



# 2016 Sea to Sky Corridor Overall Economic Impact of Mountain Biking

*Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance*  
  
*Alliance canadienne du tourisme sportif*

 **steam pro**<sup>2.0</sup>  
real data • real time



BRITISH PACIFIC PROPERTIES



# Background & Objectives

- Purpose: Determine the economic value of mountain biking resulting from visitor spending in 4 communities: North Shore, Squamish, Whistler, and Pemberton plus the Sea to Sky Corridor overall.
- Compare results to 2006 Economic Impact Study (North Shore, Squamish, Whistler). Note Pemberton was not included in the 2006 study.
- Economic modelling using the Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance's STEAM model (2006 and 2016). The 2006 data was revised to reflect the STEAM 2.0 model.
- Data gathered via in-person intercept surveys: 274 on the North Shore, 445 in Squamish, and 210 in Pemberton between June and Labour Day 2016. Data was collected by Tourism Whistler (2015 and 2016) and shared for the purposes of this study. Whistler spending data includes the Whistler Bike Park, Crankworx, and the cross-country trail network.
- 2016 rider volume estimates derived from Trailforks data. In 2006, rider volume estimates were developed from trail counter data. The 2006 volume estimates were revised to reflect the full year rather than the 17 weeks of the 2006 study.



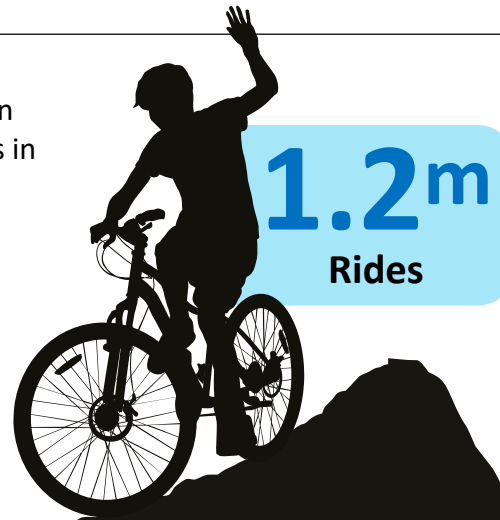
# What's changed in the Sea to Sky Corridor since 2006?

- Expanded trail networks
- Trail authorization process introduced in 2006
- More funding for trail development & marketing
- Growth in community mountain bike associations
- Promotion of mountain biking as a tourism product
- Development of a provincial mountain bike tourism strategy



# SEA TO SKY 2016 – OVERALL

Represents the total number of mountain bike rides by 398,000 non-resident riders in the Sea to Sky Corridor in 2016



Represents the total number of full-time equivalent jobs supported by the spending of non-resident mountain bikers in the Sea to Sky Corridor in 2016



**Visitor spending**

Represents the combined spending of non-resident mountain bikers in the Sea to Sky Corridor in 2016



**Wages**

Represents the combined wages generated by the spending of non-resident mountain bikers in the Sea to Sky Corridor in 2016



**Taxes**

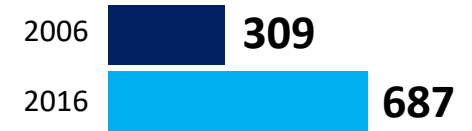
Represents the combined taxes generated by the spending of non-resident mountain bikers in the Sea to Sky Corridor in 2016

