

#### **Report to Committee**

To:

General Purposes Committee

Director, Business Services

Date:

November 27, 2025

From:

Katie Ferland

File:

08-4150-03-01/2025-

Vol 01

Re:

**Draft Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035** 

#### Staff Recommendations

1. That the draft Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035, included as Attachment 1 of the report titled "Draft Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035," dated November 27, 2025, from the Director, Business Services, be endorsed for the purpose of seeking public and interest holders' feedback on the plan; and

2. That the final Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035, incorporating feedback from the public and interest holders on the draft plan, be brought back to Council for consideration.

Ktedod

Katie Ferland Director, Business Services (604-247-4923)

Att. (1)

REPORT CONCURRENCE			
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
Arts, Culture & Heritage Community Social Development Parks Services Recreation & Sport Services Climate and Environment Development Applications Policy Planning Transportation	\ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \	- TO	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	Initials:	APPROVED BY CAO	

#### Staff Report

#### Origin

The draft Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 (Tourism Master Plan) was developed to create a shared 10-year vision for tourism in Richmond and a framework of key goals and initiatives that align tourism, economic development, and the community. This plan has been jointly developed by Tourism Richmond, the City, and the Richmond Hotel Association with extensive input from industry representatives, community members and other interest holders.

On July 8, 2024, Council was presented with a proposed approach for developing a Tourism Master Plan including project structure, work plan, community engagement process, and guiding principles, and adopted the following resolution:

That the approach to developing a Richmond Tourism Master Plan, including the guiding principles, as outlined in the staff report titled, "Development of a Richmond Tourism Master Plan," dated June 10, 2024, from the Director, Business Services, be endorsed.

On July 21, 2025, the General Purposes Committee was presented with a report on the feedback received through public engagement and adopted the following resolution:

That the staff report titled, "Richmond Tourism Master Plan: Public Engagement Feedback," dated June 30, 2025, from the Director, Business Services, be received for information.

The draft Tourism Master Plan was informed by research and feedback received through the public engagement process. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the draft Tourism Master Plan for the purpose of seeking public and interest holders' feedback on the plan.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #1 Proactive in Stakeholder and Civic Engagement:

Proactive stakeholder and civic engagement to foster understanding and involvement and advance Richmond's interests.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #2 Strategic and Sustainable Community Growth:

Strategic and sustainable growth that supports long-term community needs and a well-planned and prosperous city.

2.5 Work collaboratively and proactively to attract and retain businesses to support a diversified economic base.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Focus Area #6 A Vibrant, Resilient and Active Community:

Vibrant, resilient and active communities supported by a wide variety of opportunities to get involved, build relationships and access resources.

This report also supports multiple related City plans and strategies such as the Richmond Arts Strategy, Resilient Economy Strategy, Richmond Accessibility Plan, and others.

#### Background

#### Tourism Service Delivery and Program Governance

Tourism is a significant driver of the provincial and local economy. The Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) Program is jointly administered by the British Columbia Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport, and Destination British Columbia to grow tourism-related revenues, visitation and jobs, and to amplify provincial tourism marketing efforts. Section 123 of the British Columbia *Provincial Sales Tax Act* and associated regulation provide the mechanism for collecting and using MRDT revenues to fund local tourism marketing, programs and projects.

Within this legislative framework, Richmond has adopted a partnership model and shared governance approach to delivering tourism services for the community. Each partner entity plays a distinct, complementary role that is essential to the effective administration of the MRDT Program in Richmond and the advancement of local tourism development:

- City of Richmond As the designated MRDT recipient, the City delivers key programming
  and also provides overall program oversight, adopts a municipal bylaw requesting
  imposition of the tax, ensures compliance with all provincial reporting and financial
  requirements, and maintains accountability for the MRDT Program and related funding.
- Richmond Hotel Association (RHA) Representing local hotel operators who collect and
  remit the tax, the RHA offers sector intelligence, strategic input into tourism planning, and is
  a key channel for securing the required level of industry support for MRDT applications and
  related business plans.
- Tourism Richmond As the City's contracted tourism service provider and Destination
  Marketing Organization, Tourism Richmond leads the delivery of destination marketing,
  tourism programs, industry engagement and product development initiatives, and promotes
  Richmond as a compelling visitor destination.

Together, these entities collaborate on destination development, major events, tourism programs, and strategic planning initiatives. It is through this coordinated partnership and shared governance model that the draft Tourism Master Plan has been developed.

#### Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 Overview

Tourism is a cross-cutting sector, acting as both an economic driver and community builder. Its success depends on integration with cultural, environmental, social, and economic priorities. The

Tourism Master Plan is designed to align with and advance the goals of the City of Richmond's broader suite of Council adopted strategies and plans.

The Tourism Master Plan is anticipated to guide development of tourism in Richmond over the next 10 years and will also form the basis of the City's next 5-year Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) application to the Government of BC (2027-2032). It has been shaped by the below Council-approved guiding principles:

- Create a shared vision. Through the process of developing the Tourism Master Plan, extensive community and industry consultation will enable a greater understanding of multiple perspectives, with the aim that the final Plan reflects a shared vision to guide activities to enhance Richmond as a tourist destination.
- **Grow sustainably**. The Tourism Master Plan will guide future growth of the tourism sector in Richmond and will identify opportunities to grow the visitor economy sustainably over the long-term, building resilience to address shorter-term impacts. The lens of social, cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability will seek to provide long-term opportunities for the greatest breadth of residents and communities possible.
- **Positively impact the community**. In considering future growth of the sector, the Tourism Master Plan will be guided by a focus on approaches and actions that positively impact the broader Richmond community.
- Guide future investments. The Tourism Master Plan will help provide direction for future
  public and private investments related to tourism in Richmond over the longer term. This
  includes guiding future MRDT applications, investments and associated activities
  undertaken by the City and its partners to support growth and development of the tourism
  sector in Richmond.

#### Public and Industry Engagement

As detailed in a report to the General Purposes Committee on July 21, 2025, an extensive public engagement process was undertaken between March and May 2025 to inform the development of the draft Tourism Master Plan. Over 750 individuals, including Richmond residents, visitors and industry partners provided feedback through multiple channels. Input and insights were garnered through an online survey, interviews with leaders and partners in the tourism industry, focus groups representing multiple tourism sub-sectors, and pop-up events in key Richmond locations.

#### **Analysis**

#### Tourism in Richmond 2035: Vision, Goals, and Strategic Initiatives

The draft Tourism Master Plan proposes that Richmond's path over the next 10 years is focused on evolving into a destination of choice to discover and experience, in alignment with the following vision that was developed through the engagement process:

Richmond is a dynamic Pacific gateway and a destination to be discovered.

We proudly share Richmond's blend of cultures and cuisines, the mix of urban, cultivated, and natural landscapes, and our rhythm of coastal life across time.

This long-term vision is supported by three goals and associated strategic initiatives that are designed to support the development of Richmond's visitor economy in a way that addresses strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges and is aligned with the guiding principles and community feedback. Identifying opportunities that generate positive social, cultural, economic and environmental impact is at the center of these goal and strategic initiatives, which are listed below. The complete draft Tourism Master Plan is provided in Attachment 1.

#### **Goal 1: Enhance Connectivity and Accessibility**

#### **Goal Statement:**

Create a seamlessly connected destination that prioritizes multi-modal, accessible and sustainable transportation options enhanced through technology and barrier-free access to attractions and experiences for visitors and residents.

- Strategic Initiative 1: Build a Smart and Seamless Mobility Ecosystem
  - Purpose: Transform Richmond's transportation ecosystem through technologyenabled, sustainable, accessible, and interconnected mobility solutions for both visitors and residents.
- Strategic Initiative 2: Advance Accessibility and Connectivity Across Richmond's Tourism Experiences
  - Purpose: Position Richmond as a national leader in accessible tourism by ensuring the city's attractions, experiences, and activities are inclusive, welcoming, and barrier-free enabling all visitors to fully enjoy Richmond's cultural, culinary, and recreational offerings.

#### **Goal 2: Elevate and Diversify Visitor Experiences**

#### **Goal Statement:**

Develop Richmond into a vibrant year-round tourism hub, providing a wide array of immersive activities that encourage extended visitation and create community pride.

- Strategic Initiative 1: Cultivate Signature Year-Round Experiences
  - Purpose: Transform Richmond into a year-round destination through a calendar of iconic events and experiences that celebrate heritage, culture, food, nature and community.
- Strategic Initiative 2: Showcase Sport, Culinary and Agritourism Leadership
  - Purpose: Leverage Richmond's identity and established programs to anchor its tourism brand, create new experiences and expand its influence as a hub and gathering place for leaders in sport, culinary and agricultural tourism.
- Strategic Initiative 3: Enhance Tourism Offerings
  - Purpose: Broaden Richmond's appeal by enhancing a range of authentic local experiences in order to develop new visitor markets and extend length of stay.

#### Goal 3: Advance Tourism Infrastructure Development

#### **Goal Statement:**

Encourage the development of top-tier tourism infrastructure, gathering spaces and landmark attractions that position Richmond as a vibrant, must-visit destination in every season.

### • Strategic Initiative 1: Explore Opportunities for a Multi-Purpose Conference and Event Venue

 Purpose: Advance planning toward a multi-purpose conference and event venue that anchors Richmond's event economy and showcases the city as a premier destination for conferences, meetings and events that are aligned with Richmond's key visitor segments and growth opportunities.

#### • Strategic Initiative 2: Foster Destination-Defining Infrastructure and Investment

- Purpose: Encourage and guide strategic tourism infrastructure development that enhances Richmond's competitiveness and visitor experience.

#### Strategic Initiative 3: Leverage Public Spaces and Placemaking

- Purpose: Leverage Richmond's waterfronts, parks, and open spaces to celebrate its culture, landscapes, and community spirit.

The above goals and strategic initiatives are the core of the draft Tourism Master Plan, and a separate action plan will be developed to guide future implementation by Tourism Richmond, the City, the Richmond Hotel Association, and other industry and community partners.

The 10-year horizon for the Tourism Master Plan allows for the flexibility to bring forward new projects and initiatives for consideration as these are developed within this framework.

#### Public Engagement on Draft Tourism Master Plan

If the draft Tourism Master Plan is endorsed by Council for community consultation, the following additional engagement activities, led by Tourism Richmond and with support from the City, would occur in early 2026.

- The draft Tourism Master Plan would be posted on the project page of Tourism Richmond's website as well as on the City's Let's Talk Richmond platform (letstalkrichmond.ca).
- Tourism Richmond and the City would use social media, e-newsletters and emails to past
  focus group and engagement session participants to direct the public and interest holders
  to review and provide feedback on the draft plan.
- A survey would be developed and administered via Let's Talk Richmond to receive feedback on the draft plan and key elements including the vision, goals, and strategic initiatives.
- Interviews would be conducted with key partners that may be involved in implementing initiatives within the plan.

- A virtual 2-hour townhall meeting, open to the public, would be held to present and receive feedback on the draft plan.
- A facilitated workshop would be held with the project Steering Committee, Tourism Richmond Board of Directors and Richmond Hotel Association members.

