



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee

Date: February 23, 2026

From: Katie Ferland
Director, Business Services

File: 08-4150-03-06/2025-
Vol 01

Re: Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035

Staff Recommendations

1. That the Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 and Action Plan, as outlined in the report titled, "Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035," dated February 23, 2026, from the Director, Business Services, be approved; and
2. That staff initiate the process to make an application to the Government of British Columbia for the renewal of the 3% Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) for the next five-year period from July 1, 2027-June 30, 2032.

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

Att. (2)

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Arts, Culture & Heritage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Community Social Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Parks Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Recreation & Sport Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Climate and Environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Development Applications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Policy Planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

The Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 (Tourism Master Plan) was developed to create a shared 10-year vision for tourism in Richmond to build on the city's key strengths and align tourism and economic development efforts for the well-being of the community. It is intended as a roadmap for how Richmond can move toward a 2035 destination vision through actions aligned with goals, strategic initiatives and key focus areas. The Tourism Master 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 December 17, 2025, Council was presented with the draft Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 and adopted the following resolution:

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,

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.

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval of the final Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 and associated action plan, both of which incorporate feedback from the most recent public engagement. Council direction is also being sought regarding preparation of a submission to the Government of BC for early implementation of the Tourism Master Plan through the next five-year cycle of the Municipal and Regional District Tax program.

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.

Analysis

Background

The Tourism Master Plan is anticipated to guide development of tourism in Richmond over the next 10 years and 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 designed to align with and advance the goals of the City of Richmond's broader suite of Council-adopted strategies and plans. The development of the plan was 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 Engagement Process

Two phases of public engagement were conducted, first to invite input from residents, visitors, and businesses on the development of the Tourism Master Plan (January – May 2025), and then most recently to receive feedback on the draft Plan (January 2026).

Following Council endorsement of the draft Tourism Master Plan for public engagement in December 2025, staff sought community input. A total of 167 residents, visitors and partners were engaged through an online survey on Let's Talk Richmond, a virtual Town Hall, interviews, and meetings with the Tourism Richmond Board and Richmond Hotel Association Board.

Feedback Received

Overall, feedback received through the multiple engagement channels in the second phase of engagement was positive. There was strong support for the plan's strategic direction with respondents noting alignment with the destination vision, goals, and strategic initiatives.

Richmond residents accounted for 85% of survey respondents, while tourism industry representatives and visitors each comprised 8% (participants could select more than one category). Feedback was largely positive, with 91% of respondents indicating tourism will be an important part of Richmond's economic future. Support for key components of the draft Plan was also high, as 86% of respondents noted that the destination vision resonated with them, and each strategic goal received over 80% agreement. Respondents also felt that the Tourism Master Plan was strongly aligned with its Guiding Principles, particularly "Positively Impact the Community."

Feedback described the draft Plan as clear, credible, and highly usable. Prominent growth opportunity areas emphasized for Richmond were culture and cuisine, sports tourism, and year-round programming and experiences, with Richmond's multicultural and culinary strengths, particularly its Asian dining scene, frequently cited as key differentiators. Some feedback also emphasized the need to ensure broader cultural representation and to clearly define Richmond's unique role within Metro Vancouver.

Transportation management was noted as a concern (15% referenced traffic or parking in high-visitation areas). There was general support for exploring a multi-purpose conference and event venue, along with advice to undertake a feasibility study, confirm demand, and ensure that a potential future facility serves both residents and visitors. Indigenous tourism was identified as an opportunity, with interest in partnership pathways and tangible experiences that reflect local Indigenous history and culture.

Looking ahead, respondents requested more information on implementation and emphasized the importance of potential phasing and timelines. There was support for the development of an action plan. Additional detail on the public engagement process and results can be found in Attachment 1.

Based on the public engagement, a few updates were made to the Tourism Master Plan, with other feedback noted to help guide potential future implementation. An Action Plan was also developed, as previously planned and in alignment with the public engagement feedback.

Overview of Updates

Updates to the Plan itself included the following:

- **2.1 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT).** Highlighted Richmond's 'Highway to Heaven' as a strength under Cultural and Heritage Experiences.
- **5.2 Strategic Goal Area 2: Elevate and Diversify Visitor Experiences.** Feedback on the importance of private-sector investment was incorporated into the future state, which

would include exploring a wide range of year-round private and public sector led festivals and events that contribute to extended stays and economic impact.

- **5.3 Strategic Goal Area 3: Advance Tourism Infrastructure Development.** The importance of waterfront and other infrastructure development, along with a potential multi-purpose conference and event venue, was more strongly reflected.

Development of Action Plan

The Action Plan developed to guide implementation of the Tourism Master Plan maps the Key Focus Areas of each Strategic Goal to a phased implementation timeline. It is anticipated that short-term actions would take place over a 1-3 year horizon, with medium-term referring to 4-6 years, and long-term referring to 7-10 years respectively. Example actions have been included under some Key Focus Areas to demonstrate the types of initiatives that are already underway or approved, and which form the foundation for the work ahead.

Sport tourism was identified as a key and continuing priority during both phases of public engagement, as noted under Strategic Initiative 2: Showcase Sport, Culinary and Agritourism Leadership, as part of Goal 2: Elevate and Diversify Visitor Experiences. As noted in the Action Plan, work is underway on an update to 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. This updated Sport Hosting Strategy, once developed, will be presented to Council for approval.

As the Tourism Master Plan was developed in partnership with Tourism Richmond and the Richmond Hotel Association and has benefited from extensive industry and community organization input, it is also anticipated that the actions taken under the umbrella of the Plan would be led by multiple public, private, and non-profit organizations and through partnerships. Key initiatives in which it would be proposed that the City take a leadership role or be a partner would be brought to Council separately for consideration.

MRDT Renewal Application Process

If approved, the Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 would guide the development of the 5-Year Strategic Business Plan (2027-2032) to be submitted to the Government of BC as part of the renewal of the Municipal and Regional District Tax program, which is a critical source of funding for tourism development and marketing in Richmond.

Key components of the MRDT Application package including the 5-Year Strategic Tourism Business Plan and MRDT Imposition Bylaw will be brought forward to Council for approval, and appropriate approvals will also be sought from the Tourism Richmond and Richmond Hotel Association Boards of Directors.

Upcoming milestones in this process are as follows:

Milestone	Timeline
<i>Current regulation and legal agreements expire</i>	<i>July 1, 2027</i>
Pending Council direction and approval, legal agreements with	Spring/ Summer 2026

Milestone	Timeline
partners negotiated and finalized	
5-Year Strategic Tourism Business Plan finalized	Summer 2026
Accommodation provider signatures/ support by majority confirmed	Summer 2026
Application to Government of BC submitted	September 15, 2026
Provincial Review and Order in Council	October 2026 – June 2027
MRDT renewed	July 1, 2027

Financial Impact

None. The development of the Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 has been funded through the Municipal and Regional District Tax, in partnership with Tourism Richmond and the Richmond Hotel Association.

Pending Council’s approval of the Tourism Master Plan and direction to prepare the next 5-Year Strategic Business Plan (2027-2032) for the renewal of the Municipal and Regional District Tax program, it is anticipated that some actions proposed could be funded through MRDT revenues.

Conclusion

The Richmond Tourism Master 2035 outlines a shared vision and provides a roadmap for the development of tourism in Richmond over the next 10 years. Pending Council endorsement, the Tourism Master Plan would guide the development of the next 5-Year Strategic Business Plan (2027-2032), ensuring that MRDT revenues support the community’s vision for tourism and deliver sustainable and positive economic benefits for those who live, work, and visit Richmond.



Jill Shirey
 Manager, Economic Development
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- Att. 1: What We Heard – Phase 2 Report
- 2: Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 and Action Plan

What We Heard – Phase 2 Report

Engagement Plan

Following Council's endorsement of the Draft Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035, feedback was sought from the community, businesses, and partners on the draft Plan.

This phase, building on the extensive previous phase of engagement during Spring 2025, focused on confirming whether the draft Plan appropriately reflects community priorities and identifying any changes that may be needed. The engagement gathered feedback on the proposed Destination Vision, the three Strategic Goals, and the eight Strategic Initiatives contained within the draft plan.