# COMPARING 2006\* TO 2016 – OVERALL

## Number of Rides



## Number of Jobs



\$8.3m

Taxes

2006

\$18.6m

2016

\$16.1m

2006

\$35.9m

2016

\$31.7m

2006

\$70.6m

2016

Wages

Visitor Expenditures

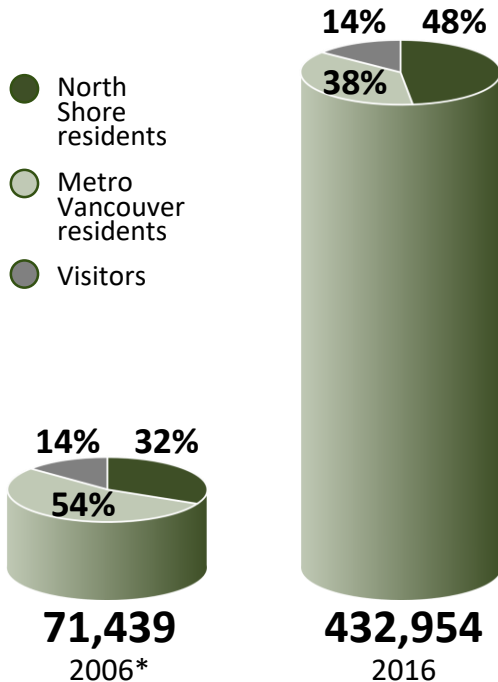
\*Note: Pemberton was not included in the 2006 study

# COMPARING 2006\* TO 2016 – NORTH SHORE

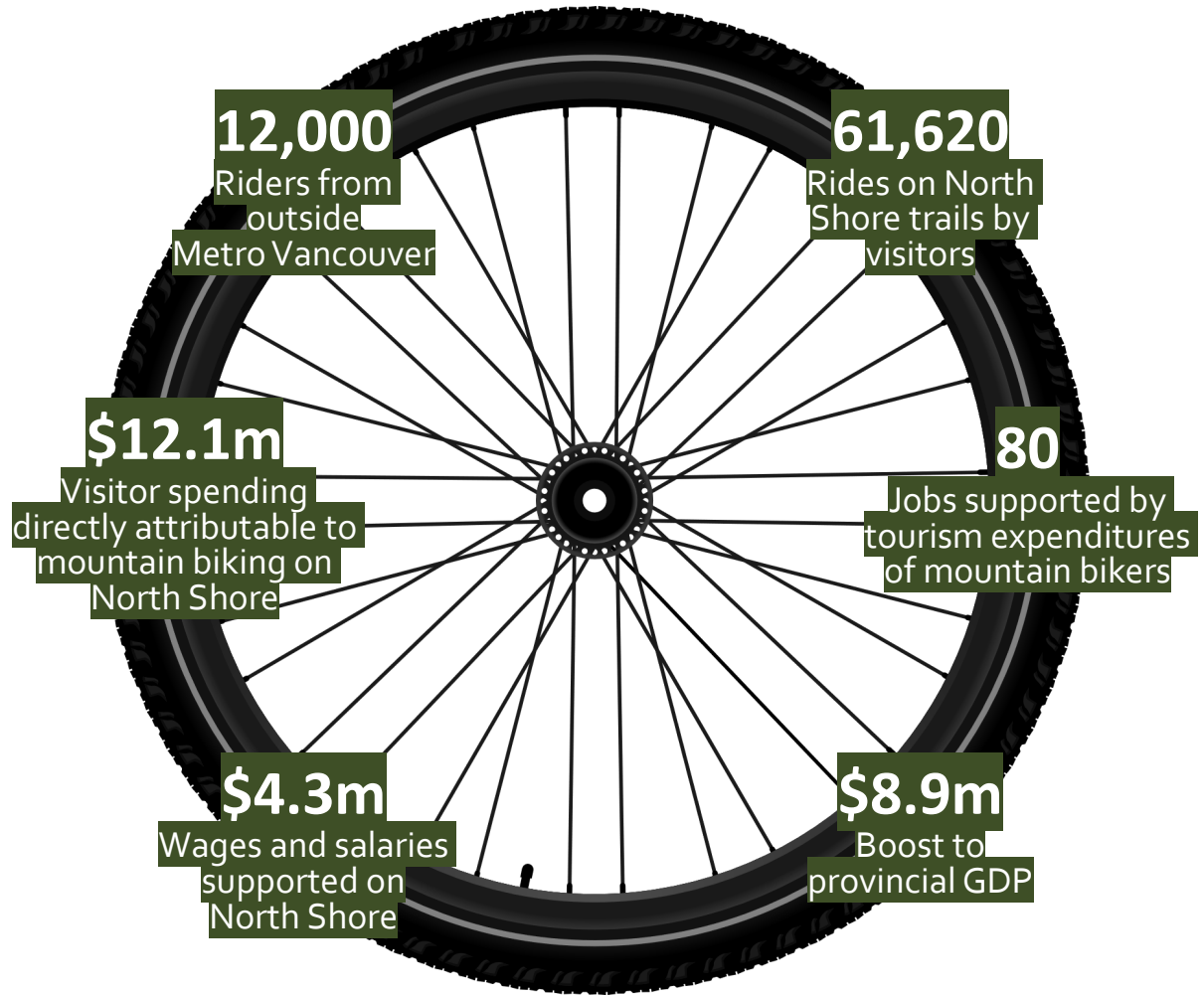
## Spending by Metro Vancouver Residents\*\* and Visitors