Feedback obtained through these engagement activities will be used to refine the Tourism Master Plan, which would be brought forward to the Tourism Richmond Board of Directors, Richmond Hotel Association Board of Directors, and City Council for consideration and approval in Q1 2026.

#### Related City Initiatives

The following City initiatives are underway or planned that relate to the development of the Tourism Master Plan:

#### 1. Sport Hosting Strategy Development

Sport hosting was identified as a continued priority through the Tourism Master Plan engagement process. This is reflected under Strategic Initiative 2 where the key focus areas include updating and implementing Richmond's Sport Hosting Strategy to ensure optimized facility use and support for a wide range of sport-focused events and activities that create lasting economic and community benefits.

A review of the Council-approved Richmond Sport Hosting Strategy 2016-2020 is underway. Research and community consultation will be undertaken in late 2025 and early 2026 to inform this review, and it is anticipated that an updated Sport Hosting Strategy will be presented to Council for consideration in Spring 2026.

#### 2. MRDT Renewal

The City's application to the Government of BC to renew the MRDT in order to secure continued funding to support Richmond's tourism service delivery for the period from July 2027 to June 2032, is due by September 30, 2026.

Staff will prepare a report to Council in Q1 2026 to initiate the MRDT renewal process and outline key required activities including developing a new five-year Strategic Tourism Business Plan, adopting an MRDT imposition bylaw and obtaining the required majority support from the accommodation sector. The Tourism Master Plan will provide important strategic direction for these activities.

#### **Financial Impact**

None.

#### Conclusion

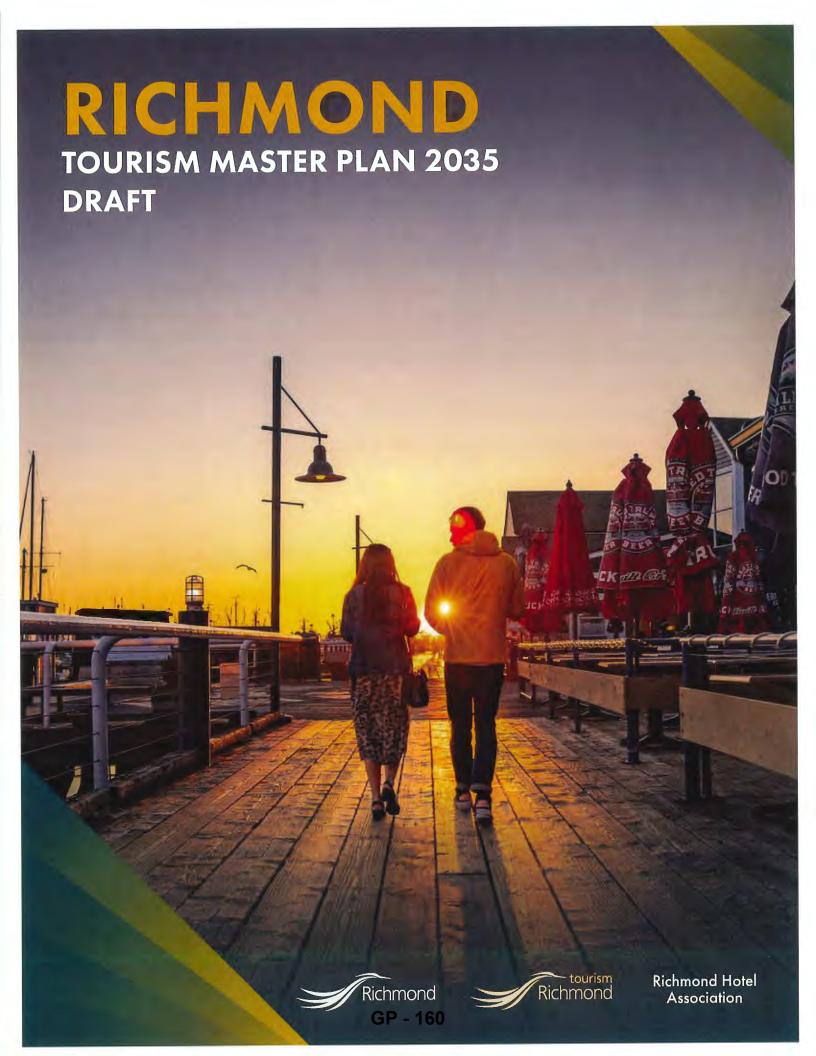
The draft Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 provides a community-informed framework to guide tourism sector development in Richmond over the next decade. Pending Council endorsement, the project team will undertake additional public and industry engagement to refine the plan and its key goals and strategic initiatives. The final Tourism Master Plan and associated action plan will be brought forward in Q1 2026 for Council's consideration, aligned with the upcoming MRDT renewal process. Together, these efforts will position Richmond to enhance its visitor economy while delivering meaningful and lasting community benefits.

Jill M. Huren

Manager, Economic Development

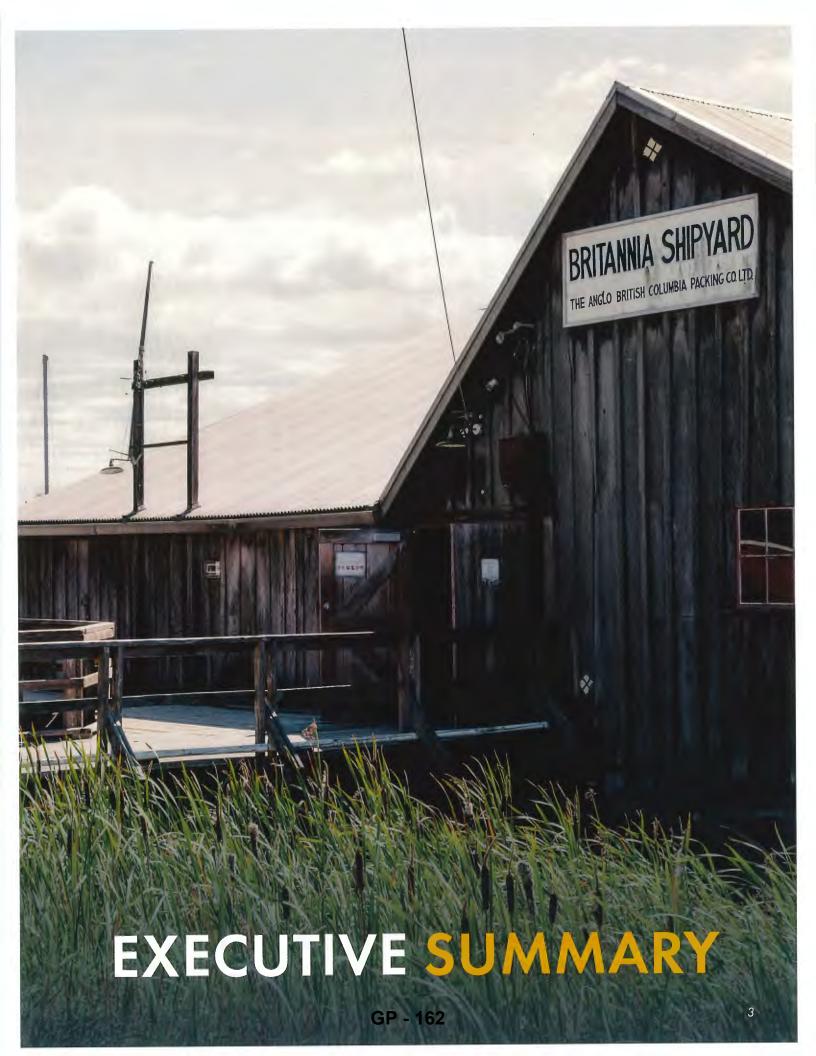
(604-247-4682)

Att. 1: Draft Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035



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The Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 sets the stage for Richmond's continued evolution as a dynamic Pacific gateway and a must-visit destination. Developed through wide-spread consultation with residents, industry partners, and interest holders, the plan's shared vision and collaborative strategies guide sustainable growth, positive community impacts, and future investments.

The plan's foundation rests on contributions from more than 750 residents and partners, whose feedback was gathered through surveys, interviews, focus groups, workshops, popup events, and digital platforms. Community input elevated priorities such as showcasing Richmond's reputation for culinary excellence, celebrating its multicultural identity, leveraging its gateway status, exploring the potential for nature-based agritourism, and building on a strong foundation of sport hosting. It also highlighted the importance of affordability, accessibility, infrastructure, transportation, and sustainability to the community and the resulting impacts on the tourism industry. Respondents to the engagement strongly emphasized the desire for new experiences, improved connectivity, and deeper integration of multicultural tourism offerings.

The plan truly reflects local aspirations for Richmond to be a must-visit destination by 2035, celebrated for its cultural richness, vibrant community life and connectivity.

# Tourism in Richmond 2035: Destination Vision

Richmond is a dynamic Pacific gateway and a destination to be discovered.

We proudly share Richmond's blend of cultures and cuisines; the mix of urban, cultivated and natural landscapes; and our rhythm of coastal life across time.

The plan proposes three strategic goals to realize this vision by 2035:

#### 1. Enhance Connectivity and Accessibility

Create a seamlessly connected destination that prioritizes multi-modal, accessible and sustainable transportation options enhanced through technology and barrier-free access to attractions and experiences for visitors and residents of all ages and abilities.

#### 2. Elevate and Diversify Visitor Experiences

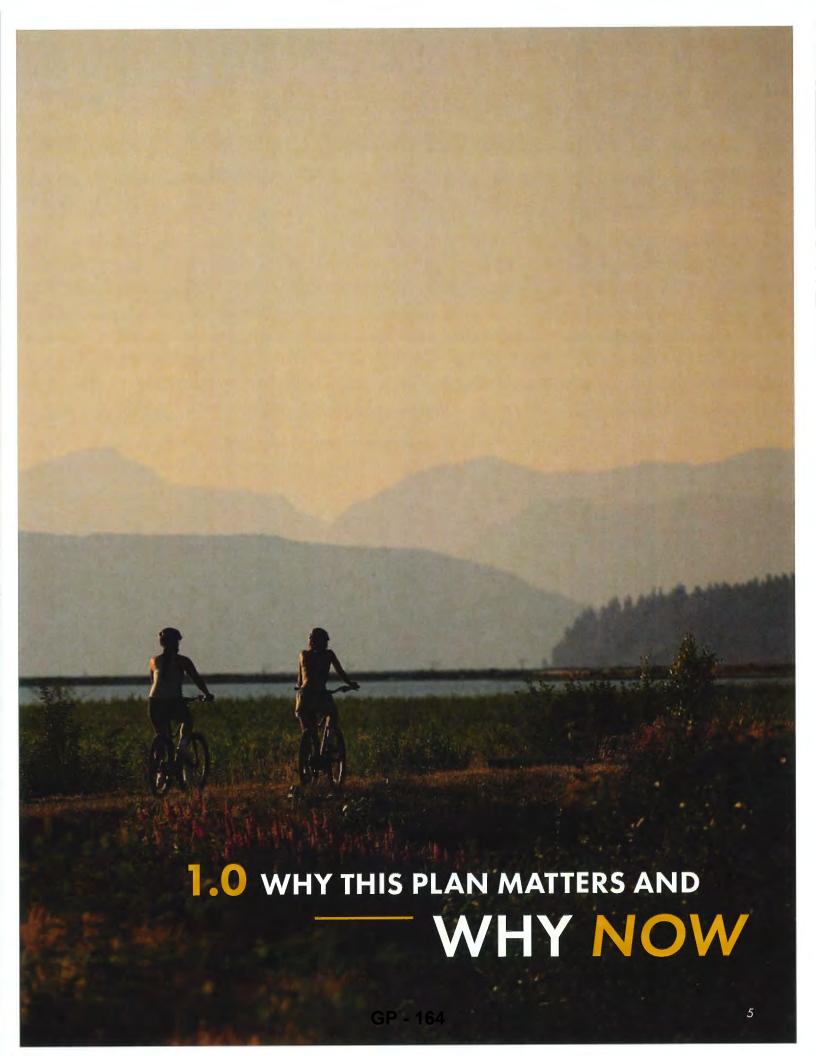
Develop Richmond into a vibrant year-round tourism hub, providing a wide array of immersive activities that encourage extended visitation and create community pride.