The engagement strategy was designed to re-engage partners and the broader Richmond community on the draft Plan and potential implementation considerations.

Objectives of the Engagement

- **Validate the Vision:** Confirm that the proposed Destination Vision resonates with residents, industry partners, and other organizations.
- **Test Strategic Direction:** Gather feedback on the three strategic goals and their corresponding initiatives to ensure these reflect community priorities.
- **Identify Gaps:** Surface any elements the community feels are missing from the draft Plan.
- **Build Implementation Support:** Explore potential future implementation opportunities.
- **Demonstrate Transparency:** Reflect how initial community input has shaped the draft Plan and provide an opportunity for feedback.

Engagement Profile

Timing	Activity	Audience
January 8 – February 1	Community Survey	General public, industry partners, community organizations
January 8 – January 28	One-to-One Interviews	Tourism industry organizations, attractions, community partners
January 20	Virtual Public Town Hall	General public
January 29	Boards of Directors and Steering Committee Workshop	Tourism Richmond and Richmond Hotel Association Boards of Directors, Tourism Master Plan Steering Committee

In total, 167 residents and partners participated from across Richmond, complemented by over 1,600 reviews of the Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 through the Let’s Talk Richmond website.



Engagement Summary

Richmond residents accounted for 85% of survey respondents, while tourism industry representatives and visitors each comprised 8% (participants could select more than one category). Overall engagement was strong, and feedback was largely positive. When asked about tourism’s role in Richmond’s future, 91% of respondents said tourism will be important to the city’s economic future.

Feedback on the draft destination vision was also strong, with 86% indicating it resonated with them. Each of the three strategic goals received over 80% resonance, and respondents broadly supported the Guiding Principles—particularly “Positively Impact Community.”

Open-ended feedback received to the survey covered several key themes. The most common implementation-related request was for clearer timing and next steps (11%). Transportation management was also noted as a key concern (15% referenced traffic or parking in high-visitation areas). Respondents expressed strong support for positioning Richmond around year-round experiences (28%), cuisine (13%), and culture (11%). In

addition, 15% of commenters emphasized that a multi-purpose conference and event venue should serve both residents and visitors.

Additional themes included strengthening Richmond's regional positioning within Metro Vancouver, increasing collaboration across tourism sectors, and leveraging Richmond's value proposition relative to Vancouver. Respondents also viewed the plan's alignment with existing City of Richmond strategies favourably.

Industry interviews also confirmed strong support for the draft Plan. Feedback was constructive and implementation-focused, reflecting confidence in the direction and readiness to move into action planning. Participants noted the plan was clear, practical, and easy to use, and emphasized the importance of defined phasing (short-, medium-, and long-term), prioritization in the first five years, and clear accountabilities. This is being addressed through the Action Plan included as an appendix to the final Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035.

The Boards of Directors and Steering Committee workshop further validated the draft Plan and suggested targeted refinements. Overall, participants expressed strong endorsement and a readiness to proceed.

Key Themes

Feedback during engagement on the draft Plan noted strong support for the plan's strategic direction, with culture and cuisine, sports tourism, and year-round experiences emerging as the most frequently discussed topics. The vast majority of feedback was very positive, with only a few respondents noting concerns. The following themes emerged from the engagement:

1. Destination Vision

- Survey comments (50+ mentions) on vision were extremely positive, with the multicultural/culinary positioning as the most frequently mentioned positive element.
- Interviewees described the plan as "solid," "credible," "balanced," and "pragmatic," with the structure and accessibility of the document praised as "easy to use."
- Boards and Steering Committee noted the plan is "clear and easy to follow" and "not flowery," with one participant observing it is the most usable master plan they have worked with.

2. Culture and Cuisine

- Survey respondents (50+ mentions) highlighted cuisine tourism as an advantage, with enthusiasm for Richmond's Asian culinary scene as a unique differentiator in North America.
- Some comments (11 mentions) requested ensuring diverse cultural representation beyond Asian cuisine.
- Interviewees identified Chinese cuisine as Richmond's primary differentiator, with Lunar New Year described as a "gem in the rough" with significant untapped potential. The Highway to Heaven was also raised as a strength to drawing visitors to Richmond.
- Boards and Steering Committee discussion emphasized defining Richmond's unique role.

3. Sport Tourism

- Survey responses (50+ mentions) highlighted the value of leveraging Richmond's facilities; others questioned whether sports should be central to Richmond's tourism identity or balanced with other pillars.
- Interviewees observed that the Richmond Olympic Oval is strong on sport tourism and could better connect with visitors to Richmond, noting an opportunity to combine sports hosting with leisure travel experiences.
- Boards and Steering Committee expressed support for "positioning Richmond as a sports and events destination" and celebrating existing venues.

4. Year-Round Experiences

- Survey respondents (45 mentions) noted that Richmond is currently "summer heavy for events" and expressed strong support for year-round programming that would benefit businesses, destinations, and workers across all seasons.
- Interviewees highlighted that heritage sites are already collaborating on initiatives like Winter in the Village in Steveston and noted the importance of increasing year-round programming.
- Boards and Steering Committee expressed the importance of private-sector investment in festivals and events, in addition to public-sector investment.

5. Multi-Purpose Conference and Event Venue

- Some survey comments (29 mentions) expressed support for a venue positioned near the airport.
- 20 respondents noted that such a facility must serve a demonstrated need, including community and cultural uses.
- Boards and Steering Committee noted that a feasibility study is a critical next step in consideration of a possible multi-purpose conference and event venue.
- Boards and Steering Committee also highlighted the importance of other infrastructure, including waterfront development.

6. Implementation and Actions

- Survey comments (16 mentions) mentioned interest in seeing concrete direction, including an action plan with specific projects and timelines.
- Interviewees emphasized the need for "clear phasing of the body of work" across short, medium, and long-term horizons.
- Boards and Steering Committee members expressed consensus on the need for an implementation plan that prioritizes "what is important within first 5 years".

7. Indigenous Tourism

- Some survey respondents (8 mentions) identified an opportunity to better showcase Indigenous history and culture within Richmond's tourism offerings.
- Interest was expressed in partnerships with First Nations and the development of experiences that celebrate the area's Indigenous heritage.
- Interviewees observed that current Indigenous content feels "aspirational rather than concrete," suggested the importance for future engagement pathways to be more specific.

Recommendations

Overall, the Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 received strong support during the January-February 2026 community engagement. The feedback from the community survey, interest-holder interviews, virtual Town Hall, and the workshop held with the Tourism Richmond and Richmond Hotel Association boards along with the Steering Committee, was very positive, with respondents describing the plan as "pragmatic," "achievable," and

"clear and easy to follow." One industry leader said, "This is the most usable master plan I have worked with."

The feedback provided various suggestions to keep in mind as next steps are considered:

Recommendation 1: Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 Development

It is recommended that the draft Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 is finalized with only minor adjustments, based on feedback received from the January-February 2026 community engagement phase. These adjustments include:

- a) Adding reference to the importance of private-sector investment in festivals and events.
- b) Reordering the strategic initiatives in the tourism infrastructure goal from broader opportunities including waterfront development to the more specific multi-purpose conference and event venue opportunity.
- c) Including Highway to Heaven as an asset in the SWOT analysis.

Recommendation 2: Action Plan Development

The inclusion of an action plan had always been contemplated, which was strongly reinforced by both industry and residents during the engagement.

Therefore, it is recommended an action plan accompanies the final Richmond Tourism Master Plan. The purpose of the action plan is to present key elements of the Tourism Master Plan in an easy-to-read format including potential timelines and early work underway.

Appendix

City of Richmond News Release

January 8, 2026

Richmond, BC — From world-class cuisine and cultural festivals to major sporting events and waterfront destinations, tourism plays a vital role in shaping Richmond’s sense of place, identity and economy. Building on this foundation, the City of Richmond is inviting the community to review and provide feedback on the Draft Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035—a shared 10-year vision that will guide tourism in Richmond over the next decade.

