

The background image shows a panoramic view of a coastal city skyline at sunrise or sunset. In the foreground, there's a dense forest of evergreen trees. Some autumn-colored leaves are visible on the right side, suggesting a transition between seasons. The city skyline in the far distance includes several recognizable skyscrapers.

METRO VANCOUVER

# DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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## HIGHLIGHTS



DESTINATION  
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# THANK YOU

The Metro Vancouver Destination Development Strategy is the outcome of an 18 month iterative process of gathering, synthesizing, and validating information with tourism partners about the current status and future direction of tourism in the Metro Vancouver planning area.

We thank the Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs on whose traditional territories we travelled and gathered for our community meetings including Hwlitsum First Nation, Katzie First Nation, Kwantlen First Nation (part of Sto:lo Nation), Kwikwetlem First Nation, Matsqui First Nation (part of Sto:lo Nation),

Musqueam Indian Band, Qayqayt First Nation, Semiahmoo First Nation, Squamish Nation, Tsawwassen Treaty First Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

Thank you to our tourism partners who participated in the process by attending meetings, responded to surveys, engaged in interviews, and planning workshops. Special thanks to the members of the Metro Vancouver Destination Development Steering Committee, as well as the facilitator of the destination development process.

# WHAT'S INSIDE

1. INTRODUCTION
2. REALIZING THE POTENTIAL
3. AT A GLANCE
4. GEARING UP



# 1

# INTRODUCTION

## WHY A STRATEGY?

The Metro Vancouver Destination Development Strategy was developed to enhance the competitiveness of the Metro Vancouver planning area over the next 10 years and beyond. The strategy was developed as part of Destination BC's Destination Development Program to support and guide the long-term growth of tourism in British Columbia. This document presents the key highlights from the Metro Vancouver strategy.

## WHO IS IT FOR?

The Metro Vancouver Destination Development Strategy is a guide for tourism partners as they work collaboratively to grow the visitor economy. The strategy will be reviewed and updated to reflect changing tourism objectives, priorities, and market conditions. Results will be tracked, and emerging learning outcomes will inform future implementation activities thereby optimizing their effectiveness in increasing economic, social, and cultural benefits for the entire Metro Vancouver planning area.

## WHERE IS IT FOR?

The Metro Vancouver planning area lies within Indigenous traditional territories, and includes Langley and Maple Ridge to the east, Vancouver to the west, Delta and Surrey (and the US border) to the south, the North

Shore and Lions Bay to the north, and all parts in between, including Bowen Island. Communities in the Metro Vancouver planning area coincide with those within the Metro Vancouver Regional District and overlap with the Sea-to-Sky Corridor and Fraser Valley planning areas.

## WHERE DOES IT FIT?

Metro Vancouver is one of 20 planning areas across BC for which destination development strategies are being developed. Each planning area represents a logical destination for visitors in and around the province. As planning areas span across multiple jurisdictions, the importance of adopting an integrated approach with a shared vision and coordinated investment is critical. The Metro Vancouver Destination Development Strategy is one of six planning area strategies being prepared for the Vancouver, Coast & Mountains tourism region. The five others are the Sea-to-Sky Corridor, Sunshine Coast, Fraser Valley, the Gold Rush Trail, and the Highway 3 Corridor. In time, informed by the outcomes of all relevant planning area destination development strategies, regional destination development strategies will be developed. These will, in turn, inform the creation of a provincial destination development strategy, thereby ensuring a truly integrated and cohesive combination of bottom-up and top-down destination planning.

## A KEY IMPERATIVE

The recommendations contained within the Metro Vancouver Destination Development Strategy form the foundation for additional, focused, and aligned discussions regarding implementation. It will be important to ensure that the strategy becomes embedded in local, regional, provincial, and federal decision making processes. It is only by working collaboratively in an integrated way with a shared agenda that the full potential of Metro Vancouver will be realized.

## AT A GLANCE

In what follows, the distinctiveness of the Metro Vancouver destination is summarized, and its vision for tourism introduced. While acknowledging the challenges the sector faces, its potential for growth is set out in terms of key opportunities and experience development potential. A consideration of each development theme and associated actions then follows. While further detail on each of these elements is available in the full strategy, they are brought together 'At A Glance' to demonstrate the scope of the integrated nature of the approach being taken.