#### 3. Advance Tourism Infrastructure Development

Encourage the development of top-tier tourism infrastructure, gathering spaces and landmark attractions that position Richmond as a vibrant, must-visit destination in every season.

The Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 sets a confident course for long-term, sustainable, and inclusive growth, ensuring the city's tourism sector is responsive to community needs while being resilient. Success will be driven by ongoing collaboration between the City and industry and progress will be monitored to ensure the benefits of tourism are widely shared and aligned with Richmond's evolving aspirations.





Richmond is a city defined by exceptional quality of life, premium amenities, and cultural experiences that reflect its unique cultural heritage, diversity, and deep connection to the natural environment.

Once seen as being in Vancouver's shadow, Richmond has emerged as a place with a compelling story of connection, diversity, and opportunity. Visitors are drawn to the deep cultural heritage and charm of Steveston Village, the thrill of whale watching, the vibrancy of festivals, sport, and business events, the city's unique blend of nature and urban life, the energy of shopping districts, and the richness of local cuisine.

The development of Richmond's Tourism Master Plan comes at a pivotal moment. Past investments and partnerships have created the conditions for developing a resilient, well-prepared sector through a comprehensive plan. Tourism partners have an opportunity to build on Richmond's momentum, past strategic efforts, and align around a shared vision and a long-term direction.

Many communities - including some mentioned in this plan - are actively and aggressively implementing strategies to stand out as destinations of choice. Richmond should look forward and prepare to face these growing competitive challenges.

Richmond is a place where tourism helps fuel prosperity, celebrates cultural diversity, and strengthens community life. Tourism acts as both an economic driver and a community builder.

By guiding sustainable growth and targeted investment, developing this 10-year Tourism Master Plan right now will align with other City of Richmond future-focused plans and strategies; and will ensure that in the long-term Richmond enhances its global reputation as a place to visit while contributing to a vibrant, resilient, and connected community



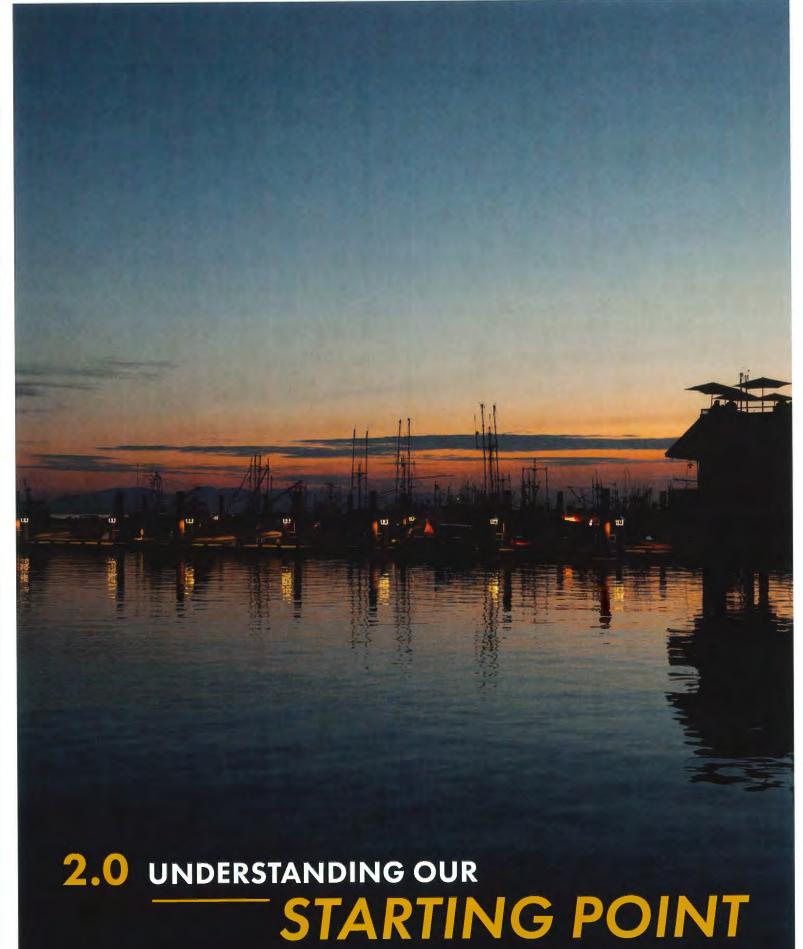
#### 1.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Four guiding principles were established as the foundation for developing the Tourism Master Plan, with each principle deeply integrated into the research, industry engagement, and creation of the strategic framework.

- Create a shared vision. Through the process
  of developing the Tourism Master Plan, extensive
  community and industry consultation will enable a
  greater understanding of multiple perspectives with the
  aim that the final Plan reflects a shared vision to guide
  activities to enhance Richmond as a tourist destination
- Grow sustainably. The Tourism Master Plan will guide future growth of the tourism sector in Richmond and will identify opportunities to grow the visitor economy sustainably over the long-term, building resilience to address shorter-term impacts. The lens of social, cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability will seek to provide long-term opportunities for the greatest breadth of residents and communities possible.
- Positively impact the community. In considering
  future growth of the sector, the Tourism Master Plan will
  be guided by a focus on approaches and actions that
  positively impact the broader Richmond community.
- Guide future investments. The Tourism Master Plan will help provide direction for future public and private investments related to tourism in Richmond over the longer term. This includes guiding future MRDT applications, investments, and associated activities undertaken by the City and its partners to support growth and development of the tourism sector in Richmond.

These guiding principles shaped every stage of the Tourism Master Plan's development through comprehensive consultations with community members and industry, resulting in a vision that positions Richmond for inclusive, resilient, and sustainable tourism growth that will foster positive outcomes for the broader community.



A defining advantage for Richmond is the deep collaboration among key partners — the City of Richmond, Tourism Richmond, the Richmond Hotel Association, and the broader tourism industry. Together, they share a unified purpose of developing and promoting Richmond as a vibrant, welcoming, and world-class destination.

This strong partnership has been a demonstrated success. Over the past several years, Tourism Richmond's destination marketing initiatives — supported through the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) program and the collaborative investment of local partners — have showcased the city's unique character and culture, and culinary richness on a global stage.

Flagship initiatives such as the world-famous Dumpling
Trail, Pacific Authentic Richmond BC brand campaign, the
Steveston Spot Prawn and Seafood Celebration, inception
of the BC Bird Watching Trail, promotion of Richmond's
rich heritage assets, sport tourism that creates community
and leaves a strong legacy, business events attraction,
seasonal culinary promotions, creation of alternate

community transportation options such as the Discovery Shuttle, and much more have all been successful because of this coordinated approach.

Each initiative has leveraged the strengths of the partners:
Tourism Richmond's marketing expertise and commitment to visitation, the Richmond Hotel Association's objective of driving positive economic impact, and the City's alignment with community development goals. This partnership model not only amplifies Richmond's brand but also ensures that marketing investments deliver shared benefits — enhancing local pride, supporting the visitor economy, and reinforcing Richmond's position as a must-visit destination in British Columbia.

The strong collaboration among the partners creates momentum for effectively implementing strategies that will elevate and evolve Richmond's standing as a place to visit. These destination enhancement strategies are the primary focus of the Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035.









#### 2.1 STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, THREATS (SWOT)

A comprehensive SWOT analysis was undertaken to assess the city's current tourism landscape. This evaluation examines Richmond's existing attractions and supporting infrastructure; alongside the challenges and opportunities that will shape future growth. The analysis provides an evidence-based understanding of Richmond's strengths as a gateway destination, its gaps, and the external forces influencing its competitiveness.

#### Strengths

- · Gateway Location & Accessibility
  - Home to Vancouver International Airport (YVR), one of North America's leading airports, positioning Richmond as an international gateway and convenient stopover destination.
  - Strong regional and international connectivity via Canada Line rapid transit, major highways, proximity to the US border, and Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal.
- . Distinctive Attractions
  - Steveston Village serves as the city's premier tourism anchor, blending heritage, arts, and waterfront charm
  - A diverse range of complementary attractions including the Richmond Olympic Oval, Night Market, McArthurGlen Designer Outlet, River Rock Casino, and wineries.
- Authentic Culinary Scene
  - Renowned as a culinary destination, particularly for its exceptional and diverse Asian cuisine, which attracts both local and international food travellers.
- Hotels
  - Richmond hosts twenty-five hotels and approximately 5,000 rooms, representing 19% of Metropolitan
     Vancouver's hotel room stock. The city can offer both capacity and diversity of lodging options for leisure travellers, sport events, and business travel.
- Outdoor and Active Offerings
  - Richmond has an extensive network of trails, parks, dykes, and cycling paths (345 km) support sustainable and healthy tourism experiences.

- Cultural and Heritage Attractions
  - Richmond boasts two National Historic Sites (Britannia Shipyards and Gulf of Georgia Cannery); and an excellent network of additional cultural experiences.
- \* Significant Economic Impact
  - Visitor economy generates \$3.2B in direct visitor spending and \$4.5B in total economic impact, supporting 18,700+ jobs.

#### Weaknesses

- Limited Demand Generating Attractions
  - While Richmond has strong experience enhancers, there is a shortage of large-scale, signature attractions or must-see icons that independently draw overnight visitors (demand-generating attractions).
- Seasonal Fluctuations
  - Hotel performance and visitation are seasonal, with some demand dips in winter months resulting in a dependence on summer travel peaks.
- Connectivity Gaps
  - Certain neighbourhoods and tourism zones lack seamless connectivity by transit or pedestrian infrastructure, limiting visitor mobility and dispersal.
- Perception as a Gateway Only vs. a Destination that Stands on its Own Merits
  - Many visitors view Richmond primarily as an airport or layover city rather than a full tourism destination for multi-day stays.
- Event and Meeting Space Constraints
  - Current multi-purpose event space is limited in its capacity to host conferences and events.



