

March 1, 2022

Destination Greater Victoria invests in largest marketing campaign ever

VICTORIA, B.C. – To drive recovery efforts from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Destination Greater Victoria is investing more than \$2.2 million to market Greater Victoria in spring and summer 2022. This is Destination Greater Victoria’s largest marketing campaign investment ever and is designed to attract leisure visitors to book multi-night stays in the destination as travel restrictions ease.

Beginning March 1, 2022, and running to August 20, 2022, Destination Greater Victoria will engage its core expertise by marketing the destination to leisure travellers in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland, Calgary, Toronto, Washington state and California, as well as secondary markets in BC and Alberta. Visitation from diverse geographic source markets is important for the destination’s recovery, and the conversion of potential customers in these markets will be the key measurement of the campaign. Recovery within the Greater Victoria visitor economy has been very limited and uneven to date, with many segments still struggling to generate sufficient operating revenues. This campaign addresses key Canadian and US markets critical for a wide and deep recovery, supporting all segments to generate sustained business again.

Destination Greater Victoria will continue to focus on the Lower Mainland as a core market. However, this campaign’s reach is broader and aims to re-establish top-of-mind awareness and conversion in Washington state and California. US currency conversion makes Greater Victoria more affordable and an attractive place to visit for American visitors. Strategic partnerships with ferry operators FRS Clipper and Black Ball Ferry Line (MV Coho) will be integral to driving US visitation to Greater Victoria.

This unprecedented marketing campaign was made possible by a variety of factors at Destination Greater Victoria. These include fiscal discipline and deep overhead cuts over the past two years, increases in visitation during summer and fall 2021, strategically investing Destination Greater Victoria’s restricted reserve, renewal of Destination Greater Victoria’s Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) mandate through to 2026, and a new, leaner organizational operating model moving forward.

Quotes:

“This campaign is Destination Greater Victoria’s most significant campaign ever and is carefully planned to help stimulate and drive recovery. These investments are orders of magnitude higher than for any pre-COVID-19 year. Due to significant overhead reductions, we were able to muster these resources despite poor revenues for our organization throughout the pandemic. We were extremely focused and disciplined for the past two years. As part of this campaign to stimulate recovery, Destination Greater Victoria is deploying its restricted reserves which have been carefully built up over the years. We also declined many previous potential opportunities due to poor timing or low return on investment, enabling DGV to keep our powder dry for the right moment when travel restrictions eased. Re-introducing Greater Victoria’s travel brand into key source markets such as Washington state and California, where competitive travel marketers within the United States have been very active for the past two years, will present some challenges; however, we are confident that Greater Victoria has a solid reputation to build upon. Our goal is to help stimulate recovery that is wide and deep for as many members as possible.” – Paul Nursey, CEO – Destination Greater Victoria

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"It is exciting to see Destination Greater Victoria initiate this marketing campaign after such a challenging time. The past two years have seen very uneven visitation with many businesses deeply affected by a loss of revenue. It is thrilling to see Destination Greater Victoria being able to focus once again on what it does best – and that is telling our potential visitors about everything Victoria has to offer. All of the extraordinary pieces that made our destination an attractive place to visit before the COVID-19 pandemic are still in place. This campaign will show we are still a first-class and highly-desirable vacation destination." - Erika Stenson, Board Chair – Destination Greater Victoria

"Destination Greater Victoria's recovery marketing campaign will help catalyze our business as we relaunch our service. The last two years have been very difficult, but we are excited for the spring and summer. Destination Greater Victoria have been tremendous partners and we thank them for their support." - David Gudgel, CEO – FRS Clipper

Destination Greater Victoria (Greater Victoria Visitors and Convention Bureau) is our region's official, not-for-profit destination marketing organization working in partnership with nearly 1,000 businesses and municipalities in Greater Victoria.

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DESTINATION GREATER VICTORIA

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FACT SHEET

Budget

- In 2022, Destination Greater Victoria will invest more than \$2.2 million in a destination marketing campaign, including travel media, ferry partnerships, travel trade consortia and airline partnerships, sports sponsorships, and major events. For comparison, in 2019 Destination Greater Victoria invested \$1.1 million in these same lines of business.

Source Markets

Strategic marketing and engagement in identified source markets is informed by robust data insights. Information on each source market is provided below:

- **Vancouver and the Lower Mainland:** Significant foundation core market where Greater Victoria is viewed as a very popular destination. Approximately 80 per cent of overnight visitors to Greater Victoria from Greater Vancouver are repeat visitors.
- **Seattle:** Market accounted for 55 per cent of US visitors to Greater Victoria pre-pandemic. On average, visitors from Seattle spend 70 per cent more than Canadian visitors within Greater Victoria and marketing campaigns in the Seattle and western Washington areas have historically delivered at least a 50:1 return on investment.
- **San Francisco:** A key California market, it is important for leisure visitors as well as highly valuable meetings business. Like Seattle, visitors from San Francisco typically spend 70 per cent more within Greater Victoria than Canadian visitors. There is also significant growth potential in San Francisco as a key source market.
- **Calgary:** A very important core market with numerous direct flights, it is particularly important for attracting leisure visitors. Alberta accounted for 17 per cent of Canadian visitors to Greater Victoria pre-pandemic.
- **Toronto:** Identified as a strategic growth opportunity and serviced by direct flights to Greater Victoria, the Ontario market accounted for 12 per cent of Canadian visitors to Greater Victoria pre-pandemic.

Campaign Elements

- **Direct to Consumer Marketing:** Destination Greater Victoria will drive visitation by creating an emotional connection to the destination through paid digital advertising, television, radio, social media, blogs, and dedicated landing pages. Highlighted attributes will include Greater Victoria's mild climate relative to other places in Canada, boutique hotels, historic architecture, playful attitude, and world-class culinary scene.
- **Travel Trade Partnerships:**
 - **Air Canada Vacations:** This partnership is focused on Ontario and Quebec and is part of consolidating strategic opportunities in these markets. This includes driving package stays.
 - **FRS Clipper and Black Ball Ferry Line:** There will be a strategic investment of \$200,000 for the purposes of marketing getaways to Greater Victoria for overnight stays. This investment will be in Washington state and led by the ferry operators.
 - **Earned Media:** Destination Greater Victoria is partnering with global public relations firm MMGY NJF (<https://www.njpr.com/>) to create earned social media content and engage influencers in the western United States.

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