## A DISTINCTIVE DESTINATION

Metro Vancouver is known around the world for its natural beauty, cultural diversity, and quality of life. Its visitor economy is underpinned by the strategic gateway complexes of the Port of Vancouver, Canada's largest port, and Vancouver International Airport (YVR), which is consistently ranked as the leading airport in North America.

Downtown Vancouver, Stanley Park, the North Shore mountains, Capilano Suspension Bridge, Bowen Island, and Granville Island represent some of the area's key attractors. In addition, Metro Vancouver's stunning collection of world-class provincial parks and protected areas, internationally-renowned seawalls, lush destination gardens, and a network of vibrant neighbourhood parks provide ample opportunity for visitors to get up close to nature.

Experience the Fraser's network of blueways and trails is not only bringing new visitors to the river's waterfront but is also energizing communities bordering its banks in re-establishing their connection to this mighty waterway. Further north, False Creek, Coal Harbour, Jericho Beach, Spanish Banks, along with the other bodies of water and beaches along English Bay, are frequently visited Vancouver destinations. Indigenous experiences, heritage sites, rural communities, attractions, cultural events, creative offerings, and a vibrant urban scene all combine to provide year-round visitor appeal.

## A SHARED VISION

Adopting a sustainable approach to the development of the destination, tourism partners are keen to realize the following vision:



METRO VANCOUVER IS A BIGGER, MORE ENRICHING GATEWAY, AND ATTRACTS A WIDER VARIETY OF VISITORS THANKS TO ITS EXPANDING GLOBAL REPUTATION AS A BEAUTIFUL, METROPOLITAN AREA WITH A FUSION OF INSPIRING PEOPLE AND IDEAS. METRO VANCOUVER'S DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL URBAN EXPRESSION IS JUST

AS POWERFUL OF A DRAW AS ITS STUNNING NATURAL BEAUTY. METRO VANCOUVER OFFERS A SEAMLESS, SINGULAR DESTINATION EXPERIENCE FROM THE MOMENT VISITORS ARRIVE. THE SUCCESS OF METRO VANCOUVER IS THE RESULT OF BOLD LEADERSHIP, COORDINATED PLANNING EFFORTS, AND INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS. RESIDENTS SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT THAT ENRICHES THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND SPREADS PROSPERITY.

# 2

# REALIZING THE POTENTIAL

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES

The destination faces a number of challenges in terms of capacity constraints relative to accommodation, convention and meeting spaces, labour, and cruise; limited transportation options and congestion; a lack of tourism product and operators in some areas, inclement weather, and inconsistent support for tourism by governments.

However, key opportunities include:

- Regional planning efforts
- Growth at YVR and Abbotsford International Airport
- Connected visitors and technology use
- Growing demand for experiences: health, wellness, culture
- More business and affluent travellers
- Indigenous cultural tourism development
- Resident engagement
- Lower Canadian dollar to attract US market



ABERDEEN CENTRE, RICHMOND  
Photo: Tourism Richmond

## EXPERIENCE POTENTIAL

Product experiences to motivate travel, encourage longer stays, and sustain year-round tourism throughout the destination include:

- **NATURE AND WELLNESS** Metro Vancouver offers significant opportunities to enjoy outdoor adventure, soft nature-based experiences, and healthy lifestyles. New nature-based experiences are being developed, such as new campsites at Golden Ears Provincial Park in Maple Ridge, management planning for Pinecone-Burke Provincial Park in Coquitlam, and “On Water: Vancouver’s Non-motorized Watercraft Strategy”.
- **MAJOR EVENTS** Metro Vancouver has a strong history of successfully hosting major events which includes sports, meetings and conventions, from Expo 86 and the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympic & Paralympic Games, all the way through to TED conferences at the Vancouver Convention Centre, the 2019 Canada Cup International Softball Championship in Surrey, and the World Taekwondo Junior Championships in Burnaby.
- **INDIGENOUS TOURISM** While the Metro Vancouver planning area is within 11 First Nations traditional territories, it is home to relatively few Indigenous tourism businesses. As Indigenous cultural tourism is a small, but rapidly growing segment of the British Columbia tourism industry, the development of new Indigenous cultural tourism experiences and increasing the celebration of Indigenous cultures through tourism is a priority for Metro Vancouver tourism partners.