“Tourism is one of Richmond’s greatest strengths, connecting people to our city while supporting local jobs and community life,” said Mayor Malcolm Brodie. “This draft plan reflects extensive input from residents, visitors, industry partners, and other stakeholders in 2025. We are now seeking broader community feedback to help ensure tourism continues to deliver positive social, cultural, and environmental benefits for Richmond in the years ahead.”

How to participate

- Visit LetsTalkRichmond.ca to learn more and complete the online survey. The survey deadline is 11:59pm, on Sunday, February 1.
- Join the Virtual Town Hall meeting at 7:00pm on Tuesday, January 20, via Microsoft Teams (visit LetsTalkRichmond.ca for more information and the link).

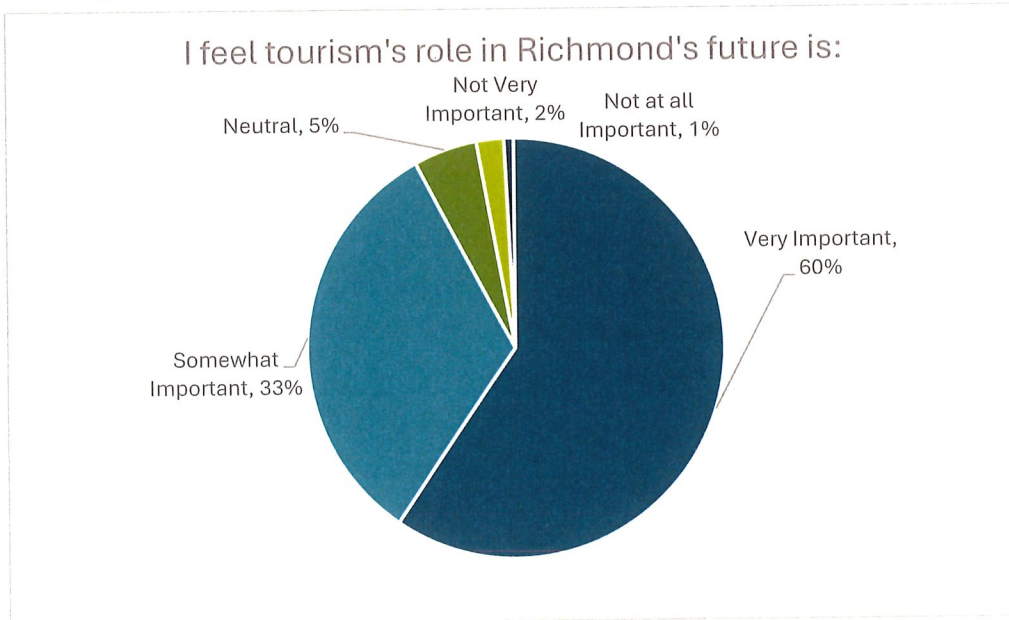
The draft plan outlines key goals and initiatives that align tourism with economic development and community well-being, supporting Richmond’s long-term livability and local character.

“Richmond’s tourism sector thrives when the community has a voice,” said Nancy Small, Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Richmond. “We encourage residents, visitors, tourism businesses and industry partners to provide feedback by February 1 so the plan reflects both community priorities and the city’s full tourism potential.”

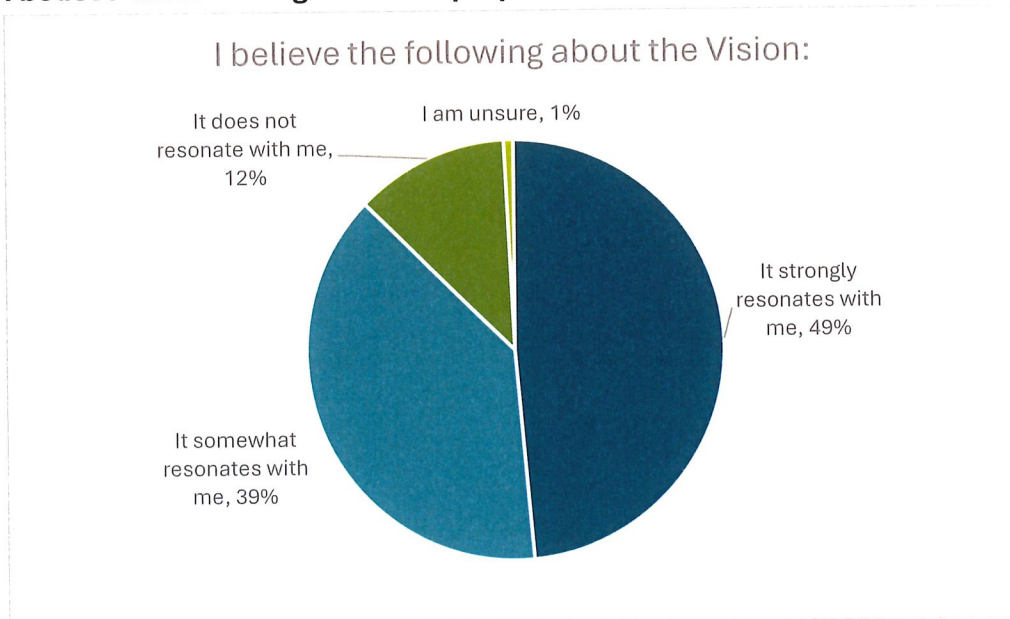
The draft plan has been jointly developed by the City of Richmond, Tourism Richmond and the Richmond Hotel Association, with extensive input from industry representatives, community members and other interest holders. Feedback received will help inform final refinements before the plan is presented to Council for consideration. The plan and participation details are available at LetsTalkRichmond.ca.

Survey Results

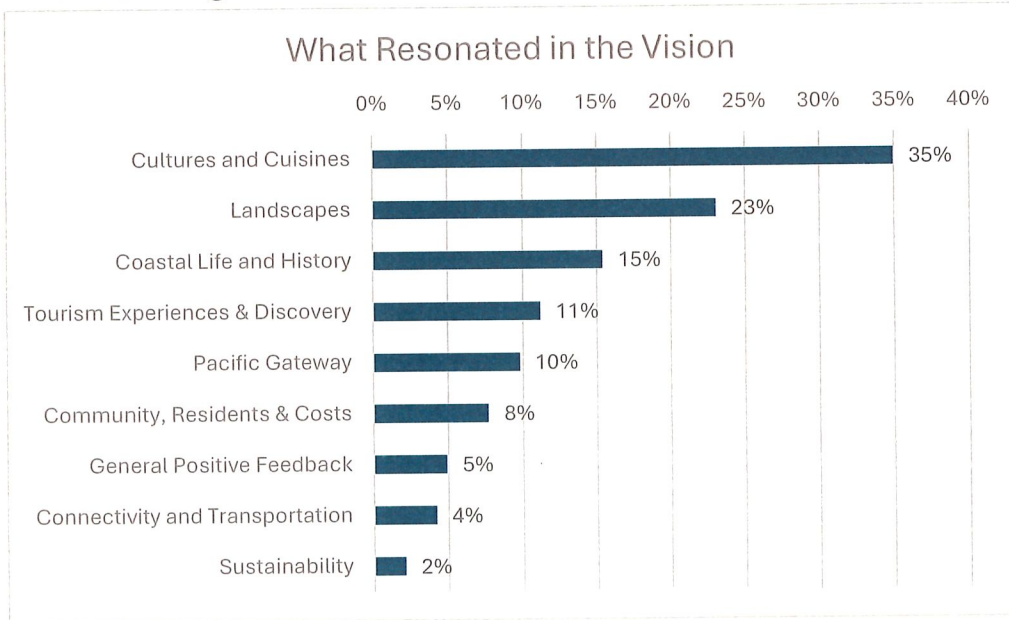
I feel tourism's role in Richmond's future is:



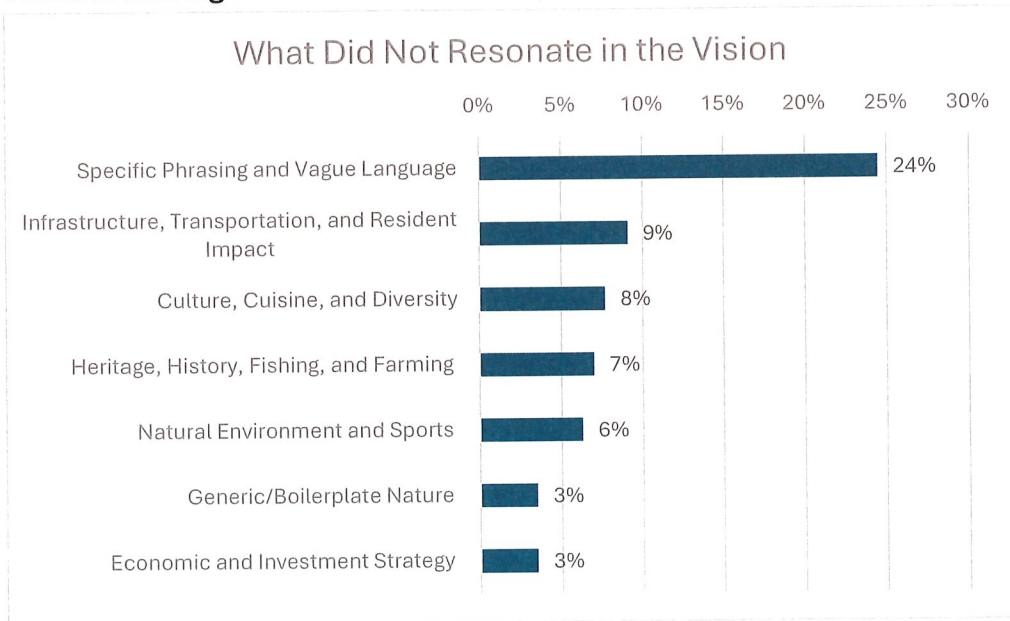
I believe the following about the proposed Destination Vision:



When reviewing the Destination Vision, what DID resonate with you?



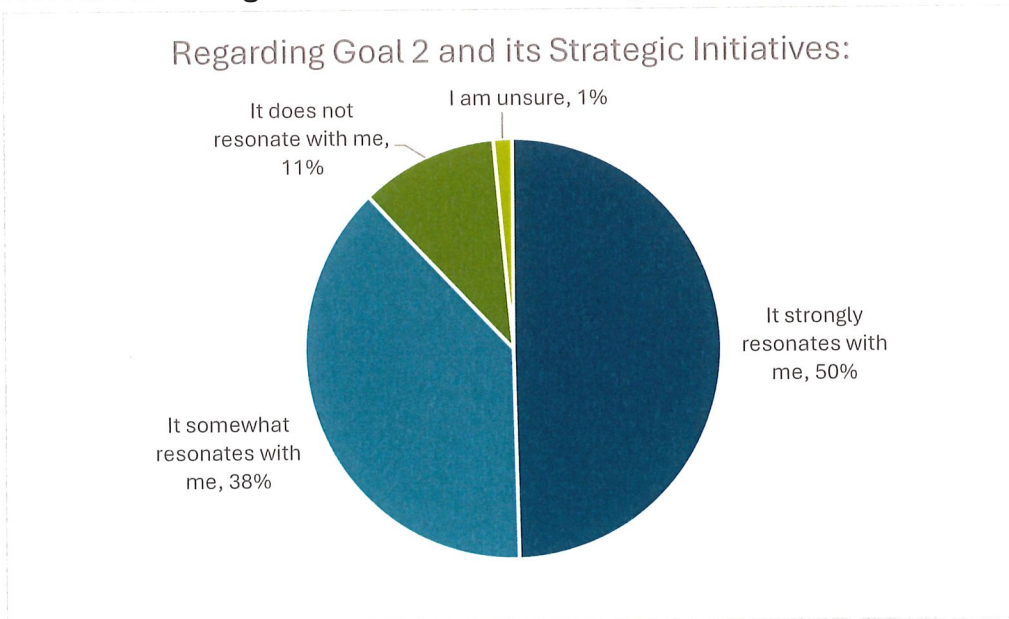
When reviewing the Destination Vision, what DID NOT resonate with you?



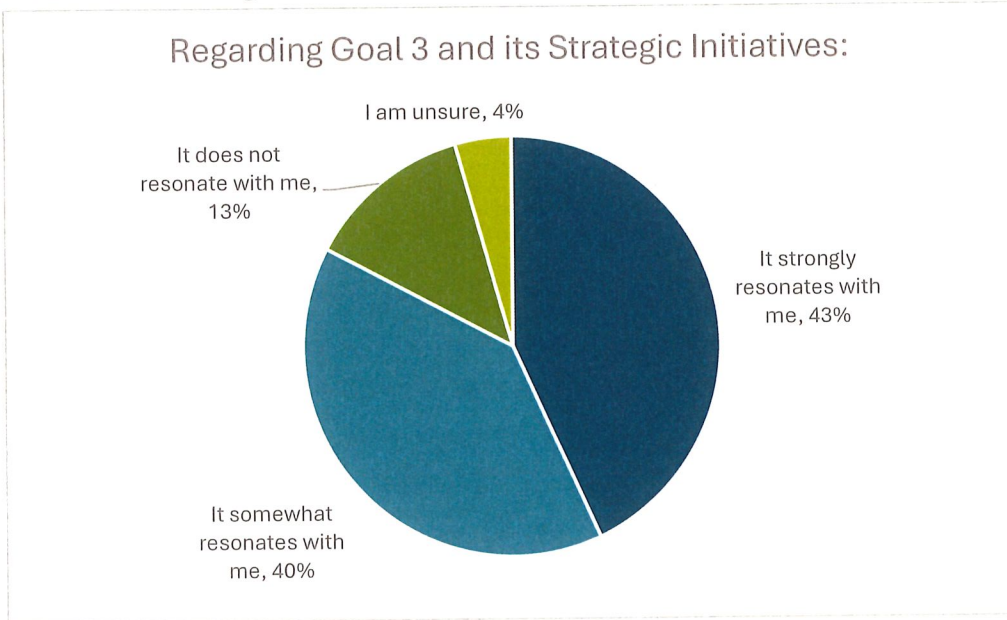
I feel the following about Goal 1 and its Strategic Initiatives:



I feel the following about Goal 2 and its Strategic Initiatives:

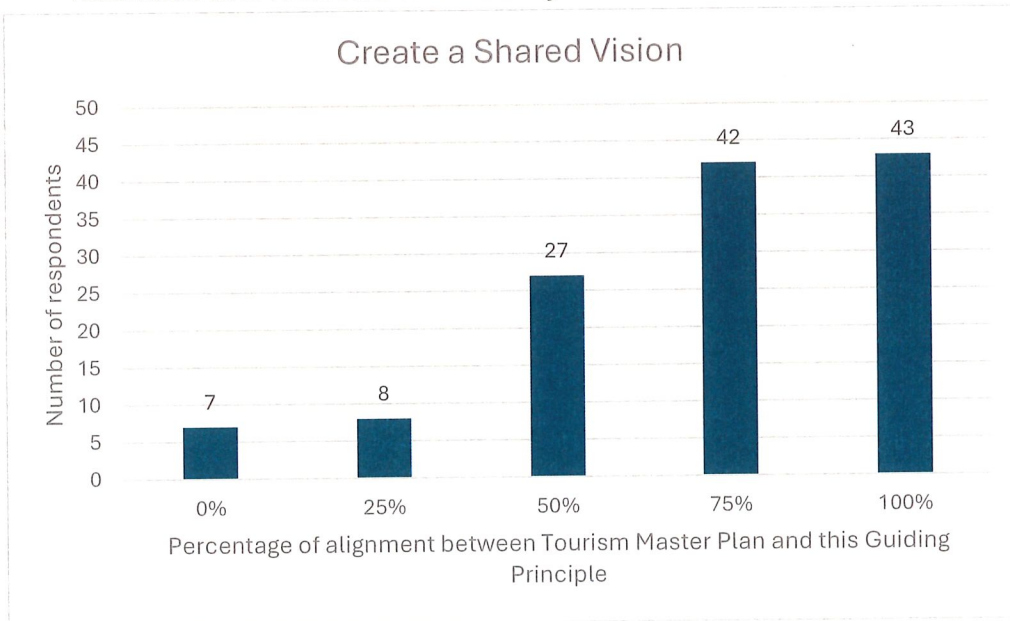


I feel the following about Goal 3 and its Strategic Initiatives:

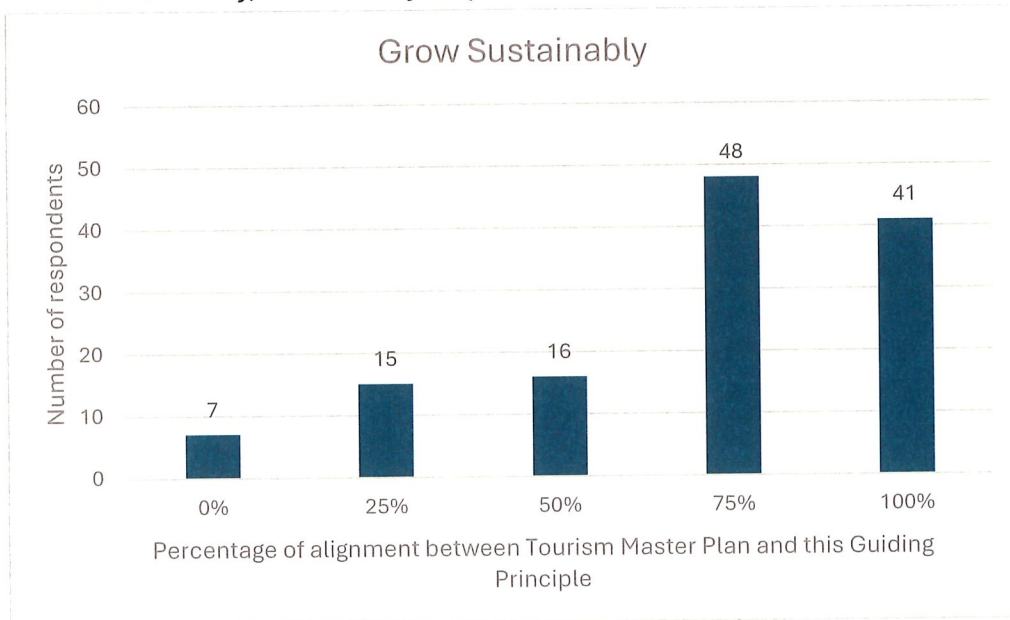


How aligned do you feel the Draft Tourism Master Plan is with each of the following Guiding Principles? (on a scale from 0% aligned to 100% aligned)

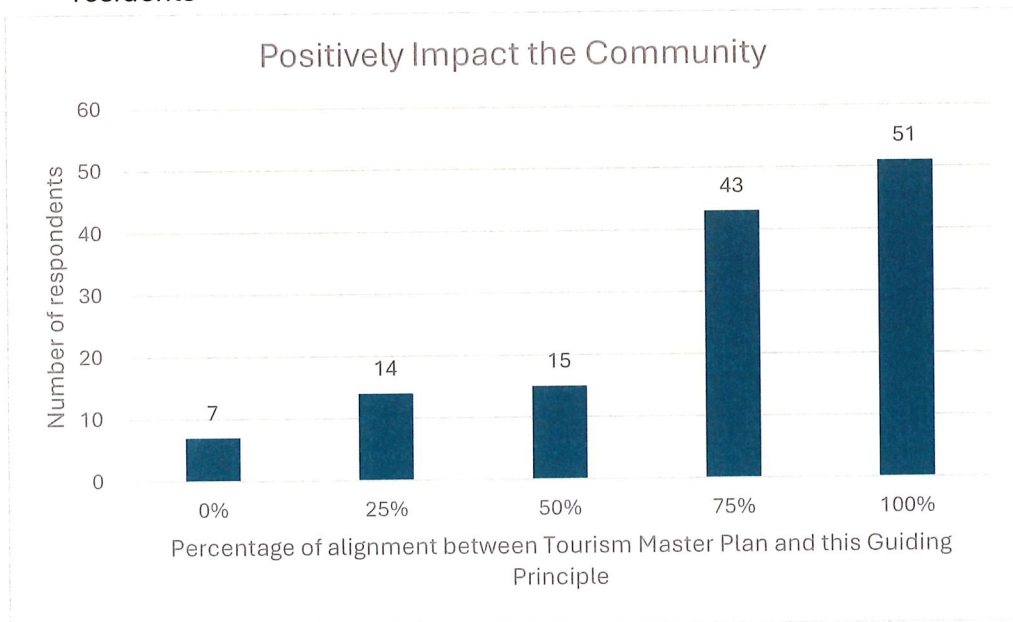
Create a Shared Vision — The plan reflects community input and establishes a vision that resonates with residents and industry



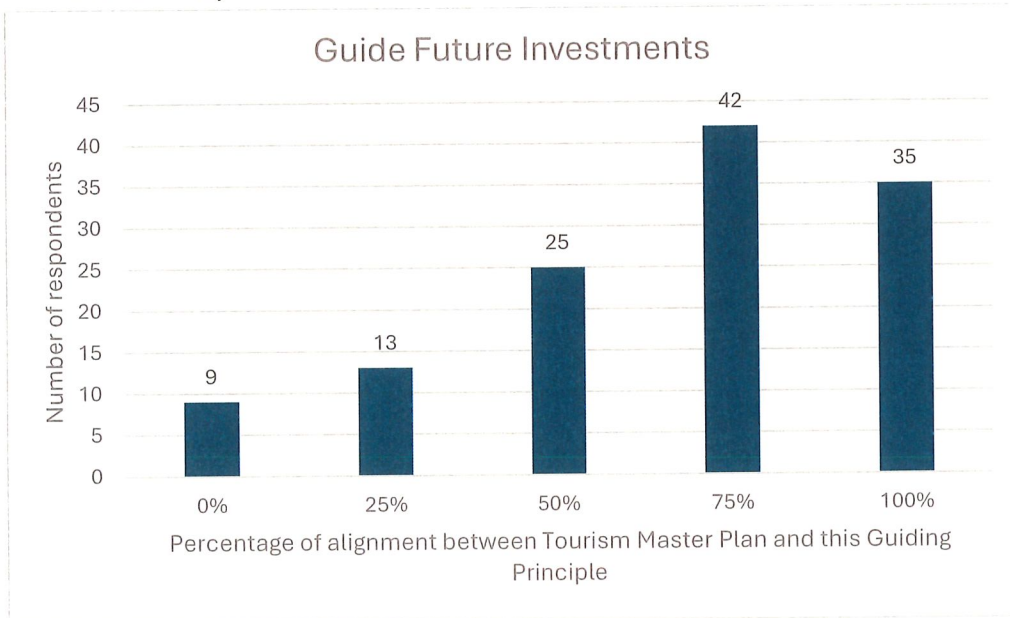
Grow Sustainably — The plan supports tourism growth that is environmentally, economically, and socially responsible



