



Greater Victoria 2025-2035 Destination Master Plan

DESTINATION GREATER
VICTORIA



Destination 2035: A Bold Vision for the Visitor Economy

Greater Victoria is globally recognized as a leading destination that continually attracts visitors from all over. To stay ahead of the competition, it's essential for the region to advance and continually elevate the visitor experience.

Destination Greater Victoria's 2025-2035 Destination Master Plan is a roadmap that outlines the vision, goals, and actions for the sustainable development of tourism in the region over the next 10 years. The plan identifies five strategic goals and associated initiatives that offer guidance regarding how Greater Victoria will achieve its shared vision. When successfully implemented, these goals and initiatives will positively impact the quality of life, experiences, and economy in Greater Victoria.

The Vision

Greater Victoria is recognized as a global leader in sustainable tourism and events, delivering world-class experiences while thriving in alignment with local community values and the natural environment.

About Greater Victoria's Visitor Economy

In 2023, Greater Victoria welcomed 4.9 million visitors, generating \$3.5 billion in economic outputs, contributing \$2 billion to GDP and \$510 million to taxes, and supporting approximately 25,000 jobs. Economic activity related to the visitor economy supports local small and medium sized enterprises. Growing the impact of visitor expenditure in Greater Victoria will benefit the broader community and its residents.

The Goals

This long-term Destination Master Plan was developed with extensive input and support from many Greater Victoria stakeholders, industry and partner organizations, government partners, First Nations, and residents. Insights gained from representatives of the following organizations were instrumental in shaping the vision and strategy for the future of Victoria's visitor economy articulated in this Plan. We extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who shared their time, insights, and expertise with the project team.

1

Enhance Tourism Infrastructure

Greater Victoria's visitor economy will benefit from supporting and developing additional attractions, events, and experiences that drive visitation, overnight stays and extended stays by meetings and conference delegates.

- **Renew and elevate the iconic Inner Harbour and Ship Point** to invest in infrastructure and animate the downtown waterfront with more multi-purpose gathering, event and retail spaces that attract visitors and residents year-round.
- **Develop additional meeting, conference and hosting facilities** to meet demand, and ensure Greater Victoria's long-term competitiveness in the key meetings and events market
- **Increase Greater Victoria's hotel room inventory**, including full-service hotel options with a wider range of price points and smaller local accommodations to support regional attractions.
- **Ensure the Royal BC Museum remains in the Inner Harbour** to maximize its accessibility and impact on the visitor economy.

2

Create New Attractions, Events, & Experiences

Greater Victoria's visitor economy will benefit from the development and revitalization of community assets that enable tourism activities, contribute to the overall visitor experience and enhance the quality of life of residents year-round.

- **Support attractions development** including the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria as well as the shared vision of the Xwsepsum Nation, Songhees Nation, and the Maritime Museum of BC to establish the Future of History Project in the Inner Harbour.
- **Attract or develop a signature annual winter event** that benefits the region during the off-peak season.
- **Develop and promote activations in downtown Victoria**, including light shows, pop-up concerts, artwork displays or similar events.
- **Develop a regional event strategy** that builds alignment and collaboration between events in Greater Victoria to create stronger draws for visitors.

3

Emphasize Stewardship and Placemaking

Supporting and showcasing Greater Victoria's people, cultures, diversity, inclusivity and commitments to sustainability will strengthen our visitor economy while providing meaningful opportunities for community engagement and regional collaboration.

- **Develop and support agritourism** that showcases Greater Victoria's farmers, sustainable agriculture, and culinary experiences.
- **Develop and promote unique neighbourhoods and their character** (markets, art and culture, events, restaurants), including special focus on the Gorge area and Saanich Peninsula.
- **Support First Nations' economic development, authentic Indigenous-led tourism businesses, and arts and placemaking initiatives** that center local First Nations' language and culture.