#### **Opportunities**

- Development of New Demand Generators
  - Invest in gathering spaces, landmark attractions or immersive experiences that anchor Richmond's tourism identity (e.g., cultural or waterfront precincts, conference and event venues, or signature festivals).
  - New attractions also could convert Richmond's day trippers (whether from Metro Vancouver or those visiting and staying in Vancouver) to overnighters.
- Regenerative Tourism & Community Integration
  - Build on regenerative tourism principles to enhance local quality of life, sustainability, and authentic visitor engagement.
- Enhanced Connectivity Initiatives
  - Expand programs like the Discovery Shuttle, Steveston Bike Valet, and Community Wayfinding Strategy, and integrate with active transportation routes to strengthen movement between attractions and amenities.
- Culinary Tourism Expansion
  - Build on already established food trails, create cooking tours, dining districts or culinary events that leverage Richmond's globally recognized food scene.
- Agri-tourism
  - Diverse farm-based experiences, seasonal agricultural-themed events, and farmers markets offer the chance to attract visitors seeking authentic, local adventures by highlighting a key asset of Richmond.
- Leveraging Technology & Data
  - Utilize the latest digital tools, AI-driven visitor intelligence, and smart mobility solutions to improve trip planning, visitor flow, and sustainability outcomes.

- Destination Development for Shoulder Seasons
  - Design targeted experiences and events to balance visitation across all seasons, reducing reliance on summer peaks.
  - Leverage current infrastructure to attract more events aligning with Richmond's sports assets and Sport Hosting Strategy.

#### **Threats**

- Competitive Regional Landscape
  - In addition to destinations further afield, Richmond faces strong competition from nearby Vancouver,
     Burnaby, and other Metro destinations with iconic attractions, venues, and wider marketing reach.
- Transportation and Infrastructure Strain
  - Increased visitation could put pressure on roads, parking, and transit capacity, particularly around
     Steveston and waterfront areas – resulting in community and resident backlash.
- Economic Uncertainty
  - Global or national economic downturns, trade disputes, exchange rate fluctuations, or airline disruptions could impact travel demand.
- Environmental Risks
  - Sea level rise, flooding, and extreme weather events pose long-term risks to waterfront infrastructure and outdoor recreation areas.
- \* Labour and Housing Constraints
  - Ongoing labour shortages and housing affordability issues may affect tourism workforce sustainability.

#### 2.2 MARKET PROFILE

According to the latest visitor data from Environics,
Richmond's largest share of visitors is from Canada particularly BC and Alberta - and the United States,
notably Washington and California. Outside North
America, Richmond attracts the most international visitors
from mainland China and Hong Kong, South Korea,
Mexico, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

Richmond has three key market segments: Leisure, Business Events, and Sport Tourism:

#### 2.2.1 Leisure

Leisure visitors to Richmond are seeking meaningful, authentic, and rich cultural experiences. They are curious explorers who go beyond the well-known areas to engage deeply with the places they visit, appreciating local foods, stories, traditions, and communities.

#### 2.2.2 Business Events

Business travellers are drawn by Richmond's strategic location as the home of Vancouver International Airport, modern accommodation, excellent meeting facilities, and convenient transit connections. Conference and corporate meeting organizers are often drawn to Richmond for sector-specific reasons, such as the city's reputation in agrifoods and aviation.

#### 2.2.3 Sport Tourism

Richmond's location and excellent legacy of hosting sporting competitions and sport-related events (participants and their families, officials, and spectators) make it a top location to optimize sport tourism. This legacy includes community, provincial, national and international competitions and events that drive visitation throughout the year.











#### 2.3 INSIGHTS FROM OTHER DESTINATIONS

The cities listed below have been highlighted as relevant examples of collaborative destination development partnerships. As discussed earlier, Richmond has a strong foundation to build from with how well the City and industry have worked together over the years. Now as Richmond looks to further enhance tourism through destination development strategies, it is helpful to review the experience from other communities.

The cities in this section have an excellent dynamic in terms of how industry, government, and residents come together to manage and develop tourism in their community. Key attributes include: a broad base of communication and outreach between businesses, government, and residents; a strategic focus in terms of stimulating and building and managing visitor demand; and ongoing key performance metrics to evaluate performance and success.

The Appendices provides additional information on these destinations' approaches and successes and the positive impact tourism makes on their communities.



#### 2.3.1 Victoria, British Columbia

Why look at Victoria? Victoria has a mature tourism market that has successfully positioned itself as a premier destination through its unique heritage assets, natural beauty, and vibrant visitor experiences while placing a strong focus on sustainable development principles. The relevance to Richmond is multifaceted, particularly the coastal positioning and that both destinations serve as gateways: Victoria is a gateway to Vancouver Island and Pacific Ocean experiences.



#### 2.3.2 Surrey, British Columbia

Why look at Surrey? Like Richmond, Surrey has significant cultural diversity, strategic geographic positioning within Metro Vancouver, sport hosting, and unique culinary offerings. Surrey is working hard to establish a distinct identity from Vancouver's strong tourism presence.



#### 2.3.3 Mississauga, Ontario

Why look at Mississauga? Mississauga's relevance to Richmond lies in their similar positioning as home to international airports with diverse, multicultural municipalities adjacent to major tourism draws (Toronto and Vancouver). Mississauga is planning to leverage this position by investing in a multi-purpose hub for the arts, culture, tourism, business and events.



#### 2.3.4 Seattle, Washington

Why look at Seattle? Seattle serves as an economic and cultural hub of the Pacific Northwest region, focusing on sustainable tourism practices, diverse cultural offerings, and iconic attractions.

Seattle Southside (SeaTac, Tukwila and Des Moines) offers a mix of international cuisine, family-friendly attractions, scenic waterfronts, and easy access to SEATAC Airport. Tourism partners collaborate to build bundled destination experiences and use "micro adventures to appeal to both residents and visitors. Sport bodies (e.g. Starfire Sports Complex with 54 acres of soccer facilities) and business meeting industry groups also partner to leverage proximity to the airport, transport infrastructure, and a diverse lodging supply to generate visitation.



#### 2.3.5 Brooklyn, New York

Why look at Brooklyn? Brooklyn has carved out a distinct identity from Manhattan by inviting visitors to "Brooklyn Like a New Yorker," emphasizing lived-in neighborhoods, independent businesses, and community arts rather than iconic, high-density tourist districts.

The borough's draw combines Dumbo's skyline-facing waterfront, robust cultural institutions, and culinary tours rooted in long-standing immigrant communities, offering a complementary, less commercialized urban experience to Manhattan's marquee attractions.

#### 2.4 TOURISM INDUSTRY TRENDS

This Tourism Master Plan draws on international and local research, insights from other communities, and emerging tourism trends, all of which inform Richmond's approach. These also have a bearing on existing and potential market demand, which in turn shape the strategies for building and improving what is needed to attract visitors. They are relevant in terms of the means to connect with potential visitors and groups, the types of experiences sought out by visitors to a destination, and the need for alignment with the qualities and values that are also important to residents.

#### 2.4.1 Global Travel Trends

- Strong Growth: The industry's resilience and growth (especially in relation to current and previous shocks such as the global pandemic and climate change) is a testament to the global demand for travel experiences and the importance of tourism to the world economy.<sup>1</sup>
- Focus on Experiences: Travellers increasingly value meaningful experiences, personal growth, and cultural connection over traditional sightseeing.<sup>2</sup> Wellness pursuits and engaging in purposeful outdoor activities are becoming increasingly popular.
- Travel friendly tech: 80% of Millennials and Gen
  Z surveyed like the fast convenience of using travel
  planning apps or social media to help them plan their
  travel journey.<sup>3</sup>

- Sustainability: Eco-conscious travellers seek destinations that are environmentally responsible. Travellers are drawn to destinations that protect the environment and support local communities.<sup>4</sup>
- JOMO (Joy of Missing Out): In contrast to the fear of missing out (FOMO), there is increasing interest in JOMO travel. This trend focuses on disconnecting from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and embracing relaxation in environments where the visitor can unwind and recharge without the pressure of constant connectivity or social media updates.<sup>5</sup>
- Detour Destinations: These are lesser-known locations
  that offer unique experiences away from overcrowded
  tourist hotspots. Travellers are increasingly seeking
  authentic, less-explored places that provide a fresh
  perspective on popular regions. Big Sur might be a
  detour for San Francisco, Cobourg for Toronto, and
  Green Bay for Chicago.



80%

of Millennials and Gen Z like the fast convenience of using travel planning apps or social media to help plan their travel journey

- 1 Travel & Tourism Economic Impact Research (EIR)
- <sup>2</sup> Travel Hospitality Industry Outlook
- <sup>3</sup> Global Travel Trends
- <sup>4</sup> 10 Sustainable Travel Trends Driving The Future of Tourism
- <sup>5</sup> 2025 Travel Trends: What's Shaping The Future Of Travel In The New Year Travel Noire



# 2.4.2 Trends in Business Travel and Meetings

- Diverse Destinations: Demand is growing for secondary cities and unique venues beyond traditional hubs.<sup>6</sup>
- Rise of AI: Advanced artificial intelligence systems increasingly support business travellers by autonomously handling complex travel tasks, providing personalized experiences that enhance convenience and efficiency.<sup>7</sup>
- Bleisure Travel Growth: The blending of business and leisure travel is more popular, especially among younger professionals. This trend allows employees to extend their business trips for leisure activities, maximizing their time away and enhancing overall travel satisfaction.<sup>8</sup>
- Sustainability Focus: There is a growing emphasis
  on sustainable travel options, with travellers opting
  for carbon offset flights. Companies are increasingly
  aware of their environmental impact and are seeking to
  implement sustainable practices in their travel policies.<sup>9</sup>



- <sup>6</sup> Top Trends, Predictions, Meetings and Events 2025
- <sup>7</sup> Business Travel Trends 2025
- <sup>8</sup> 9 Business Travel Trends to Watch in 2025 | Cvent Blog
- 9 2025 Deloitte Corporate Travel Study | Deloitte Insights



#### 2.4.3 Trends in Sport Tourism

- Women's Sports Growth: The growing appeal and engagement in women's sports are driving a shift in sport tourism, with a significant portion of sports fans planning to travel to see women's sports events.<sup>10</sup> Women's sports are experiencing rapid growth, with 2024 global revenue reaching \$1.88 billion. This growth is driven by increased visibility, strategic investments, and a rising number of female fans.<sup>11</sup>
- Sustainability and ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance): Host cities are under increasing pressure to incorporate sustainability in their sports events. This includes green infrastructure, minimizing environmental footprints, and legacy planning to ensure long-term value (e.g., reusing venues, generating return on infrastructure).
- Increased Hosting / Event Costs and Capacity
   Constraints: Increased event costs are putting immense
   pressure on sport organizations at the community,
   provincial and national level. These higher costs are
   coupled with human resource capacity constraints within
   the organizations who are challenged with attracting
   both staff and volunteers to host new events or host/
   grow existing events.

