising, operating staff, and public works capital projects. Direct spending on tourism infrastructure in the Lakeshore District continues. This includes contributions from the Town, local developers, and the Province. Spending total over the course of the last six years was \$103 million.<sup>5</sup>

Capital spending in the Sylvan Lake area can be categorized into the following major projects:

- **Lakeshore Drive redevelopment**  
End of Phase 4 – 2013, \$23.63 million
- **Lakeshore Drive redevelopment**  
Phase 5 & 6 – 2016, \$4.4 million
- **Centennial Street redevelopment**  
Preliminary design estimated \$5.5 million, detailed design underway
- **Provincial Park washrooms**  
Completed in 2013, \$2.27 million
- **NexSource Centre**  
Opening spring of 2017, \$30 million
- **Aquatic Centre renovations**  
Reopening spring of 2017, \$3.5 million
- **Residential waterfront development**  
Completed in 2016, \$30 million
- **Commercial mall development**  
Completed in the fall of 2016, \$3 million



## INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Sylvan Lake has just purchased a significant waterfront property of 3.5 acres, and has applied for a transfer of an additional 1.5 acres through an existing License of Occupation, with the Province of Alberta. After public consultation in 2017, Sylvan Lake expects to entertain opportunities for P3 investment at the waterfront.

In addition to this new acquisition, there are clearly pockets in Sylvan Lake in which the right business would not only fit, but thrive.

The map to the right identifies the current investment opportunities by number. Tourism assets and landmarks are shown by letter.



### investment opportunities

- 1 RV PARK, RESORT, HOTEL
- 2 MIXED USE
- 3 P3 PROJECTS, RENTAL KIOSKS, DAY MOORING, SPRAY PARK
- 4 LIMITED SERVICE HOTEL WITH MEETING ROOMS
- 5 RESTAURANT, BREW PUB, SPA
- 6 LAKESHORE CORNER MALL – COMMERCIAL SPACE
- 7 LIMITED SERVICE HOTEL WITH MEETING ROOMS, MIXED USE
- 8 MIXED USE
- 9 QUICK SERVICE RESTAURANT
- 10 LIVE-WORK
- 11 LIVE-WORK

### tourism assets + landmarks

- a LIGHTHOUSE PARK
- b SYLVAN LAKE AQUA SPLASH
- c MARINA/BOAT LAUNCH
- d THE PIER, BEACH VOLLEYBALL, FIREWORKS
- e NEXSOURCE CENTRE
- f MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT BUILDING
- g CENTENNIAL PARK
- h SYLVAN LAKE COUNTRY CLUB, GOLF
- i VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE
- j OUTDOOR SKATING RINK, OVAL
- k LAKESIDE GOKARTS, MINI GOLF
- l PUBLIC WASHROOMS
- m ICE FISHING, SCUBA DIVING
- n SYLVAN LAKE RV PARK

 PUBLIC WATERFRONT  
 RAILWAY LINE

# the sylvan lake advantage

## The Town of Sylvan Lake has made great strides to prepare for outside investment including the following initiatives:

- Formed the Business Recruitment Team (BRT), a committee of Council specifically focused on Investment Attraction activities, makes recommendations to Council
- Creation of an **Investment Attraction Policy** to help administration evaluate 'Projects of Local Significance'
- Development of Lighthouse Park, featuring an iconic Peggy's Cove replica lighthouse – Rotary led
- Flexible Waterfront Design Guidelines intended to enhance the district as a unique place to live and work
- Tourism-directed bylaws: mobile vending and busking, pedicabs, snowmobile access to services route
- Installation of Visitor Pay Parking in 2017; revenue to be utilized for Waterfront Commercial District (WCD) maintenance
- Support for new private sector attractors such as Sylvan Lake Aqua Splash (Wibit water park)
- Development of the community's first Cultural Master Plan



- Creation of the Waterfront Direct Control zone (W-DC), allowing Council to ensure the Waterfront Area Redevelopment Plan's (WARP) goals are achieved
- Established the Waterfront Commercial District (WCD) Revitalization Committee, a Chamber of Commerce administered sub-committee
- Initiated the Façade Improvement Program grant to provide incentive for property owners to upgrade storefronts on Centennial Street
- A community rebranding exercise to better articulate Sylvan Lake to residents, businesses and visitors
- Maintenance of a cooperative working relationship with Alberta Environment & Parks and Sylvan Lake Management Committee (SLMC) activities
- Annual funding contribution to the regional Central Alberta Tourism Alliance (CATA)
- Sylvan Lake is an ideal stop for a bus circle tour from both the north and south of the province, and Central Alberta Tourism Alliance (CATA) is working towards this end, as identified in a Destination Management Plan, developed in 2015 by 11 participating regional municipalities.
- Planning is underway for the development of a new field house, soccer pitches, and ball diamonds. Opportunities exist for the development of a campground and RV park adjacent to this sports park.



## “Sustainability in Action Award”

2016 POPULATIONS OF 10,000 AND OVER,  
ALBERTA URBAN MUNICIPALITIES ASSOCIATION  
(AUMA)

## “Top 12 Great Communities for Business”

2015 ALBERTA VENTURE MAGAZINE

## Why not Sylvan Lake?

Sylvan Lake is a vibrant lakeside community with a high quality of living that respects the environment, provides diverse economic opportunities, and values efficient, inclusive and transparent government.

**Contact Amanda Mercer,  
Economic Development  
Officer at Sylvan Lake for  
a guided familiarization  
tour of the Town.**

Amanda will be happy to help with any additional information you feel is relevant to your investment idea.

Ananda Mercer

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