## Number of Rides per Year



## By the Numbers: Mountain Biking on the North Shore (2016)

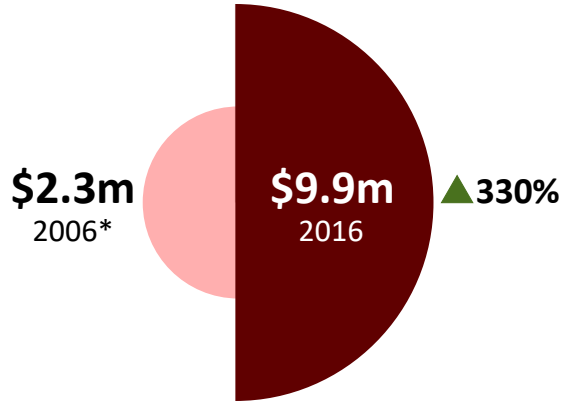


\*2006 figures adjusted to reflect full year estimates to compare to 2016 results

\*\* Metro Vancouver residents living in communities other than North and West Vancouver are considered day visitors

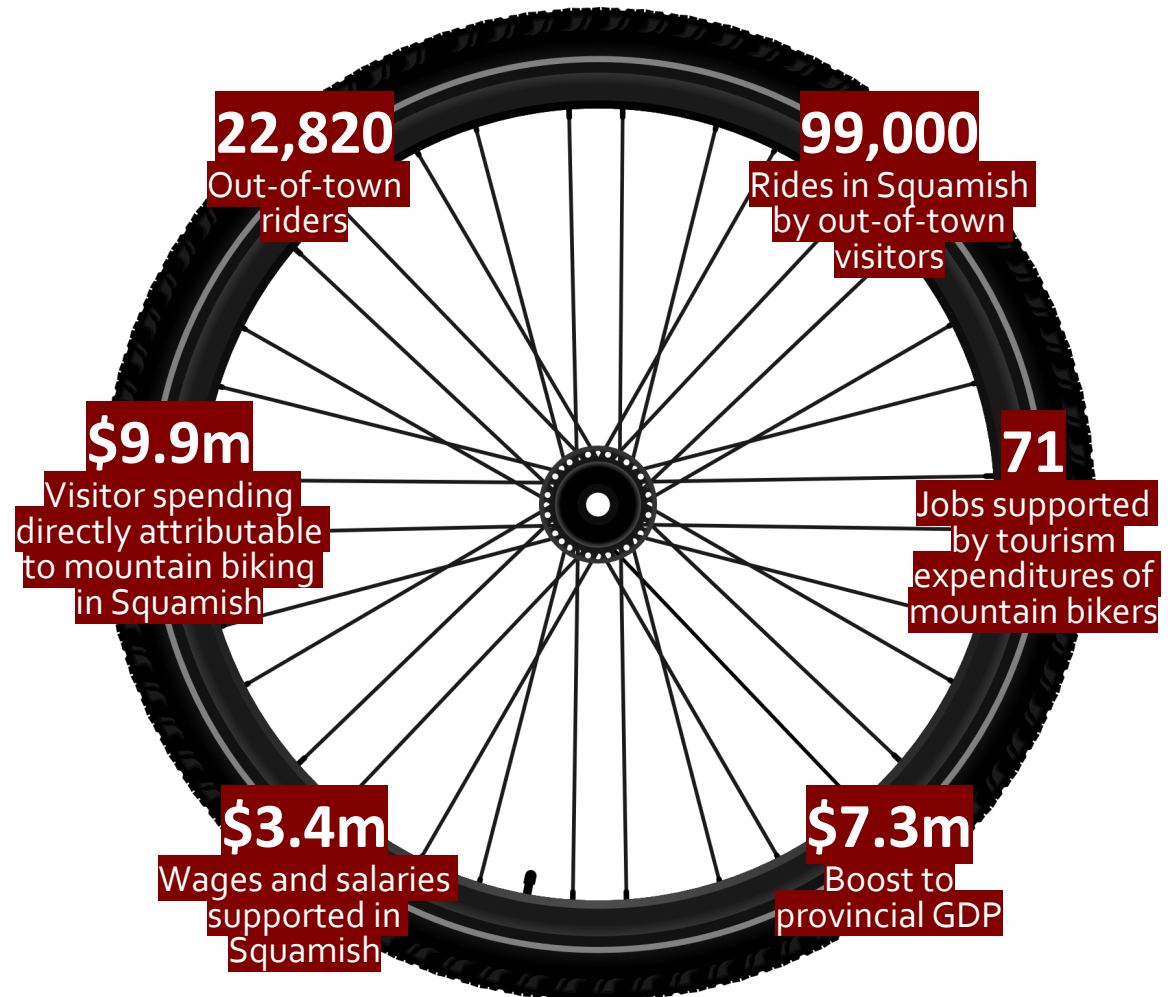
# COMPARING 2006\* TO 2016 – SQUAMISH

## Visitor Spending



	2006*	2016
Proportion Staying overnight	21%	44% (▲ 109%)
Average length of stay (nights)	3.2	5.8 (▲ 81%)
<b>Rider volume</b>		
■ Same day	6,404*	12,893 (▲ 101%)
■ Overnight	1,702*	9,927 (▲ 483%)

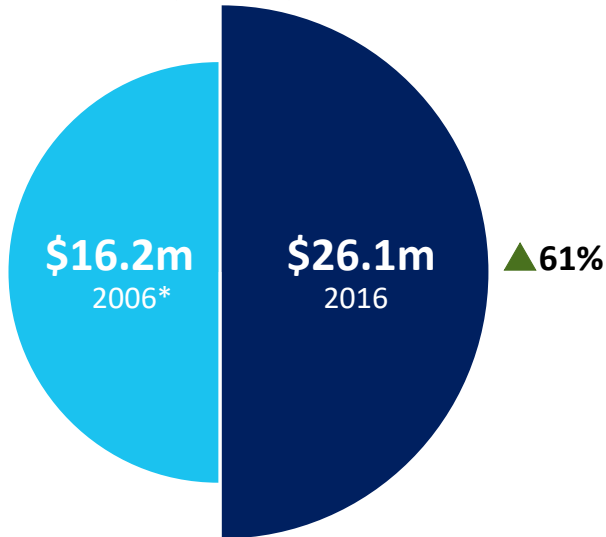
