

Yukon Tourism Advisory Board Communiqué

March 23, 2026

In recognition of the industry's interest in the Yukon Tourism Advisory Board's (YTAB) activities, the Board issues a communiqué following each meeting to summarize key discussions.

Meeting Highlights: YTAB convened on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, in the Department of Tourism and Culture boardroom (2nd floor, 100 Hanson Street, Whitehorse). Minister Jen Gehmair joined the Board for part of the session to provide updates and share government perspectives on current economic and tourism priorities.

Minister's key messages: The minister emphasized collaboration among communities, industry, and all levels of government, acknowledging fiscal constraints while prioritizing innovation and efficiency over cuts; reiterated support for growth in tourism, culture, hospitality, and business; identified labour shortages and infrastructure as key barriers to tourism expansion that require better data to inform future investments; and confirmed strong backing for community-led destination development and year-round tourism opportunities.

Convention centre update: The convention centre remains a key government objective, dependent on confirming a sustainable operating model. It is in the Minister's Mandate Implementation Plan. Industry and Government will need to work together on how a sustainable operating model can be achieved.

Tourism data: Tourism data for 2025 are still preliminary, with final figures expected from Destination Canada later this spring and results from the business survey due in November. Despite a dip in tourism spending compared to 2024, overall activity remains strong—well above pre-pandemic levels in 2019. This indicates the recovery is holding steady rather than reversing.

- Visitor volumes and access trends remain positive. Airport arrivals reached a record 244,300 in 2025, up 8.2% from 2024 and exceeding 2019's total of 206,177. Border crossings also grew 6.8% year over year, led by increased traffic at Fraser, though Alaska Highway crossings declined 11% from 2024 and remain 59% below 2019 levels.
- Total visitor spending in 2025 was estimated at \$336.6 million, down 13.7% from the previous year but still 18% above 2019. International visitors spent about \$170.5 million (a 15.9% drop from 2024, but 13% higher than in 2019), while domestic spending reached \$166.1 million (down 11.2% from 2024, yet 23% above 2019).

- From a multi-year perspective, tourism has grown significantly since 2019. Total spending rose from \$276 million in 2019 to \$389.9 million in 2024, reflecting a strong post-COVID recovery between 2022 and 2024. Both U.S. and Canadian markets expanded sharply in that period, with total spending in 2024 up by 41.3% from 2019 levels.

Culture days: Culture Days 2025 was a three-week fall event (September 19th to October 12) with more than 40 free arts, culture, and heritage activities across seven Yukon communities. The events engaged over 1,000 participants, both visitors and Yukoners. Culture Days showcases how effective collaboration among cultural tourism operators, arts and culture organizations, and government can result in dynamic public programming and vibrant community spaces.

Quick Facts

YTAB meets a minimum of four times per year. Additional meetings may be requested by the Minister or the Chair. Secretariat support for the Board is provided by the Department of Tourism and Culture.

More information about YTAB and the Board's full Terms of Reference can be [found here](#).

Members:

Chair: Neil Hartling

Voting Members: Benjamin Ryan, Denise McHale; Heather Callaghan; Lisa Brooksbank and Ricky Mawunganidze

Ex-officio member: Sierra van der Meer, Deputy Minister of Tourism and Culture

Further questions and information: ytab@yukon.ca