4

Augment Connectivity and Mobility

Increasing access to sustainable transportation and mobility options can positively influence tourism, while fostering economic development, addressing climate change and enhancing the quality of life for residents.

- **Develop an integrated regional transportation strategy** that supports the expansion of rapid transit, including between downtown, Victoria International Airport and the Westshore.
- **Improve delegate and traveller air access to Greater Victoria** by supporting air route development and direct air access to more cities in Canada and the United States.
- **Support potential small-ship cruise home porting at Ogden Point** and enhance, resident-sensitive access between Ogden Point cruise terminal and downtown.
- **Encourage visitors to choose active transportation options** through the development of scenic pathways and trails, and shared multi-modal options.

5

Ensure Continued Sustainability and Innovation

Regional, venue and tourism-specific commitments to sustainability play an important role in attracting visitors and meetings to Greater Victoria, while providing communities, residents and businesses with numerous long-term social, economic and environmental benefits.

- **Leverage Biosphere Certification for Greater Victoria** to further build the destination's brand and credentials and to attract funding to support emerging sustainability initiatives, including with industry partners.
- **Develop and implement an industry-leading circular economy strategy** for Greater Victoria's visitor economy.
- **Support healthy and sustainable local food systems**, including access to locally-grown food for visitor economy businesses.
- **Work with industry and government partners to reduce waste and carbon emissions**, in alignment with Provincial and local government policies and targets.

Greater Victoria Hotel Sector Analysis

As Greater Victoria continues to experience growth in visitor volumes, one of the most significant issues likely to impede or constrain its visitor economy is the lack of available hotel inventory. Greater Victoria's falling hotel inventory (27% over the past decade to a record low of 4,695 rooms) is leaving visitors with fewer hotel options and rising hotel rates that will discourage convention business and leisure travellers in the coming years.

Greater Victoria's visitor economy would benefit from:

- Additional 800-1,200 full-service hotel rooms over the next five years.
 - Our growing region could absorb 2,000 new hotel rooms over the next decade, while maintaining healthy business conditions for existing hotels.
- A broader range of hotels:
 - An emphasis on full-service, 3 and 4-star hotels.

The strategic goals and recommendations in this Plan are the result of a collaborative and consultative process, and represent the ideas and aspirations of the people who live in and contribute to Greater Victoria.

Achieving the shared vision articulated in this Plan will require a collective, community-wide implementation effort across multiple organizations as well as Destination Greater Victoria, the tourism industry, and community stakeholders.

Destination Greater Victoria does not own the assets and experiences of the local visitor economy, and hence cannot single-handedly move this Destination Master Plan forward. DGV therefore looks forward to continuing to partner and collaborate with stakeholders across the region to advance the important initiatives in this Plan.

What is a full-service hotel?

A full-service hotel offers a range of onsite amenities such as a staffed front desk, restaurants, retail, business centres, exercise spaces, spas, and meeting spaces.



Victoria Conference Centre Development Analysis

Business events generate about 40% of overall tourism spending in Canada*.

Conference delegates:

- stay longer and spend more than leisure travellers
- use more services
- are more likely to extend their stay or return for leisure purposes
- generate valuable tourism sector during spring and fall when fewer leisure and cruise travellers visit Greater Victoria.

A larger conference facility could grow the Victoria Conference Centre's economic impact by 50% and ensure Victoria remains competitive in the Canadian business events market, where numerous competitors have expanded their convention centres or have expansion plans on the drawing board.

Three possible options:

1

Maintain the present facility and upgrade where possible

2

Consider a rebuild and expansion of the facility on the existing site.

3

Build a facility as part of a bigger multi-purpose hub (including Royal BC Museum and hosting complex)

*Meetings Mean Business Canada





Next Steps

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Destination Greater Victoria, as the keeper of this plan, is committed to updating the plan as needed, and catalyzing its effective implementation. Key to this will be ongoing consultation and partnership with local First Nations, ensuring the plan reflects their economic development priorities related to the visitor economy.

Read the full
Destination Master Plan



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