#### 2.4.4 Evolving Priorities for Destinations

The 2025 Destinations International DestinationNEXT
Futures Study (a global research study) highlighted several
trends that are influencing destination development and
management strategies:<sup>12</sup>

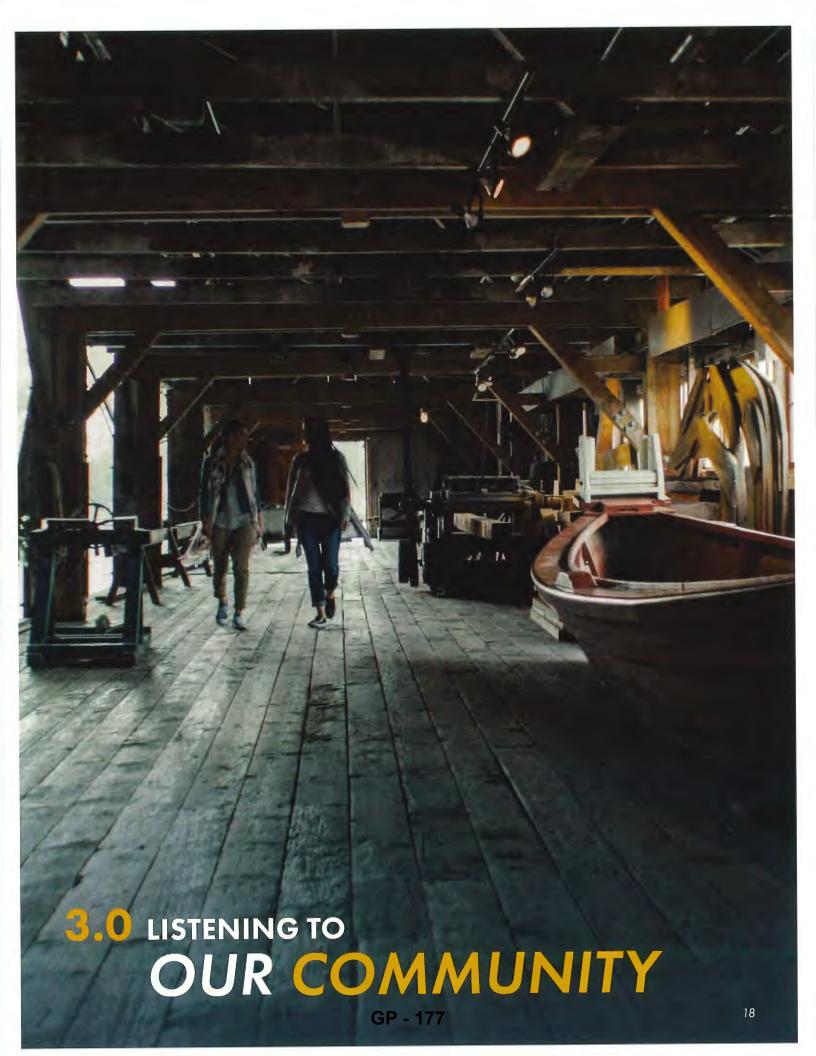
- Generative AI and evolving traveller behaviour is transforming destination marketing, pushing organizations to adopt more authentic, data informed, and personalized strategies.
- The industry is redefining success, with key performance indicators increasingly focused on social impact, including resident sentiment, community benefit, environmental sustainability, and a welcoming environment rather than just visitation or spend.
- Greater industry, community, and government alignment is driving destination competitiveness and brand.
- Communities expect to be more engaged in destination, product and experience development for locals and visitors.
- Destination organizations are increasingly developing strategic alliances across multiple economic sectors to leverage resources.

Additionally, as Canada's population ages and more people live with disabilities – in 2022, 27% of Canadians aged 15 and older reported having at least one disability – highlights the need for more inclusive tourism experiences. With new and evolving legislation, including in the Province of BC, visitor locations will have to adapt to be prepared for changing customer needs.

<sup>10</sup> Women's sports ore booming. Why now? | CBC Sports

<sup>11</sup> Forbes Search

<sup>12</sup> DestinationNext 2025 Futures Study: 2025



Community engagement is a cornerstone of successful tourism master planning because it ensures that tourism development aligns with the values, needs, and aspirations of the people who live in the destination. The engagement process in Richmond was robust and incorporated a diverse number of tactics to elicit feedback and insights from residents and interest holders.

#### 3.1 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

More than 750 residents and partners across Richmond were engaged from January to May 2025, including individuals representing 47 organizations. Outreach included online surveys, personal interviews, pop-up events, and focus groups. The process was complemented by over 1,200 visits to the Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 website.

In addition to direct engagement activities, a dedicated webpage was launched to inform the public about the Tourism Master Plan and its development process. This webpage attracted 1,213 total pageviews, demonstrating significant community interest in the project. Organic searches accounted for 65% of the traffic, indicating that most users found the page by actively seeking information about the Tourism Master Plan.

Targeted email campaigns were utilized to encourage participation and keep the community informed. On April 14, 2025, the campaign titled "Your Voice Matters—Win a Richmond Getaway" achieved an open rate of 56.2% and received 155 clicks. A subsequent campaign on May 8, 2025, "Final Call: Share Your Voice, Win a Staycation," maintained strong engagement with a 52.9% open rate and 112 clicks. These results demonstrate ongoing interest and involvement from the community throughout the engagement period.

The What We Heard Report, which was completed in June 2025, provided an overview of the feedback from respondents during the engagement process. The following topics emerged as important considerations for the development of the Tourism Master Plan.



750
engaged residents
and partners

4.7
organizations

1,200 visits to website





#### 3.1.1 Culinary Destination

Richmond's diverse, high-quality, and authentic food scene, particularly its Asian cuisine, is consistently highlighted as a major strength and differentiator. There is also a desire to increase awareness of the variety of cuisines available, such as highlighting specialized world cuisine and unique culinary opportunities.

#### 3.1.2 Cultural Mosaic

The city's multicultural identity, especially its strong
Asian influence, is a unique asset that sets it apart. Those
engaged identified an opportunity to better integrate and
showcase other cultures, including Indigenous tourism
offerings, in future events, experiences and other initiatives.

## 3.1.3 Gateway to British Columbia and Metro Vancouver

Vancouver International Airport's (YVR) location within Richmond was frequently highlighted as a natural entry point and a convenient base for exploring the wider region. Leveraging layover traffic from YVR was identified as a specific opportunity.





#### 3.1.4 Nature, Outdoors, and Agritourism

The extensive dyke system, trails, parks, waterfront areas, and agricultural lands offer significant appeal. Participants discussed potential in agritourism, such as farm-to-table experiences and showcasing rural landscapes. Birdwatching was also mentioned as a specific niche.

#### 3.1.5 Sport Hosting

Richmond's success with sport hosting has created a notable interest in further developing the market. The landscape within the sport hosting market is shifting and Richmond needs to ensure the sport community in the city is best positioned to leverage its assets, while optimizing the opportunities for economic impact and community legacy.

#### 3.1.6 Value Proposition

Differentiation from Vancouver was a popular topic. Richmond offers more affordable accommodation, dining options, unique attractions including those that are low- or no-cost, and some capacity/availability at different times of the year versus competitors. Discussions were had around how this could be leveraged, particularly for markets like business travel and conferences.

#### 3.1.7 Infrastructure

Suggestions included the need for a multi-purpose conference and event venue, enhancing sport venues and facilities, developing or improving hotels, especially highend or unique options, revitalizing and activating waterfront areas with amenities and recreational access, and investing in place-making efforts in areas like City Centre and Alexandra Road to create vibrant hubs. Improving existing parks and public spaces was also noted.

# 3.1.8 Transportation and Connectivity and Accessibility

Addressing perceived transportation challenges was identified as an important opportunity for development. Suggestions included improving public transit access to key attractions like Steveston and the Oval, expanding accessible shuttle services connecting hotels and attractions, enhancing bike and pedestrian infrastructure and developing rental/sharing systems, exploring water taxi or ferry services along the river, and enhancing signage and accessible transportation options.



#### 3.1.9 Diversifying Experiences & Product

Creating new experiences, attractions, and events was a common topic. This included developing more structured agritourism experiences, integrating Indigenous cultural tourism experiences in collaboration with Indigenous groups/partners, growing interest in the Highway to Heaven and spiritualism in general, expanding eco-tourism and nature-based activities, growing arts and culture offerings, developing a vibrant nightlife, growing signature events, leveraging the potential for business events, and sport tourism.

# 3.1.10 Collaboration and Community Integration

Strengthening meaningful relationships with Indigenous partners supporting their tourism efforts was mentioned throughout engagement as being important. Further developing partnerships between the City of Richmond, Tourism Richmond, the Richmond Hotel Association, YVR, TransLink, and other Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) in the Lower Mainland was also highlighted.



# 3.1.11 Sustainability and Regenerative Tourism Focus

It was frequently mentioned through engagement that Richmond as a destination should continue to incorporate sustainable and regenerative practices into tourism development. Feedback included the importance of promoting low-emissions transportation options, protecting natural ecosystems, and ensuring tourism is a force for good for residents and the environment.

#### 3.1.12 Enhancing Year-Round Appeal

Feedback included the opportunity to strengthen visitation and revenue, particularly during the winter season. Elements to consider should include developing seasonal events, explore weather-independent attractions and exhibits, and develop a Lunar New Year festival and events program.





# 3.2 SUMMARIZING COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Insights gathered from the January-May engagement phase revealed that Richmond's community and partners emphasized the city's culinary excellence, multicultural identity, unique cultural and spiritual experiences, and world-class sport and recreation assets. They highlighted opportunities to differentiate Richmond through infrastructure, connectivity, sustainability, and year-round experiences. Feedback also called for strong collaboration with Indigenous partners, local organizations, and regional stakeholders to ensure tourism growth benefits the community.

The Plan's goals and focus areas respond directly to these priorities, shaping initiatives that enhance experiences, activate assets, and position Richmond as a vibrant, inclusive, and globally recognized destination.

#### 3.3 VISIONING WORKSHOP

A six-hour Visioning Workshop was held on August 12th with more than 50 leaders from the public and private sector. The workshop served as a vital forum for uniting the extensive research with the broad community engagement. This session synthesized detailed research with the feedback summarized in the What We Heard Report.

The main purpose of the workshop was to define Richmond's destination vision and overarching goals, and to explore and shape shared strategic priorities. Combined with the intelligence gathered from the Community Feedback engagement phase, the results from the Visioning Workshop were used to draft, design, and refine the foundation of Richmond's Tourism Master Plan.

# 4.0 DEFINING RICHMOND'S DESTINATION VISION

A destination vision reflects the shared aspirations of both residents and community leaders, shaping a future that honours the unique identity of the community while welcoming visitors. It provides clarity of purpose, positioning the destination for sustainable growth.

Richmond's path to 2035 is focused on evolving into a destination of choice - a place to truly discover and experience. Key themes identified during community engagement include:

- Dynamic Pacific Gateway
   Emphasizing Richmond's strategic location on the Pacific
   Rim and its global connections through Vancouver
   International Airport.
- Destination to Be Discovered
   Cultivating intrigue and positioning Richmond as more than a transit point, establishing the city as a destination which stands on its own merits.
- Blend of Cultures and Cuisines
   Celebrating Richmond's multicultural identity, especially its renowned food scene.
- Urban, Cultivated, and Natural Landscapes
   Showcasing the coexistence of urban life, agricultural lands, and natural environments including coastlines, wildlife viewing, parks, and wetlands.
- Rhythm of Coastal Life Across Time
   Grounding Richmond's identity in its coastal heritage
   brings emotional resonance to the vision.

# RICHMOND'S DESTINATION VISION

Richmond is a dynamic Pacific gateway and a destination to be discovered.