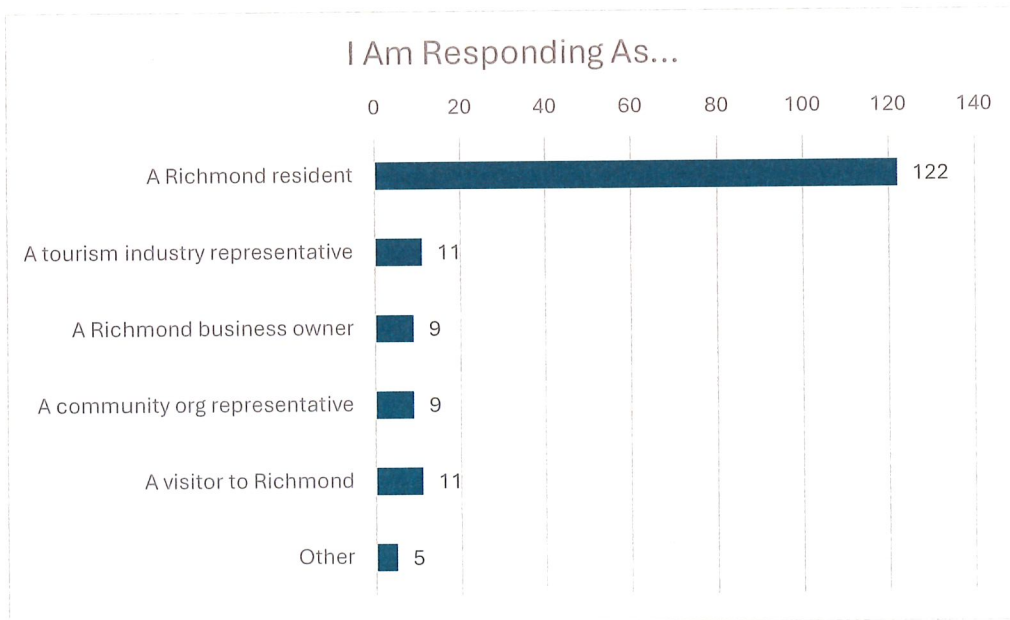
Positively Impact the Community — The plan ensures tourism benefits both visitors and residents



Guide Future Investments — The plan provides clear direction for tourism infrastructure and development decisions



I am responding as: (select all that apply)



RICHMOND

TOURISM MASTER PLAN 2035





RECONCILIATION

We are committed to building and maintaining positive and respectful relationships with x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam) and Indigenous Peoples who live in and around Richmond in order to advance reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

GP – 32

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
1.0 Why this Plan Matters and Why Now	6
1.1 Guiding Principles	8
2.0 Understanding Our Starting Point	9
2.1 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)	11
2.2 Market Profile	13
2.3 Insights from Other Destinations	14
2.4 Tourism Industry Trends	16
3.0 Listening to our Community	19
3.1 Community Feedback	20
3.2 Incorporating Community Feedback into Planning	23
3.3 Visioning Workshop	23
4.0 Defining Richmond's Destination Vision	24
4.1 Tourism in Richmond 2035: Destination Vision Realized	26
5.0 Goals and Initiatives	27
5.1 Strategic Goal Area 1: Enhance Connectivity and Accessibility	28
5.2 Strategic Goal Area 2: Elevate and Diversify Visitor Experiences	30
5.3 Strategic Goal Area 3: Advance Tourism Infrastructure Development	32
6.0 Blueprint for Success	34
6.1 Strategic Enablers	35
6.2 Key Performance Indicators	36
7.0 Looking Ahead	37
8.0 Appendices	38
8.1 Insights from Other Destinations	39
8.2 Engagement Phase: Profile	41
8.3 Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035: Action Plan	42



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GP – 34

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, pop-up 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.





1.0 WHY THIS PLAN MATTERS AND — WHY NOW

GP – 36

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 2035 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.



2.0 UNDERSTANDING OUR --- *STARTING POINT*

GP – 39

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 & Connectivity**
 - 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 Experiences

- Richmond boasts two National Historic Sites (Britannia Shipyards and Gulf of Georgia Cannery); and an excellent network of additional cultural/spiritual experiences including the 'Highway to Heaven' corridor.

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 overnighers.
- **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.¹
- **Focus on Experiences:** Travellers increasingly value meaningful experiences, personal growth, and cultural connection over traditional sightseeing.² 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.³
- **Sustainability:** Eco-conscious travellers seek destinations that are environmentally responsible. Travellers are drawn to destinations that protect the environment and support local communities.⁴
- **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.⁵
- **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 \(EIR\)](#)

² [Travel Hospitality Industry Outlook](#)

³ [Global Travel Trends](#)

⁴ [10 Sustainable Travel Trends Driving The Future of Tourism](#)

⁵ [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.⁶
- **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.⁷
- **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.⁸
- **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.⁹



⁶ [Top Trends, Predictions, Meetings and Events 2025](#)

⁷ [Business Travel Trends 2025](#)

⁸ [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.¹⁰ 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.¹¹
- **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.

¹⁰ [Women’s sports are booming. Why now? | CBC Sports](#)

¹¹ [Forbes Search](#)

¹² [DestinationNext 2025 Futures Study: 2025](#)

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:¹²

- 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.



3.0 LISTENING TO OUR COMMUNITY

GP - 49

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

3.1.1 Phase 1 Engagement

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 - Phase 1*, 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.

3.1.2 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 2035.

3.1.3 Phase 2 Engagement

Following Council’s endorsement of the draft Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035, we sought public, partner and industry feedback for the plan.

This phase focused on confirming that the draft plan accurately reflects community priorities and identifying any refinements needed before final adoption. The engagement gathered feedback on the proposed Destination Vision, the three Strategic Goals, and the eight Strategic Initiatives contained within the draft plan.

The engagement strategy was designed to efficiently re-engage partners and the broader Richmond community while also inviting those with the capacity to lead or support implementation of the plan’s initiatives to provide input into potential implementation considerations.

In total, 167 residents and partners across Richmond were engaged, complemented by over 1,600 reviews of the Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 through the Let’s Talk Richmond website.

920 engaged residents
and partners

47 organizations
GP – 50

2,800 visits to
website



3.2 KEY THEMES FROM ENGAGEMENT

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 high-end 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.





3.3 SUMMARIZING COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Insights gathered from the January-May 2025 community engagement 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 feedback from the August visioning workshop was combined with the intelligence gathered from the community engagement phase to draft, design, and refine the foundation of the Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035.

The community engagement held in January-February 2026 confirmed that the Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 accurately reflects community priorities. With the destination vision, goals, and strategic initiatives strongly resonating with the community, only minor adjustments were made to the plan. Included in these refinements was the inclusion of an action plan to help transition strategic direction into implementation.

By undertaking comprehensive engagement, the Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 directly addresses community priorities, shaping initiatives that enhance visitor and resident experiences, optimize local assets, and position Richmond as a dynamic, inclusive, and internationally recognized destination.

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 Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035, 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.



5.0 GOALS AND INITIATIVES



GP – 57

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 AI-powered trip planning, real-time route optimization and smart parking systems.
- Expand on existing visitor-oriented and demand-responsive 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. A wide-range of private- and public- sector led festivals and 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-to-table 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, public art, 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 arts, 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: 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.