## By the Numbers: Mountain Biking in Squamish (2016)



\*2006 figures adjusted to reflect full year estimates to compare to 2016 results



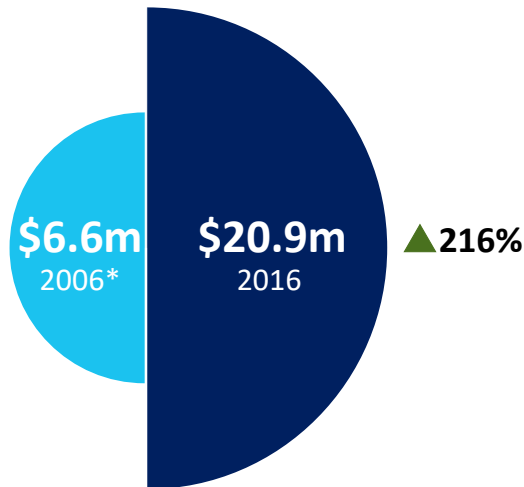
## Visitor Spending – Bike Park



## By the Numbers: Mountain Biking in Whistler (2015/16)

<b>102,500</b>	<b>533,000</b>	<b>\$46.6m</b>
Out-of-town mountain biking-related visits	Rides in Whistler (Bike Park and x-c trails)	Visitor spending directly attributable to mountain biking
<b>389</b>	<b>\$18.1m</b>	<b>\$39.3m</b>
Whistler jobs supported by mountain bike tourism and operational spending	Wages and salaries supported in Whistler	Boost to provincial GDP