We proudly share Richmond's blend of cultures and cuisines; the mix of urban, cultivated and natural landscapes; and our rhythm of coastal life across time.







#### 4.1 TOURISM IN RICHMOND 2035:

#### - DESTINATION VISION REALIZED

If the above vision is realized, this is what we expect how Richmond will be seen, felt, and experienced:

By 2035, Richmond has established itself as both a gateway and a destination – a must-visit component of any Canadian west coast itinerary. The city has emerged as one of the most connected, culturally rich, and vibrant destinations in Western Canada bringing meaningful and long-lasting positive benefits to its community.

This journey began a decade earlier, with collaborative efforts from both private and public sectors to enhance connectivity, elevate the visitor experience, and advance the development of visitor facilities and amenities.

Richmond has become a city where movement is seamless, sustainable, and inclusive. A smart, accessible and seamless mobility ecosystem now connects visitors and residents through AI powered route planning, real time updates, and demand responsive transport. Residents and visitors engage with the city's comprehensive community wayfinding network. Active travel is second nature, supported by bike and e scooter hubs, signature walking and cycling routes, and barrier free infrastructure that connects people of all ages and abilities to a wide variety of accessible sites and attractions throughout the community, positioning Richmond as a national leader in accessible tourism.

The city has become a year round destination, celebrated for its cultural vibrancy and diversity. Iconic festivals and events, immersive storytelling, and collaborations with artists and cultural groups have created authentic experiences that reflect Richmond's heritage and identity. Culinary and agritourism leadership has anchored Richmond's reputation, with food trails, farm to table programs, and gastronomy summits showcasing innovation and sustainability.

Richmond's tourism offerings are broader and more diverse than ever with an expanded range of visitor experiences and several new visitor attractions that are exciting for both the community and the visitor.

Urban and cultivated landscapes co-exist with wildlife

viewing (bird watching and whale watching), biking and other nature experiences for a unique visitor and community experience.

Sport and business events are seamlessly integrated with leisure itineraries, while thematic journeys invite visitors to explore the city in new ways. Partnerships with Indigenous and cultural groups have expanded authentic, community driven experiences that deepen Richmond's appeal. Emerging within this evolution is a network of reimagined public spaces that bring people together year round. This includes the concept of a landmark multi-purpose conference and event venue designed to host a wide variety of meetings and other events by adapting its layout, technology, and amenities to suit different needs. Strategic infrastructure investments, new hotels, and mixed use developments have strengthened Richmond's competitiveness while ensuring benefits flow to the community.

Guided by the Tourism Master Plan, the tourism sector helps fuel prosperity, celebrates diversity, and enhances quality of life thereby securing Richmond's place as a sustainable, vibrant, resilient, and globally recognized destination that attracts people to not only visit...but also as a place to live and work.





The Strategic Goals and Initiatives outlined in this
Tourism Master Plan directly reflect the voices, ideas,
and aspirations shared through Richmond's community
engagement process. Every goal and action item was
shaped by what residents, businesses, and partners said
they value the most about Richmond — and what they
envision for its future as a destination.

The extensive community engagement helped define the themes that underpin this Plan: connectivity, accessibility, cultural celebration, culinary excellence, sustainability, and shared pride of place. The strategic goals and focus areas respond directly to this feedback — turning community priorities into actionable outcomes that will enhance livability for residents while enriching the visitor experience.

Together, these goals and their corresponding initiatives represent a community-built vision — one where tourism is not developed for the community, but with the community — ensuring that Richmond's growth as a destination continues to strengthen local identity, inclusivity, and pride.

# 5.1 STRATEGIC GOAL AREA 1: ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

This goal responds to community feedback calling for improved transportation between attractions, active mobility options, and barrier-free access for all ages and abilities.

#### **Goal Statement**

Create a seamlessly connected destination that prioritizes multi-modal, barrier-free access and sustainable transportation options enhanced through technology for both visitors and residents.

#### **Current State**

Richmond's transportation system plays a vital role in how residents and visitors experience the city. While the presence of Vancouver International Airport and the Canada Line are major strengths, connectivity between key attractions—such as Steveston Village, the Olympic Oval,

and hotel districts—can be challenging due to dispersed destinations, traffic congestion, and limited transit options. These challenges may be amplified for some people with disabilities who can face additional barriers related to mobility and accessing destinations and attractions.

Public perception often points to parking shortages, particularly in busy areas like Steveston. However, City studies show that parking is available, though residents and businesses express a preference for free, on-street options. Car-free transportation options including the Richmond Discovery Shuttle and Steveston Bike Valet have created new ways to visit key destinations while helping to address congestion and parking challenges.

Richmond's approved Community Wayfinding Strategy sets the stage for signage, navigation, and overall connectivity. The city's reputation for being active, inclusive, and accessible provides a strong foundation to build a more connected, multimodal transportation system. Engagement participants emphasized the need for better movement between attractions, aligning with broader trends toward smart, technology-enabled mobility seen in leading destinations worldwide.

#### **Future State**

Richmond is a seamlessly connected, accessible, and sustainable destination where getting around is intuitive and part of the visitor experience. Smart mobility solutions—supported by technology, active transportation networks,



and barrier-free infrastructure—make travel within the city effortless for residents and visitors alike. Building on this ambition, the following strategic initiatives focus on creating a smart and seamless mobility ecosystem, expanding accessibility across all tourism experiences, promoting full and equal participation for people of all ages and abilities, and encouraging active, sustainable exploration throughout Richmond's diverse neighbourhoods.



# 5.1.1 Strategic Initiative 1: Build a Smart and Seamless Mobility Ecosystem

Purpose: Transform Richmond's transportation ecosystem through technology-enabled, sustainable, and interconnected mobility solutions for both visitors and residents.

#### **Key Focus Areas**

- Support a smart, accessible and seamless new mobility ecosystem, incorporating technology such as Alpowered trip planning, real-time route optimization and smart parking systems.
- Expand on existing visitor-oriented and demandresponsive transport connections linking key visitor zones (e.g., Steveston Village, the Olympic Oval, City Center, shopping districts, and the airport).
- Advance the provision of mobility-as-a-service (MaaS) solutions such as car sharing and e-bike and e-scooter rentals, and other related innovations in urban transportation such as share hubs.
- Provide visitor services along active corridors and encourage activation and animation of these routes through guided tours, pop-up markets or community rides and walks.

 Expand and develop new experiential transportation opportunities, such as an electric trolley, water taxi or pedal-assisted sightseeing vehicle.

#### 5.1.2 Strategic Initiative 2: Advance Accessibility across Richmond's Tourism Experiences

Purpose: Position Richmond as a national leader in accessible tourism by ensuring the city's attractions, experiences, and activities are inclusive, welcoming, and barrier-free — enabling all visitors to fully enjoy Richmond's cultural, culinary, and recreational offerings.

#### **Key Focus Areas**

- Complete the implementation of the Richmond Community Wayfinding Strategy.
- Develop partnerships with accessibility focused organizations to co-design improvements with people with disabilities that benefit both visitors and residents.
- Expand barrier-free access by ensuring attractions, visitor experiences, public spaces, and transportation networks are welcoming and usable for people of all ages, cultures, and abilities.
- Introduce training and certification programs for tourism operators to strengthen accessible service delivery.
- Assess sport facilities, accommodations, and transportation options against national and international standards, and support enhancements to position Richmond as a welcoming, adaptable, inclusive sport destination.



# 5.2 STRATEGIC GOAL AREA 2: ELEVATE AND DIVERSIFY VISITOR EXPERIENCES

This goal reflects residents' enthusiasm for showcasing Richmond's multicultural identity, sport legacy, culinary leadership, and vibrant year-round festivals that bring people together.

#### **Goal Statement**

Develop Richmond into a vibrant year-round tourism hub, providing a wide array of immersive activities that encourage extended visitation and create community pride.

#### **Current State**

Richmond is often a stopover for overnight visitors travelling through North America, but it offers much more than a convenient gateway. The city is renowned for its culinary scene, particularly Asian cuisine, reflecting its multicultural population, and for its arts, cultural experiences, diverse large-scale and community events, and unique offerings such as the Highway to Heaven and immersive heritage attractions.

Visitors also enjoy cycling, nature trails, birdwatching, and whale watching. Richmond is a popular sport destination, leveraging world-class facilities like the Richmond Olympic Oval and local sport fields; while business events, meetings, and conferences continue to attract visitors during the winter and shoulder seasons.



#### **Future State**

Richmond is a vibrant, year-round tourism hub, offering immersive experiences that celebrate its culture, cuisine, heritage, and landscapes. By elevating and expanding on current initiatives, the city showcases its unique offerings such as multi-faith religious and spiritual hubs, agritourism adventures, riverside trails and engaging arts and heritage attractions.

Steveston is an essential place to visit for any heritage enthusiast, while Richmond's Asian restaurant scene draws people from around the world.

Sport tourism leverages world-class facilities to not only attract tournaments, competitions and training camps but also to appeal to a broader market that has a combined passion for sports with the desire to explore new destinations. Festivals, events and business conferences animate the city year-round, and together these visitor experiences foster community pride, generate extended stays and enhance economic impact and community benefit.

This sets the foundation for strategic initiatives to cultivate signature experiences, showcase Richmond's sport, culinary and agritourism leadership, and diversify visitor offerings, reflecting community feedback, highlighting Richmond's unique assets, and supporting sustainable tourism growth.

### 5.2.1 Strategic Initiative 1: Cultivate Signature Year-Round Experiences

Purpose: Transform Richmond into a year-round destination through a calendar of iconic events and experiences that celebrate heritage, culture, food, nature and community.

#### **Key Focus Areas**

- Enhance and further develop cultural celebrations (e.g. Lunar New Year, harvest festivals, night markets) that drive visitation in all seasons and build on Richmond's strengths.
- Develop and/or attract an anchor festival that raises the profile of Richmond and has a national draw.
- Support the development of year-round immersive experiences offered by local artists, cultural groups, and tourism operators highlighting authentic Richmond stories.
- Elevate seasonal nature experiences that celebrate local and regional flora and fauna, e.g. Cherry Blossom Festival, bird migration, Fraser River salmon fishing.

## 5.2.2 Strategic Initiative 2: Showcase Sport, Culinary and Agritourism Leadership

Purpose: Leverage Richmond's identity and established programs to anchor its tourism brand, create new experiences and expand its influence as a hub and gathering place for leaders in sport, culinary and agricultural tourism.

#### **Key Focus Areas**

- Enhance sport tourism opportunities by continuing to leverage Richmond's premier facilities to attract tournaments, competitions, and training camps and create extended-stay opportunities through related events and complementary itineraries.
- Update and implement Richmond's Sport Hosting Strategy to ensure optimized facility use and support a wide range of sport-focused events and activities that create lasting economic and community benefits.
- Engage with sport partners to help them navigate increasing hosting costs by improving efficiencies, developing shared resources, expanding volunteer pipelines, and supporting workforce development across local sport organizations.
- Strengthen Richmond's position as Canada's premier Asian culinary destination through chef collaborations, food trails, celebrated dining districts, and signature dining experiences.
- Develop agritourism circuits, sea-to-table, and farm-totable programs that connect visitors directly with local growers, producers, and markets.