5.3.2 Strategic Initiative 2: 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.

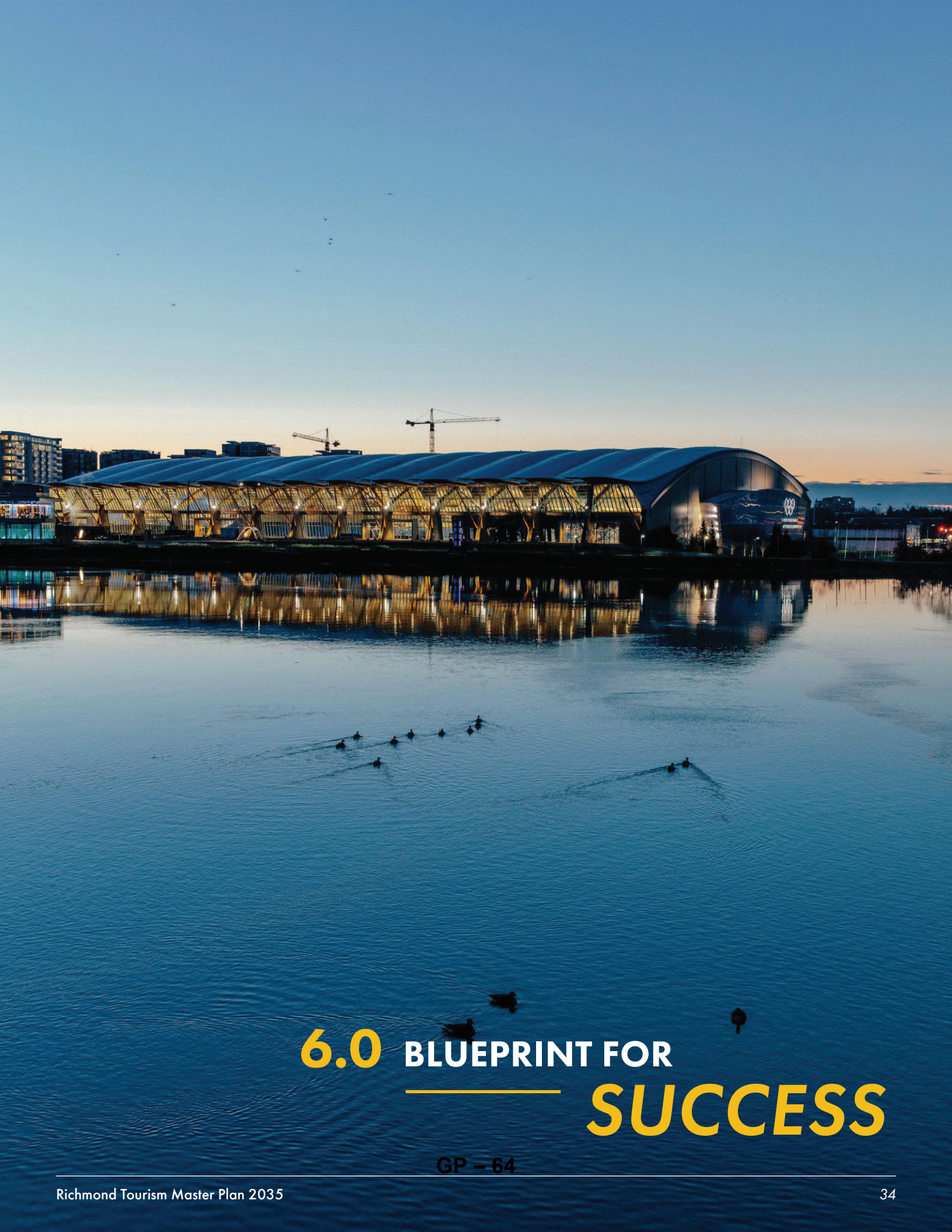
5.3.3 Strategic Initiative 3: Explore Opportunities for a Multi-Purpose Conference and Event Venue

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 multi-purpose 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.





6.0 BLUEPRINT FOR

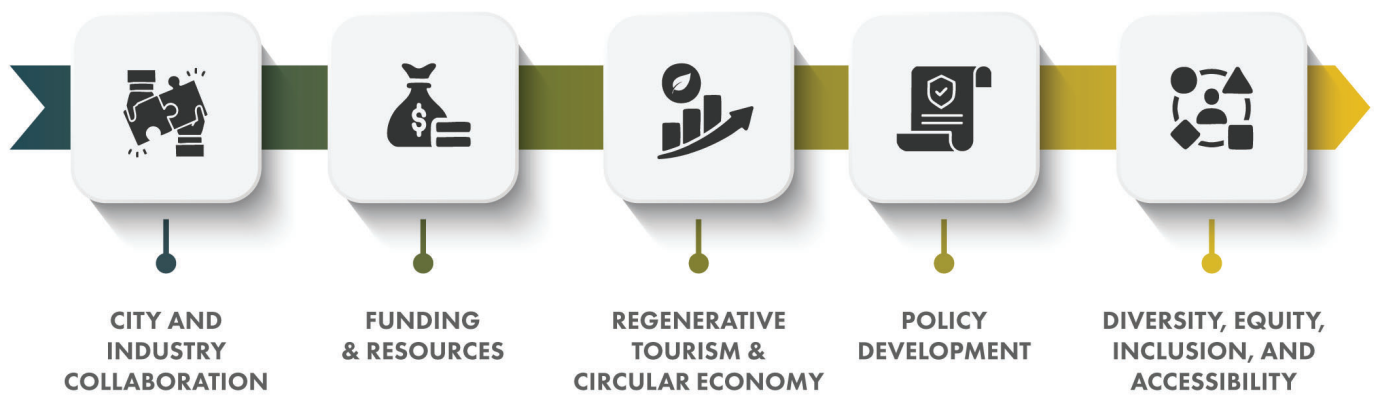
SUCCESS

GP – 64

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 long-term 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.



8.0 APPENDICES

GP - 68

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 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROFILE

In phase 1, 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 the outreach, individuals representing 47 organizations were engaged through interviews and focus groups. The full summary of the engagement can be found in the *What We Heard - Phase 1 Report*.



In phase 2, over 165 residents and partners across Richmond were engaged, complemented by over 1,600 reviews of the Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 through the Let's Talk Richmond website. The full summary of the engagement can be found in the *What We Heard - Phase 2 Report*.



8.3 RICHMOND TOURISM MASTER PLAN 2035: ACTION PLAN

8.3.1 Collaborative Engagement

Carrying out the Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035 will take considerable effort from the industry and community. While the destination has many strengths and assets to forge a new direction, the key to success lies in the ability of partners to work together. No single entity will be able to implement this plan alone. It will require multiple partners including industry leaders, civic leaders, community groups, and the business sector.

In addition to the City of Richmond, Tourism Richmond, and the Richmond Hotel Association, the following organizations have been identified as potential partners for the plan's implementation. As the plan moves forward and momentum grows, further organizations will be identified and engaged.

- Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site
- Destination BC
- Destination BC - VCM Region
- Great Canadian Entertainment
- Gulf of Georgia Cannery NHS
- Indigenous Tourism BC
- MacArthurGlen Designer Outlet Vancouver Airport
- Richmond Arts Council
- Richmond Night Market
- Richmond Olympic Oval
- Richmond Sports Council
- Rick Hansen Foundation and other disability-serving organizations
- Steveston Historical Society
- Translink
- Vancouver Airport Authority

8.3.2 Purpose of the Action Plan

This level of collaboration requires a shared framework to guide and coordinate activity across the destination. The action plan serves as a practical companion to the Richmond Tourism Master Plan 2035, translating its strategic direction into activity. Its purpose is to present the key elements of the tourism master plan in an easy-to-read format including indicative timelines.

In addition, by including examples of actions already approved or underway by the City of Richmond, Tourism Richmond, and the Richmond Hotel Association, the action plan is intended to:

- Create a shared understanding of what is happening across the partnership;
- Highlight early wins and momentum that can build confidence among industry and the community;
- Ensure ongoing work is connected to the strategic direction of the master plan; and
- Help align with all partners who will be working together on implementation.

The action plan also outlines anticipated timelines (Short: 1-3 years, Medium: 4-6 years, Long: 7+ years) for each focus area, offering a sense of how implementation will unfold over time. These timelines are not rigid deadlines but estimates that reflect the complexity, scope, and interdependencies of the work.

STRATEGIC GOAL AREA 1: ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

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.

Strategic Initiative 1

Build a Smart and Seamless Mobility Ecosystem

Key Focus Areas	Timeline		
	Short	Medium	Long
<p>a) Support a smart, accessible and seamless new mobility ecosystem, incorporating technology such as AI-powered trip planning, real-time route optimization and smart parking systems.</p>			
<p>b) Expand on existing visitor-oriented and demand-responsive transport connections linking key visitor zones (e.g., Steveston Village, the Olympic Oval, City Center, shopping districts, and the airport).</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the Discovery Shuttle service as a free, accessible transport service connecting Richmond's City Centre, attractions, hotels and Steveston Village. Continue the Steveston Bike Valet as a free, accessible service to encourage sustainable ways to travel to and from Steveston Village. 			
<p>c) 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.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support car share and e-mobility shared service providers to expand transportation network choices for residents and visitors, including securing car share spaces at Canada Line stations and onsite through redevelopment. 			
<p>d) 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.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the annual Island City By Bike Event, through which registrants receive a guided tour of the City's cycling facilities and new projects are showcased. In partnership with HUB Cycling, Go By Bike and Bike to Shop events and celebration stations are held annually. 			
<p>e) Expand and develop new experiential transportation opportunities, such as an electric trolley, water taxi or pedal-assisted sightseeing vehicle.</p>			

STRATEGIC GOAL AREA 1: ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

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.