- **CULTURAL EXPRESSION AND URBAN CREATIVITY** Metro Vancouver offers significant diversity with its rich cultures, from rural farm fields to modern art galleries to an abundance of festivals and events. While it may be best known for being an urban city in close proximity to nature and outdoor recreation, there are opportunities to increase its global standing and competitiveness from a cultural perspective.
- **COASTAL HERITAGE AND WATERWAYS** Metro Vancouver has a rich history in connecting people to the water, from Coast Salish peoples to the fishing industry, maritime history, and the tourism sector’s own history that began in part with day trips to the North Shore and Bowen Island for visitors from Metro Vancouver. Today, Metro Vancouver’s waterways are just as enticing, with opportunities to elevate coastal heritage storytelling and increase the experiences that visitors can enjoy on the waterways.
- **CRUISE** Cruise is still considered to be an important pillar of the Metro Vancouver tourism sector. Improving the cruise passenger experience remains a priority. The Canada Place cruise terminal serves as homeport for the Vancouver-Alaska cruise itinerary. While it is operating at maximum capacity during the busy cruise season the Port Authority is exploring how best to accommodate future capacity needs



CYPRESS MOUNTAIN, WEST VANCOUVER  
Photo: Insight Photography

# 3

# AT A GLANCE

**VISION STATEMENT** Metro Vancouver is a bigger, more enriching gateway, and attracts a wider variety of visitors thanks to its expanding global reputation as a beautiful, metropolitan area with a fusion of inspiring people and ideas. Metro Vancouver's diversity of cultural urban expression is just as powerful of a draw as its stunning natural beauty. Metro Vancouver offers a seamless, singular destination experience from the moment visitors arrive. The success of Metro Vancouver is the result of bold leadership, coordinated planning efforts, and innovative partnerships. Residents support sustainable destination management that enriches the quality of life and spreads prosperity.

THEME 1

GEAR UP: OVERCOMING CAPACITY CONSTRAINTS		
<p><b>GET REAL</b></p> <p>Create a robust business case for accommodation development, identifying where best to invest in new/existing developments. As a matter of urgency, work with the planning authorities to integrate accommodations into time sensitive planning projects such as the Broadway corridor transportation planning, the Jericho Lands, etc.</p> <p>Work with all Metro Vancouver municipalities to synchronize short-term rental policies.</p>	<p><b>GET ON BOARD</b></p> <p>In conjunction with the Port of Vancouver, address the capacity constraints at Canada Place Cruise Ship Terminal. Work collaboratively to develop a plan that secures long-term capacity for cruise ships, provides certainty for the visitor industry, investors, and facilitates easy access throughout Metro Vancouver for cruise passengers.</p>	<p><b>GET READY</b></p> <p>In quantifying the value of opportunities lost due to lack of meeting space in Metro Vancouver, enhance and expand the Vancouver Convention Centre to better meet client needs. Explore other locations for convention space, and opportunities to develop unique, smaller scale meeting venues.</p>
<p><b>IN THE AIR, ON THE GROUND</b></p> <p>In supporting the implementation of master plans for Vancouver (YVR) and Abbotsford (YXX) International Airports, resource a leadership position within government to develop BC's air transit opportunities. Ensure new transportation connectivity includes water-based solutions and enable visitors to seamlessly access accommodations, activities, and other transportation hubs.</p>	<p><b>ATTRACT, RETAIN, REWARD</b></p> <p>Work to improve the perception and benefits of tourism among residents. Work with go2HR to better understand the needs of the visitor economy and improve students' accessibility to affordable training opportunities.</p>	<p><b>SPREAD THE LOAD</b></p> <p>Develop a better understanding of capacity challenges and prepare a Visitor Dispersion Action Plan to monitor and disperse visitors throughout Metro Vancouver. Manage acute capacity issues as they arise and devise a toolkit to enable visitor capacity issues to be considered in all development activities to ensure tourism growth is managed appropriately.</p>

# 3

# AT A GLANCE

THEME 2

## PUSH THE BOUNDARIES: ELEVATING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

### THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

Work together to monitor, coordinate, and proactively encourage the realization of new products. Through creative collaboration with other disciplines — art and design, property development, community planning — generate new thinking around compelling visitor experiences.

### CREATE ROOM TO BREATHE

Enhance the nature and quality of the outdoor nature and wellness products and experiences, including new nature-based Indigenous experiences. Within the context of a nature-based visitor use management action plan, encourage visitation to places which can sustain more use thereby achieving a better balance of visitor activity throughout the Vancouver, Coast & Mountains tourism region.