- Introduce culinary education and innovation events, such as food-tech expos or gastronomy summits, to attract global professionals and media.
- Further highlight seafood harvesting seasons through events and festivals, such as the Spot Prawn Festival and Seafood Festival.



## 5.2.3 Strategic Initiative 3: Enhance Tourism Offerings

Purpose: Broaden Richmond's appeal by enhancing a range of authentic local experiences in order to develop new visitor markets and extend length of stay.

#### **Key Focus Areas**

- Develop a network of signature active routes (e.g., themed walking and cycling trails) that encourage active transportation while connecting cultural and culinary districts, lesser-known areas, heritage assets, waterfronts, parks and trails, and other points of interest.
- Complete the restoration of the buildings at Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site and offer a wide range of visitor-focused amenities and programs, including the development of a new First Nations exhibit.
- Expand heritage and multicultural storytelling experiences—interactive exhibits, guided tours, and digital platforms that celebrate Richmond's layered identity.
- Curate thematic visitor journeys (e.g., "Active by Nature,"
   "Taste of Richmond," "Stories of the Sea") that link
   attractions into cohesive experiences.
- Build on established relationships in the Indigenous tourism space – ITBC (Indigenous Tourism BC), artists, cultural groups – to evaluate opportunities for new experience creation.

## 5.3 STRATEGIC GOAL AREA 3: ADVANCE TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

This goal advances ideas shared around the need for new gathering spaces, placemaking initiatives, and facilities that both residents and visitors can enjoy.

#### **Goal Statement**

Encourage the development of top-tier tourism infrastructure, gathering spaces and landmark attractions that position Richmond as a vibrant, must-visit destination in every season.

#### **Current State**

Richmond's sport and event facilities, including the Richmond Olympic Oval, numerous ice surfaces, aquatic facilities, and outdoor sports fields and facilities position the city as a premier destination for tournaments, competitions, and community events. Hotels and accommodations serve airport and regional markets effectively, though occupancy levels during spring and summer can limit availability for large-scale events.

Richmond's public spaces, waterfronts, and island landscapes are points of pride for residents and visitors alike. Existing parks and open areas provide a strong foundation for community engagement, and further placemaking initiatives can enhance accessibility, celebrate Richmond's unique character, and create inviting gathering spaces that draw people year-round.





#### **Future State**

Through targeted tourism infrastructure investments,
Richmond has become a must-visit destination that stands
apart in Metro Vancouver. Support for hotel and attraction
development, alongside new community gathering spaces
has strengthened the city's appeal and boosted visitation.
This includes the potential of a landmark multi-purpose
conference and event venue to further Richmond's ability to
attract national and international meetings and other events.

Guided by a shared destination enhancement lens, planners and developers ensure that public spaces, attractions, and amenities reinforce Richmond's identity. These aligned investments have transformed the city from a gateway into a vibrant, year-round destination, driving longer stays, higher spending, and measurable economic growth.





## 5.3.1 Strategic Initiative 1: Explore Opportunities for a Multi-Purpose Conference and Event Venue

Purpose: Advance planning toward a multi-purpose conference and event venue that anchors Richmond's event economy and showcases the city as a premier destination for conferences, meetings and events that are aligned with Richmond's key visitor segments and growth opportunities.

#### **Key Focus Areas**

- Determine the market demand, competitive
  positioning, economic and tourism benefits, facility
  program requirements, location and site priorities,
  financial feasibility, and partnership, governance and
  management options for a potential landmark multipurpose conference and event venue.
- Foster alignment between venue development, hotel growth, transportation planning and emerging tourism opportunities to maximize economic impact and community benefit.
- Continue to position Richmond as a premier destination for business events, meetings, and conferences by leveraging existing hotels, meeting facilities, and unique attractions.
- Establish long-term partnerships with meeting planners, event coordinators, cultural organizations, and the private sector to augment programming of existing spaces and develop programming for potential new facilities.

## 5.3.2 Strategic Initiative 2: Foster Destination-Defining Infrastructure and Investment

Purpose: Encourage and guide strategic tourism infrastructure development that enhances Richmond's competitiveness and visitor experience.

#### **Key Focus Areas**

- In order to diversify accommodation supply and visitor offerings, form a task force to align private development and investment attraction related to tourism infrastructure with destination goals and community benefit.
- Collaborate with developers to embed a destination enhancement lens in urban planning, ensuring public realm design, signage, and amenities reinforce Richmond's brand and visitor experience.
- Pursue public-private partnerships to catalyze infrastructure growth and ensure financial sustainability for the sector.
- Explore the development of a new destination museum in central Richmond that celebrates Richmond's unique and diverse heritage.

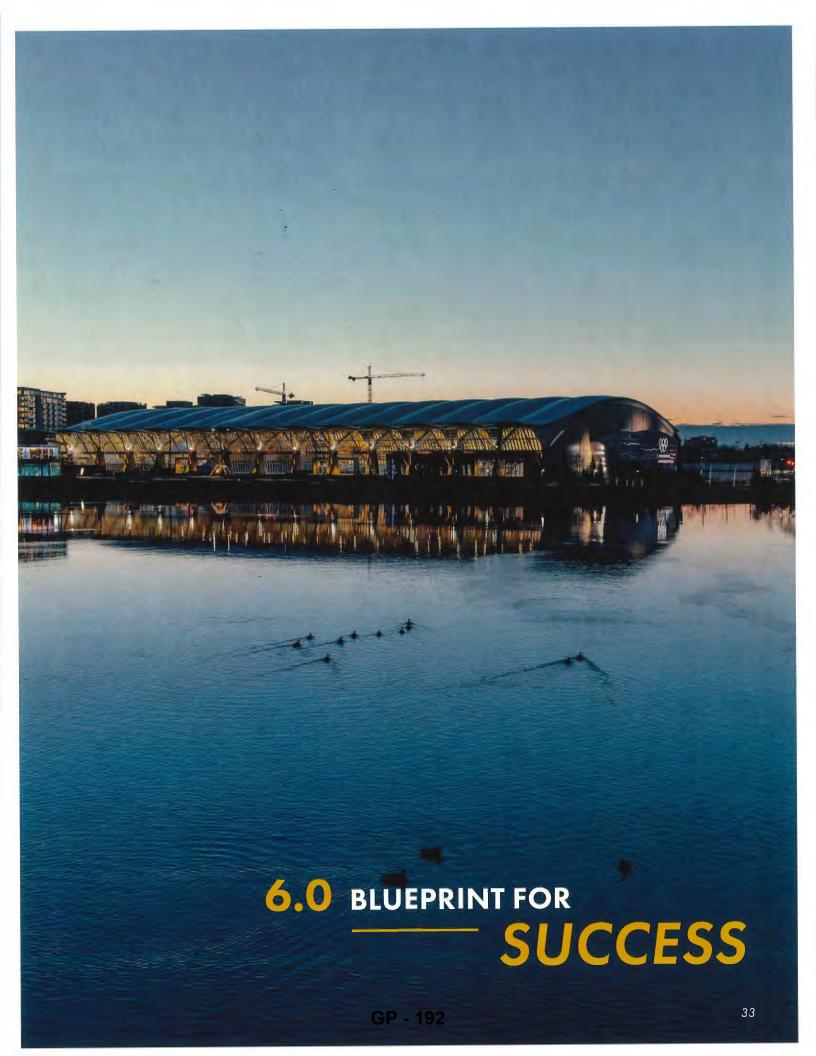
### 5.3.3 Strategic Initiative 3: Leverage Public Spaces and Placemaking

Purpose: Leverage Richmond's waterfronts, parks, and open spaces to celebrate its culture, landscapes, and community spirit.

#### **Key Focus Areas**

- Design and deliver updated public gathering areas and waterfront destinations with programming that offers opportunities for public activation and invite residents and visitors to connect year-round. E.g. event zones, pop-up markets and outdoor performance spaces.
- Expand integration of public art and interpretation elements into new and existing placemaking projects to reflect Richmond's multicultural and maritime heritage.
- Revitalize the Steveston Village streetscape through enhancements to travel lanes, parking, sidewalks, cycling infrastructure, open spaces, street finishings and street furniture.
- Link to a regional trail system, such as Experience the Fraser, that offers cyclists the opportunity for multi-day riding experiences with stopover locations in Richmond.





The path forward for implementation of the Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 is described in the context of a blueprint for success. It begins with a description of the strategic enablers - the policies, systems, partnerships, and resources that serve as the foundational pillars or conditions needed to support future growth. Then key indicators are highlighted – a starting point for monitoring performance and success.

#### 6.1 STRATEGIC ENABLERS

Strategic Enablers are the foundational elements that make it possible to successfully implement the Tourism Master Plan. They represent the systems, partnerships, policies, and resources that are needed to be in place to support the long-term tourism goals for Richmond. Sometimes referred to as foundational pillars or conditions for success, these enablers provide the structure needed to turn strategy into action.



#### City and Industry Collaboration

Ensure continued strong collaboration between Tourism Richmond, City of Richmond, Richmond Hotel Association, local businesses, Destination Canada, Destination British Columbia, industry associations, Indigenous Tourism Association of BC, and other partners and organizations.

As outlined in Section 2, Tourism Richmond's marketing initiatives in collaboration with partners have delivered strong success. Continued investment in marketing is critical to highlight destination enhancements and secure Richmond's position as a destination of choice.

#### **Funding & Resources**

In addition to securing the Municipal and Regional District Tax program for destination marketing and management, explore diversified funding sources (e.g. grants, private investment) to support tourism development initiatives.

#### **Regenerative Tourism & Circular Economy**

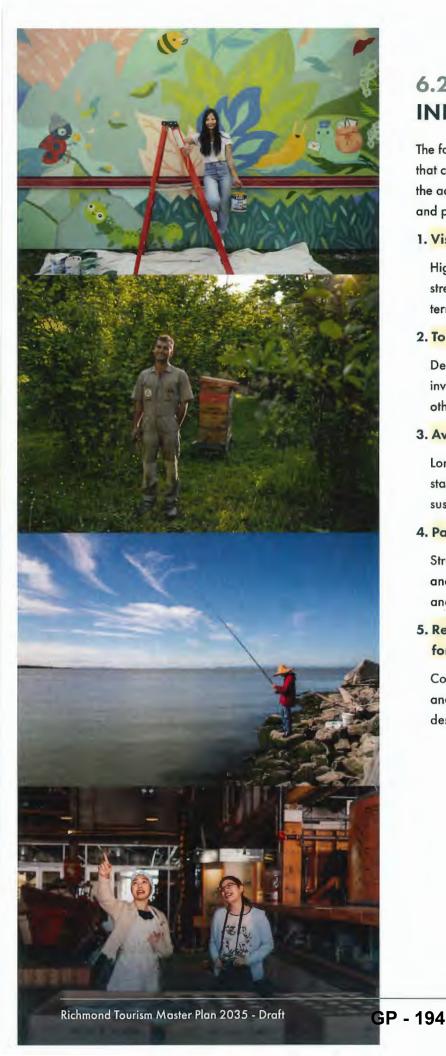
Advance regenerative tourism initiatives, such as the City of Richmond's Circular City Strategy and Tourism Richmond's Regenerative Tourism Plan.

