



VICTORIA RANKS NO. 1 FOR SUSTAINABILITY AMONG SMALL CITY TOURISM DESTINATIONS WORLDWIDE

**Victoria also places in the top three for destination management according to new Global
Destination Sustainability Index**

Victoria, B.C. (September 24, 2026) – A highly regarded tourism industry index measuring the future sustainability of tourist destinations around the world has ranked Victoria, B.C. No. 1 among the world's top small city tourism destinations, with a population of less than 200,000.

The Global Destination Sustainability (GDS) Index placed Victoria in first place among participating destinations, followed by Kerry, Ireland in second place and Luzern, Switzerland in third place.

Based on the [criteria](#) assessed for this year's index, Victoria also ranked highly for destination management with a third-place score of 95.89, close behind second place Helsinki, Finland (96.58) and Montreal in first place (97.95).

"Victoria's outstanding recognition in this year's GDS Index is a remarkable achievement reflective of DGV's destination management excellence," said Paul Nursey, CEO of Destination Greater Victoria. "The entire tourism and business community in Greater Victoria can take pride in this global recognition of DGV's exceptional management standards."

Victoria has also ranked 15th overall in the [GDS Index global "Top 40"](#) cities, cracking the top 20 for the first time. Victoria is also one of only three North American cities on the Top 40 list, behind Montreal (ninth) and ahead of Edmonton (39th).

The Top 40 ranking is based on sustainability leadership efforts across four key areas: Destination Management, Supplier, Social Progress, and Environmental Performance.

The exceptional results achieved in 2026 reflect the close collaboration between Destination Greater Victoria and the City of Victoria, as well as the shared commitment of industry partners, local government and the broader community to advancing long-term social and environmental sustainability. Victoria's success is driven by a combination of factors that distinguish it from other destinations such as extensive cycling infrastructure, walkable neighbourhoods, a clean energy grid, a safe and reliable water supply, and comprehensive climate action initiatives. The destination also benefits from a tourism industry that has embraced sustainability, with a high proportion of local hotels holding recognized environmental certifications. Further strengthening Victoria's leadership position is the carbon reduction efforts of the Biosphere Certified Victoria Conference Centre. Destination Greater Victoria's own sustainability policies, strategies and ongoing capacity-building support for members have also contributed significantly to the destination's strong performance.

Nursey credits Victoria's success to local industry leaders who stimulated the first discussions years ago around achieving sustainability in a positive, additive, and business-like manner.

"This didn't happen overnight," said Nursey. "Our approach has been industry-led with people coming together, sharing ideas, challenging one another to do better and, most importantly, turning those conversations into action. Sustainability works best when it actually becomes part of how we do business, rather than something that occurs alongside it. Our successes in the latest GDS Index show what can happen when industry, our Destination Management Organization, government, and community partners work together around practical, achievable initiatives that create real impact."

In 2025, DGV finalized a multi-faceted [Sustainability Strategy](#) aimed at ensuring Destination Greater Victoria is recognized as an international leader in sustainable tourism development and remains one of the top destinations in the world.

Part of this strategy includes DGV's annual [IMPACT Sustainability Travel & Tourism Summit](#) in Victoria which marks its 10th year in January 2027 and has a high profile globally as a leading forum on sustainability and regenerative tourism developments.

DESTINATION GREATER VICTORIA

Specific DGV sustainability programs include [Tap Into Local](#) which has established water bottle refill stations at hotels and other partner locations diverting 150,000 plastic water bottles annually from the waste stream, and its new comprehensive [Circular Economy Strategy](#) which focuses on optimizing resource use and minimizing waste.

Destination Greater Victoria has also been Biosphere Certified since 2023. Biosphere Certification is a third-party process that verifies DGV's sustainability claims based directly on the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This certification helps DGV remain aligned with global sustainability goals through measurable success.

"Working together, the Index results demonstrate that rolling up our sleeves, doing the work, and being innovative is driving our strong sustainability strategy forward," Nursey added. "It does not need to be performative, or radical, just common-sense initiatives that improve our community and the guest experience."

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About Destination Greater Victoria: Destination Greater Victoria (Greater Victoria Visitors and Convention Bureau) is our region's official, not-for-profit destination marketing and management organization working in partnership with approximately 950 businesses and municipalities in Greater Victoria. For more information, visit the Destination Greater Victoria [website](#).

Photos: Available for download [here](#).

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