### ON THE BALL

Establish a dedicated events organization to lead, organize, and manage regional efforts to attract major events. Develop a major events strategy and create a regional volunteer force to support such events. Work collaboratively across government to ensure strategy alignment and secure funding certainty when bidding for longer term event and sport hosting opportunities.

### ELEVATE AND CELEBRATE

Work with Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs to create and package new Indigenous experiences including nature, water, cultural, and heritage-based guided tours. Promote Indigenous accommodations and assess the feasibility of developing large, iconic Indigenous cultural centres at key locations. Elevate the Indigenous voice across all aspects of the visitor experience.

### TAP THE CREATIVE VIBE

Encourage city planners to adopt a “tourism lens” when developing new cultural initiatives for residents. In light of the Vancouver Art Gallery’s impending move, repurpose its current home to become part of a significant cultural hub as well as a compelling draw for visitors. Raise awareness of existing cultural offerings and support Chinatown’s ambition to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### ACTIVATE THE WATERWAYS

Support the realization of the “Experience the Fraser” concept plan. Encourage product development that connects the waterway experience with other motivating experiences. Work with the Vancouver Park Board to incorporate visitor experiences into its strategy for watercraft recreation and elevate the area’s waterways for transportation-based experiences.

### WELCOME ASHORE

Work collaboratively with key players to improve and develop new products and experiences which will enhance the overall experience for cruise ship passengers arriving at the Canada Place Cruise Ship Terminal. Include consideration of improvements to the transportation experience of cruise ship passengers.

### ON THE MOVE

Establish a Tourism Mobility and Access Task Force and work to ensure that the voice of tourism is reflected in the Regional Transportation Strategy, Smart City initiatives and community plans. Improve the appeal of transportation gateways and hubs and explore the opportunities presented by air, water, and rail to ease congestion, disperse visitors, and encourage modal and active transportation.

### STAY CONNECTED

Mine existing technology and data sources such as TELUS insights and Arrivalist to better understand how visitors experience the destination. Promote digital connectivity to facilitate area-wide access to visitor information and integrated online visitor services. Enable host communities to provide visitor services, a warm welcome, and information support.

# 3 AT A GLANCE

THEME 3

## REACH OUT: ENGAGING THE METRO VANCOUVER COMMUNITY

### TOURISM MATTERS

Within the context of a community relations program, ensure residents have opportunities to input into tourism development planning. Create benchmarks for monitoring tourism growth and carrying capacity, and communicate the value of tourism to governments and residents in terms of its potential to enhance quality of life for all.

### FAIR'S FAIR

Create a business culture that aspires to providing a living wage for tourism staff. Work with Living Wage Canada and go2HR to develop educational tools and messaging for this initiative. Learn from other regional tourism areas that have implemented living wage initiatives.

### MEET & GREET

Develop tools and resources for residents to enhance their role as hosts and ambassadors in providing recommendations and referrals for visitors.

THEME 4

## WORK TOGETHER: PARTNERSHIPS AND REGIONAL COLLABORATION

### GET ORGANIZED

Develop a formal Metro Vancouver Destination Management Steering Committee. Work collaboratively on joint research initiatives relative to data capture, sector analysis, visitor experience appraisal, and other opportunities. Devise a local government engagement toolkit and provide input to important regional plans.

### RESOURCE & EQUIP

Work with the province to secure long-term sustainable funding for destination development within the planning area. Identify funding models that incentivize communities and cities to develop infrastructure and services that take the needs of visitors as well as residents and the industry into account.

### PROFILE & SUPPORT

Provide dedicated support to Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs to facilitate their engagement in the visitor economy through tourism development. Work with Indigenous Tourism British Columbia (ITBC) to ensure that Indigenous tourism is well represented, developed, and promoted across the Vancouver, Coast & Mountains tourism region.

THEME 5

## TREAD LIGHTLY: BUSINESS RESPONSIBILITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND RESILIENCE

### GREEN CREDENTIALS

Establish a Sustainable Tourism Council and measurable sustainability goals. Work with tourism businesses and municipalities to incorporate sustainability best practices into their tourism infrastructure and operations. Engage in short-term and long-term scenario-based planning to build resilience in response to the challenges of a changing climate.