Strategic Initiative 2

Advance Accessibility Across Richmond's Tourism Experiences

Key Focus Areas	Timeline		
	Short	Medium	Long
<p>a) Complete the implementation of the Richmond Community Wayfinding Strategy.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope initial pilot project to be implemented as part of the Community Wayfinding Strategy. 			
<p>b) Develop partnerships with accessibility focused organizations to co-design improvements with people with disabilities to benefit both visitors and residents.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host a presentation for local disability-serving organizations about the Tourism Master Plan and its strategic directions and actions. Collectively, identify potential initiatives for implementation in collaboration with local organizations. 			
<p>c) 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.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop clear, accessible marketing and communications strategies, using preferred languages, plain language, culturally-relevant methods, and multiple channels to build audiences and participation. (Richmond Arts Strategy - Objective 1.1.1). Align with Richmond Accessibility Plan, and in keeping with community consultations, evaluate current arts programs, services and facilities from an accessibility perspective to identify opportunities to enhance participation and address barriers. (Richmond Arts Strategy - Objective 2.1.1). Update Britannia Shipyards park to improve accessibility of pathways, wayfinding and parking. 			
<p>d) Introduce training and certification programs for tourism operators to strengthen accessible service delivery.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a review of leading national and international practices to identify potential partnerships and existing programs that could be leveraged for implementation in Richmond. (e.g. Hidden Disabilities Sunflower). 			
<p>e) 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.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the update to Richmond's Sports Hosting Strategy 			

STRATEGIC GOAL AREA 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






Key Focus Areas	Timeline		
	Short	Medium	Long
<p>a) 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.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the development of a new multicultural festival as identified in the City of Richmond Signature and Community Events Plan 2025-2029. Further promote and develop the Doors Open Richmond event to attract visitors to Richmond and highlight Richmond's unique cultural communities. Activate Richmond's waterfront by building on signature events such as the Ships to Shore Kaiwo Maru. Launch Richmond Celebrates Soccer activations across the community during the FIFA World Cup 2026. 			
<p>b) Develop and/or attract an anchor festival that raises the profile of Richmond and has a national draw.</p>			
<p>c) Support and develop year-round immersive experiences offered by local artists, cultural groups, and tourism operators highlighting authentic Richmond stories.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to offer immersive boat restoration programming at Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site. 			
<p>d) Elevate seasonal nature experiences that celebrate local and regional flora and fauna, eg. Cherry Blossom Festival, bird migration, Fraser River salmon fishing.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to offer harbour and river tours that highlight the natural and cultural heritage of the Fraser River. 			

STRATEGIC GOAL AREA 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 2

Showcase Sport, Culinary, and Agritourism Leadership

Key Focus Areas	Timeline		
	Short	Medium	Long
<p>a) 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.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully leverage and implement the updated Sport Hosting Strategy to maximize positive community and economic impact. Host the inaugural OneAbility Games, an inclusive, multi-sport disability event that celebrates diversity, breaks down barriers, and showcases the power of sport to unite athletes and communities of all abilities. 			
<p>b) 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.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the update to Richmond's Sport Hosting Strategy. 			
<p>c) 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</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host the second annual Sport Event Exchange BC (SEEBBC) conference in Richmond, a first-of-its-kind BC sport tourism industry forum to strengthen collaboration, build capacity, and spark new opportunities across British Columbia's sport hosting landscape. 			
<p>d) Strengthen Richmond's position as Canada's premier Asian culinary destination through chef collaborations, food trails, celebrated dining districts, and signature dining experiences.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a roadmap for food tourism that showcases new ideas and leverages existing successes such as the world-famous Dumpling Trail and the Richmond Night Market. 			
<p>e) Develop agritourism circuits, sea-to-table, and farm-to-table programs that connect visitors directly with local growers, producers and markets.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further promote and develop Richmond's Local Food Map to connect residents and visitors to local farmers and fishers. Highlight Richmond's agricultural activities and businesses by hosting Richmond Farm Festival. 			

STRATEGIC GOAL AREA 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 3

Enhance Tourism Offerings





Key Focus Areas	Timeline		
	Short	Medium	Long
<p>a) 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, trails, and other points of interest.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Cycling Network Plan Update provides a blueprint for active transportation infrastructure projects over the next 15 years, with near-term improvements implemented and upcoming projects including the under-construction Gilbert Road Multi-Use Pathway (from Granville Avenue to Elmbridge Way) and extension of the Steveston Highway Multi-Use Path (connecting Shell Road to the Steveston Interchange). 			
<p>b) 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.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the First Nations Building including the development of First Nations exhibits and programs. Complete the restoration of the Japanese Duplex building as a new Welcome Centre with gift shop for the site. Upgrade the park spaces at Britannia Shipyards, including the addition of new interpretive displays of heritage boats. 			
<p>c) Expand heritage and multicultural storytelling experiences - interactive exhibits, guided tours, and digital platforms that celebrate Richmond's layered identity.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to host community-led exhibits at the Richmond Museum which highlight the variety of cultural heritage practices and histories in Richmond. Develop a tourism-focused walking tour of Steveston. 			
<p>d) Curate thematic visitor journeys (e.g. "Active by Nature", "Taste of Richmond", "Stories of the Sea") that link attractions into cohesive experiences.</p>			
<p>e) Build on established relationships in the Indigenous tourism space - ITBC (Indigenous Tourism BC), artists, cultural groups - to evaluate opportunities for new experience creation.</p>			

STRATEGIC GOAL AREA 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

Foster Destination-Defining Infrastructure and Investment

Key Focus Areas	Timeline		
	Short	Medium	Long
<p>a) 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.</p>			
<p>b) 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.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use public art and cultural programming to reimagine public spaces with an eye to creative placemaking. (Richmond Arts Strategy - Objective 5.3.6) • Incorporate creative wayfinding elements to improve navigability and visibility to cultural events and venues. (Richmond Arts Strategy - Objective 5.3.10) 			
<p>c) Pursue public-private partnerships to catalyze infrastructure growth and ensure financial sustainability by the sector.</p>			
<p>d) Explore the development of a new destination museum in Central Richmond that celebrates Richmond's unique and diverse heritage.</p>			

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Strategic Initiative 2

Leverage Public Spaces and Placemaking

Key Focus Areas	Timeline		
	Short	Medium	Long
<p>a) 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)</p>			
<p>b) Expand integration of public art and interpretation elements into new and existing placemaking projects to reflect Richmond's multi-cultural and maritime heritage.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Phase 2 of the Fisher's Walk experience in Steveston Village, including through a digital component to enhance storytelling and engage visitors and residents. 			
<p>c) Revitalize Steveston Village streetscape through enhancements to travel lanes, parking, sidewalks, cycling infrastructure, open spaces, street finishings, and street furniture.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current initiatives underway include a parking utilization study in Steveston Village, conceptual design and options of Bayview Street as a shared street and implementation options for recommended streetscapes along Chatham Street and Moncton Street. 			
<p>d) Link to regional trail system, such as Experience the Fraser, that offers cyclists the opportunity for multi-day riding experiences with stopover locations in Richmond.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to implement the Experience the Fraser trail network in Richmond, starting in Terra Nova Rural Park and Steveston. 			

STRATEGIC GOAL AREA 3: ADVANCE TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

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Strategic Initiative 3

Explore Opportunities for a Multi-Purpose Conference and Event Venue

Key Focus Areas	Timeline		
	Short	Medium	Long
<p>a) Determine the market demand, competitive positioning, economic and tourism benefits, facility program requirements, location and site priorities, financial feasibility, and partnership, governance and management of options for a potential landmark multi-purpose conference and event venue.</p>	■		
<p>b) Foster alignment between venue development, hotel growth, transportation planning and emerging tourism opportunities to maximize economic impact and community benefit.</p>	■■■■■		
<p>c) Continue to position Richmond as a premier destination for business events, meetings and conferences leveraging existing hotels, meeting facilities, and unique attractions.</p> <p>Example Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and build on Richmond's successful go-to-market strategies to optimize the uniqueness of the destination, as well as highlight hotel partners, meeting facilities, unique attractions and financial supports. 	■■■■■		
<p>d) 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.</p>	■■■■■		