#### **Policy Development**

Collaborate with governments, businesses, and community partners to shape policies that enhance tourism in Richmond.

## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

Work across the tourism industry to embed Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) principles into all programming and ensure all visitors, businesses, workers and residents feel safe and welcomed.



## 6.2 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The following outlines Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that can be used to track the success of this plan. KPIs track the achievement of the destination vision, strategic goals and priority initiatives.

#### 1. Visitor satisfaction

High satisfaction drives positive word-of-mouth, strengthens destination reputation, and supports longterm competitiveness

#### 2. Tourism's overall contribution to GDP

Demonstrates tourism's economic importance, justifies investment, and helps policymakers balance tourism with other sectors

#### 3. Average length of stay and seasonality

Longer stays and balanced seasonality increase revenue stability, reduce strain on infrastructure, and support sustainable growth

#### 4. Partner engagement

Strong engagement builds trust, aligns priorities, and ensures tourism strategies reflect diverse needs and perspectives

### 5. Resident sentiment and community support for tourism

Community buy-in is essential for tourism's legitimacy and sustainability; positive sentiment can enhance destination appeal and resilience

# 7.0 LOOKING AHEAD

The Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 charts an inspiring course for the city's future as a dynamic Pacific gateway and a destination to be discovered. Building on its growing reputation as a place to visit, the plan forges a long-term direction supported by the strong partnership between the City of Richmond, Tourism Richmond, and the Richmond Hotel Association.

The plan has been shaped by a shared community vision, where growth is sustainable, inclusive, and resilient. It is intended to strengthen local wellbeing, celebrate cultural diversity, and advance sustainable tourism goals. The plan is also meant to guide public and private investments to foster innovation, collaboration, and long-term prosperity, ensuring tourism in Richmond thrives as a model of global competitiveness and community pride.

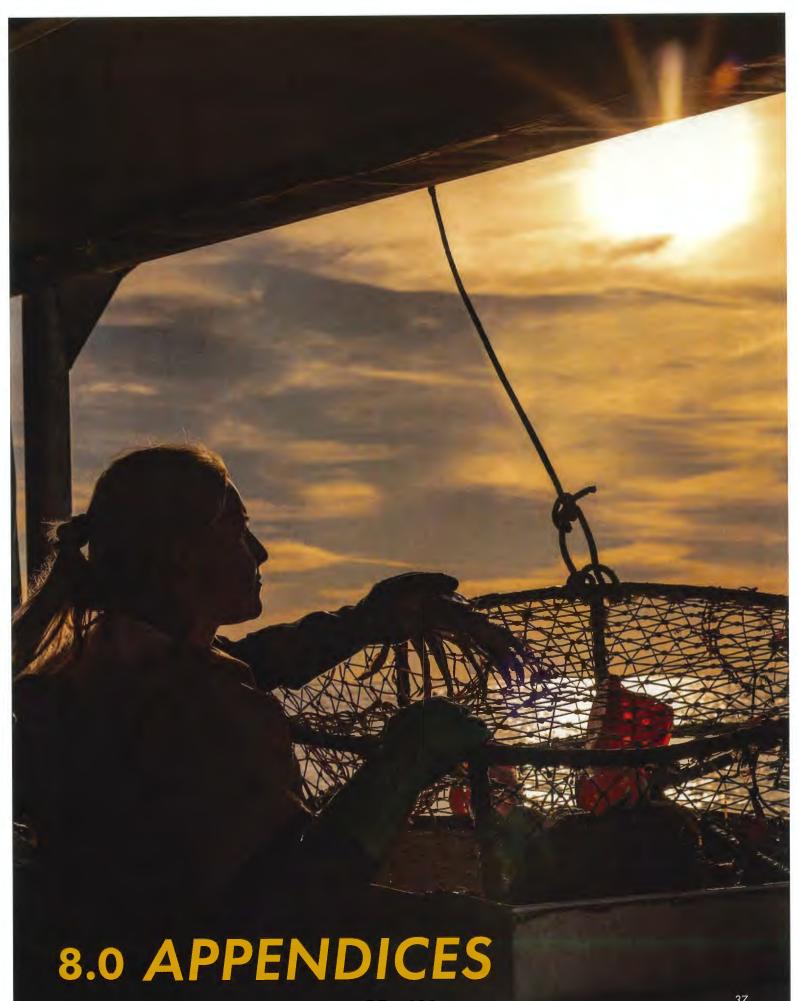
Through the collaborative efforts of the community, local businesses, and government, Richmond has established a strong foundation for a resilient, prosperous, and inclusive tourism sector that honours the city's unique character while welcoming the world. Industry, community and residents share a deep pride in their city and a strong commitment to advancing the plan's vision and goals together.

Equally vital to collaboration is establishing clear outcomes, monitoring progress, and reporting regularly. This will ensure adaptability and continuous improvement in moving the needle for tourism in Richmond.

It is also important to engage the community as the plan evolves. Maintaining ongoing dialogue with residents and businesses will help keep alignment between tourism growth with community values and aspirations.

By taking these steps on the journey to 2035, Richmond will secure its place as both a welcoming entry point and a premier destination, firmly embedded in the fabric of every Canadian west coast itinerary.





#### 8.1 INSIGHTS FROM OTHER DESTINATIONS

#### 8.1.1 Victoria, British Columbia

- Victoria has taken a thoughtful approach to growing tourism by investing in places, programming and experiences that benefit both visitors and residents. The revitalization of landmark areas like the Inner Harbour has created vibrant public spaces that serve as gathering places and visitor hubs. These spaces enhance community life while offering memorable experiences that reflect Victoria's unique character.
- Victoria has also invested in meeting and conference facilities, recognizing the value of business events in supporting year-round visitation and local economic activity.
- To address seasonal patterns in visitation, Victoria focuses on seasonal signature events that draw people during quieter months. These events showcase local culture and creativity while helping support businesses through the year.
- The city's emphasis on neighbourhood character and placemaking has created inviting areas that encourage visitors to explore beyond major attractions. This approach spreads the benefits of tourism across the community and strengthens Victoria's sense of place.
- Victoria also shows leadership in Indigenous tourism development. By working with First Nations and supporting Indigenous-led businesses, the city helps share authentic stories and ensures tourism growth creates meaningful local benefits.

#### 8.1.2 Surrey, British Columbia

- As Surrey prepares to become British Columbia's most populated city by 2030, City staff have tabled an ambitious economic development plan designed to set the stage for expanded infrastructure, new amenities, increased accommodation options, and a diverse range of visitor and resident experiences.
- Surrey has built a strong reputation in sport tourism, hosting provincial, national, and international events while ensuring local residents also benefit from quality facilities.

- Surrey is also working to attract visitors year-round by creating experiences that are enjoyable in every season and not limited by weather.
- Surrey celebrates its diverse cultures through events like the Fusion Festival, which draw visitors and build community pride.

#### 8.1.3 Mississauga, Ontario

- Mississauga has actively been differentiating itself from Toronto through intentional place branding and destination development that sets it apart.
- Mississauga offers authentic multicultural experiences through its food, arts, and year-round festivals that celebrate its global community.
- Mississauga's waterfront along Lake Ontario continues to evolve, creating new spaces for recreation, dining, and entertainment while strengthening its identity as a unique lakeside destination.
- The city is also a leader in sport tourism, hosting major events at the Paramount Fine Foods Centre and maintaining a strong network of recreation facilities that serve both residents and visitors.
- A commitment to sustainability and green spaces is evident in Mississauga's cycling networks, urban forests, and natural heritage preservation, offering visitors a balance of urban energy and outdoor recreation.
- Throughout the year, Mississauga's vibrant events calendar, anchored by Celebration Square and community festivals, creates lively public spaces that showcase the city's culture, creativity, and sense of belonging.

#### 8.1.4 Seattle, Washington

Major development projects include expansion of the Washington State Convention Center, new hotel development, Seattle Central Waterfront redevelopment, and plans to expand Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. These investments demonstrate Seattle's commitment to growing its tourism capacity and improving visitor experiences.

- The Pike-Pine Corridor has emerged as a particularly vibrant tourism hub. This concentration of activity demonstrates the value of developing distinctive districts that serve as focal points for visitor experiences.
- Seattle's blend of waterfront experiences, cultural diversity, and technological innovation creates a distinctive character that attracts both leisure and business travellers.
- Seattle has positioned itself as a leader in sustainable tourism practices, consistently ranking among the most environmentally conscious cities in the United States.
- Seattle Southside (SeaTac, Tukwila and Des Moines) offers a mix of international cuisine, family-friendly attractions, scenic waterfronts, and easy access to SEA Airport. They build bundled destination experiences and use "micro adventures" as a framing device (short, local-scale discovery experiences) that appeal to both residents and visitors.
- Seattle Southside also partners with sports bodies (e.g. Starfire Sports Complex with 54 acres of soccer facilities) and business meeting industry groups to leverage proximity to SEATAC Airport, transport infrastructure, and a diverse lodging supply to generate visitation.

#### 8.1.5 Brooklyn, New York

- The city leads with neighbourhood-first tourism, encouraging visitors to explore distinct districts such as Dumbo and Williamsburg. This approach spreads visitation beyond the core while highlighting walkable waterfronts, parks, and family-friendly amenities.
- Brooklyn celebrates its authentic culinary and cultural identity through tours, markets, and events that showcase independent businesses and immigrant heritage and offer a local, grounded alternative to nearby marquee destinations.
- Significant investment in arts and cultural infrastructure, including institutions like the Brooklyn Museum and Brooklyn Academy of Music, provides year-round cultural depth across multiple neighbourhoods rather than concentrating activity in a single downtown area.
- Brooklyn's brand messaging focuses on authenticity and local connection, inviting visitors to "experience the city like a local" across multiple districts, which explicitly contrasts with the neighboring hub's more iconic appeal.
- Tracking and communication of borough-level performance demonstrates economic impact and shifts in visitor preference, as seen in rising Brooklyn visitation and favorable foot-traffic trends relative to Manhattan.

#### 8.2 ENGAGEMENT PHASE: PROFILE

In total, we engaged with more than 750 residents and partners across Richmond, complemented by over 1,200 visits to the Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 website. During our outreach, individuals representing 47 organizations were engaged through interviews and focus groups. A list of those organizations is included in the What We Heard Report.



In addition to direct engagement activities, we launched a dedicated webpage to inform the public about the Tourism Master Plan and its development process. This webpage attracted 1,213 total pageviews, demonstrating significant community interest in the project. Visitors spent an average of over 35 seconds engaging with the content, and 65% of the traffic was generated through organic searches, indicating that a majority of users found the page by actively seeking information about the Tourism Master Plan.

Tourism Richmond also utilized targeted email campaigns to encourage participation and keep the community

informed. On April 14, 2025, the campaign titled "Your Voice Matters—Win a Richmond Getaway" achieved an open rate of 56.2% and received 155 clicks. A subsequent campaign on May 8, 2025, "Final Call: Share Your Voice, Win a Staycation," maintained strong engagement with a 52.9% open rate and 112 clicks. These results demonstrate ongoing interest and involvement from the community throughout the engagement period.