### ACCESS FOR ALL

In conjunction with the Rick Hansen Foundation, Spinal Cord Injury BC, and Travel-for-All, audit and assess visitor experiences with accessibility and inclusion challenges and work together to identify remedies. Improve the visibility of accessible and inclusive visitor experiences and, where feasible, incorporate accessibility, inclusivity, and sustainability in new product development opportunities.

### BE PREPARED

Work collaboratively with Emergency Management BC, Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC), and Destination BC to better prepare the tourism industry and visitors for emergencies and crises. Ensure disaster related communication protocols are in place and encourage tourism businesses to prepare their emergency preparedness plans.

# 4

# GEARING UP

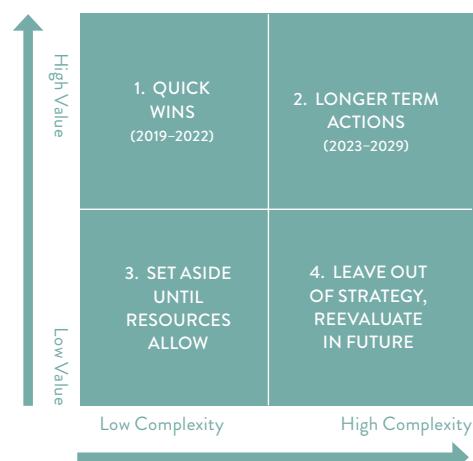
## SUCCESS NETWORKS

This strategy is intended to inform actions for the future, which over time may be embedded in the local, regional, and provincial decision making processes. The result will be an integrated system of priorities to achieve better development decisions, drive greater tourism revenues, and realize benefits for businesses and communities in the Metro Vancouver planning area. All of this will contribute to a thriving, vibrant, and growing economy.

Joint strategy ownership among all planning area tourism partners is a critical component of this program's success. The strategy identifies a suggested success network of tourism partners to champion and move actions within each objective forward.

## FRAMEWORK

The strategy presents the destination development objectives using a consistent framework to determine the prioritization of each objective and the relative timing for implementation. Objectives with a provincial or regional scope are identified as well and will inform the regional and provincial destination development strategies.



MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY, VANCOUVER  
Photo: Kevin Arnold

# 4

# GEARING UP

## CATALYST PROJECTS

The following 12 actions were identified as catalyst projects for immediately moving the strategy into implementation.

### Gear Up: Overcoming Capacity Constraints

- Develop a Metro Vancouver planning area-wide impact analysis of accommodation gaps, and create a business case for accommodation development, identifying where it makes sense to invest for new developments or expansion.
- Immediately work with city, regional district, and First Nations planners to integrate accommodations into time-sensitive planning projects (e.g., Broadway corridor transportation planning, Jericho Lands, etc.).
- Quantify the value of lost opportunities due to lack of meeting space in Metro Vancouver.
- Develop an approach to monitor and manage acute capacity issues as they arise (e.g., choke points and hot spots).

### Push the Boundaries: Elevating the Visitor Experience

- Work together to monitor, coordinate, and proactively encourage development that creates a continuously active new product development supply in Metro Vancouver.
- Metro Vancouver DMOs to establish a dedicated events organization to lead, organize, and manage regional efforts in attracting year-round major events.
- Create a regional volunteer force for major events through a centralized volunteer database (Vancouver, Coast & Mountains tourism region).
- Establish a Tourism Mobility and Access Task Force.
- Utilize technology and data such as TELUS Insights and Arrivalist to better understand the visitor experience.



DR. SUN YAT-SEN CLASSICAL CHINESE GARDEN, VANCOUVER

Photo: Tanya Goehring

# 4

# GEARING UP

## Work Together: Partnerships and Regional Collaboration

- Develop a formal Metro Vancouver Destination Management Steering Committee as a structured approach to working together to build tourism in the planning area.
- Work together with ITBC to explore representation for the Vancouver, Coast & Mountains tourism region, specific to increasing Indigenous tourism development, relations, and partnerships in tourism.

## Tread Lightly: Business Responsibility, Sustainability, and Resilience

- Establish a Sustainable Tourism Council and measurable sustainability goals to support local government and Metro Vancouver goals.



FORT LANGLEY  
Photo: Dannielle Hayes

# LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Find it in the more detailed Metro Vancouver Destination Development Strategy or you can reach us at:

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FRONT COVER PHOTO: STANLEY PARK, VANCOUVER, Jordan Manley



BOWEN ISLAND  
Photo: Harbour Air Seaplanes