## Visitor Spending – Cross Country Trails

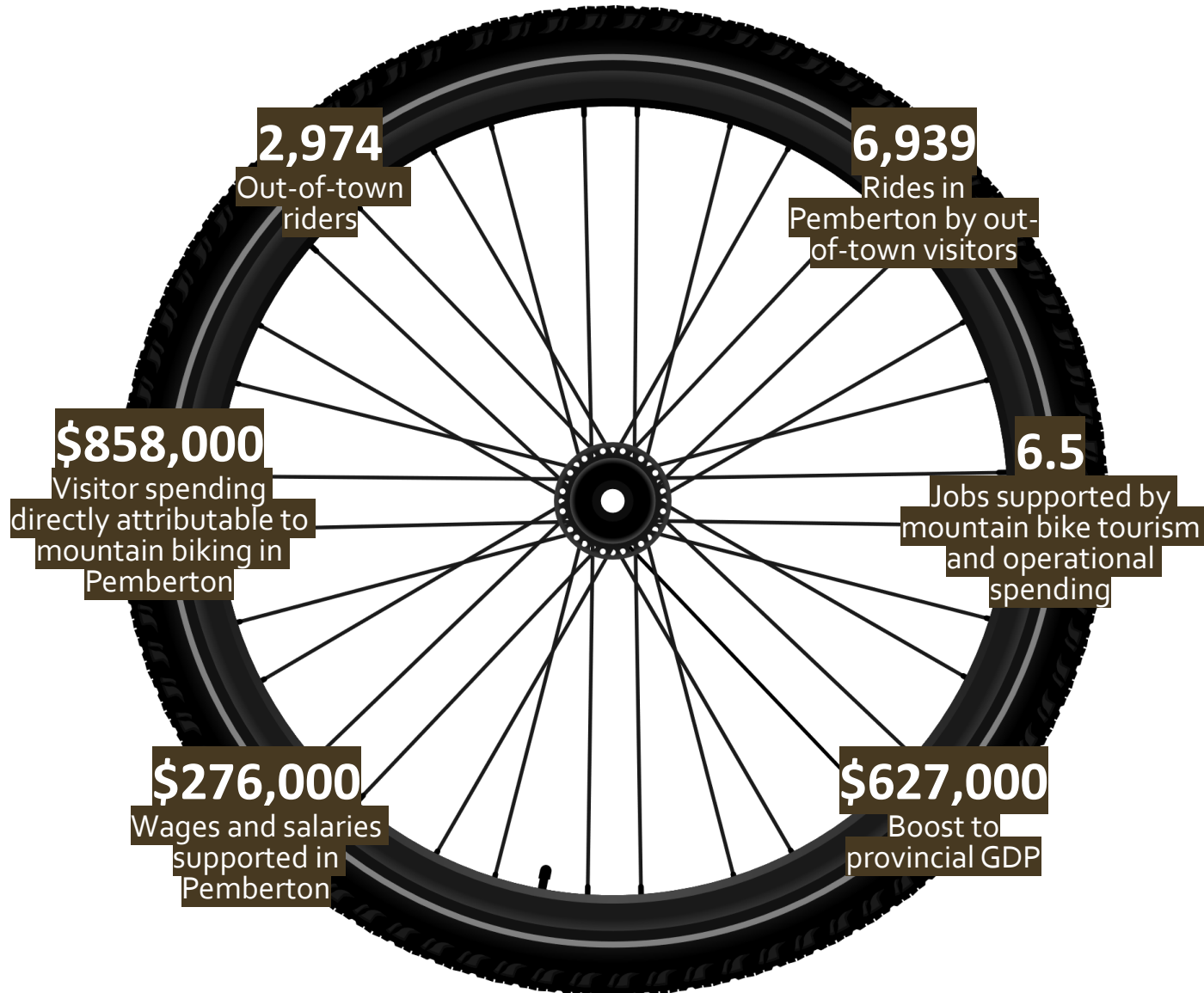


## By the Numbers: Crankworx (2015)

<b>130,000</b>	<b>287,000</b>	<b>\$14.1m</b>
Individuals exposed to Crankworx	Visitor days attributable to Crankworx	Visitor spending directly attributable to Crankworx
<b>126</b>	<b>\$6.3m</b>	<b>\$13.7m</b>
Whistler jobs supported by mountain bike tourism and operational spending	Wages and salaries supported in Whistler	Boost to provincial GDP

\*2006 figures adjusted to reflect full year estimates to compare to 2016 results

### By the Numbers: Mountain Biking in Pemberton (2016)



# Recommendations

## 1) Build capacity in Pemberton

Pemberton currently attracts a relatively small number of non-resident riders. Pemberton has a vibrant biking community with good infrastructure, a diverse selection of trails, and is located less than 30 minutes drive north from Whistler, one of the world's top mountain biking destinations. This proximity and the existence of high quality mountain bike experiences in Pemberton suggests that Pemberton has an excellent opportunity to attract more riders for both day visits and overnight stays.

What's needed...

- Build capacity of local trail organization/mountain bike club
- Adequate funding from local sources to support ongoing trail maintenance
- Focus on what makes Pemberton unique to provide a more diverse experience for visitors
- Increase awareness of Pemberton among visitors who have been to Whistler or those who may be planning to go to Whistler



# Recommendations

## 2) Understand visitor share of trail impacts

Visitors riding on local trails clearly has an impact which requires additional effort and expense from the local trail organization/mountain bike club to keep up with ongoing maintenance. In smaller communities, the number of visiting riders may drastically outnumber local riders, however, when the frequency of rides is factored, the overall number of rides by residents typically exceeds that of visitors.

What's needed...

- Local trail organizations/mountain bike clubs should have a good understanding of visitors' versus residents' impacts on trails
- Develop strategies to increase financial support for trails from visitors
- Work closely with the local tourism industry to find solutions which will increase visitation and improve experiences for both visiting and local riders



# Recommendations

## 3) Encourage more shoulder season visits

Tourism volume during the peak summer months is reaching capacity for some communities in the Sea to Sky Corridor. Mountain biking is a significant contributor to the overall volume of visitors, however, there are many other attractions and experiences that attract visitors to the region from late June to early September. Encouraging more shoulder season visits in Spring and Fall is one way to grow mountain bike tourism and help support local tourism services when they have extra capacity. Shoulder seasons typically offer cooler weather and moist trail conditions which are more comfortable for riding and help the trails stand up to greater use.

What's needed...

- Showcase early and late season riding in promotional content
- Work with local businesses and tourism services to create special Spring and Fall mountain biking packages



# Recommendations

## 4) Securing public funding for trail maintenance

In BC, there are sources of funding for building trails and promoting trails, however, there is little funding available to maintain trails. The results of the study show that there is considerable return on investment from mountain bike trails in the Sea to Sky Corridor. Several municipal governments in the region already provide annual funding to local mountain bike clubs for trail maintenance. In many cases, trails are located outside of municipal boundaries on provincial crown land. Lobbying all levels of government to support trail maintenance is critical to both the sustainability of the trail systems and to the overall positive experience of all trail users, both residents and visitors.

What's needed...

- Develop a business case for funding trail maintenance that is focused on Return on Investment (ROI)
- Create a communication strategy aimed at all levels of government to raise awareness about the need for trail maintenance



*“The growth in mountain biking in the Sea to Sky Corridor has been exponential, and has become a significant economic driver for our community as is evidenced by this study. With this growth comes a greater recognition of the efforts of the local trail building and biking community. There is broad recognition of the immense value of the trail system to Squamish, and an understanding of the importance of investing in the necessary infrastructure to support increased visitation and to ensure that we can fulfill on our brand promise long into the future.”*

-- Mayor Patricia Heintzman, District of Squamish



Access to full community reports:  
[www.mbta.ca/resources/research](http://www.mbta.ca/resources/research)

