



## **Five-Year Tourism Strategic Plan EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Five-Year Strategic Overview**

#### **Introduction**

Tourism New West has updated the five-year Strategic Plan in order to guide its efforts in promoting New Westminster as an exciting and attractive destination to visitors. This strategy will accompany the application for the 3% Municipal & Regional District Tax (MRDT), that provides sustainable funding for strategy implementation.

#### **TOURISM NEW WEST VISION**

Tourism New West will provide visitors with an authentic tourism experience that highlights the City's unique attributes and provides sustainable economic growth through tourism to the community.

#### **TOURISM NEW WEST MISSION**

To lead, develop and promote New Westminster in a way that will attract visitors to enjoy the opportunities in New Westminster as a destination through:

- Strategic partnerships and collaboration
- Innovation and knowledge management
- Effective stakeholder communication

## Strategic Context

- The global COVID-19 pandemic is undoubtedly the biggest challenge faced by the global tourism industry in decades. The COVID-19 situation presents significant impacts on tourism visitation to British Columbia and Canada. Marketing efforts based on recovery of visitation numbers is likely a focus for much of the planning period.
- Both the global COVID-19 crisis and the low Canadian dollar provide an opportunity for BC visitors to stay in Canada and respond favourably to staycations related messaging. As it is, 2 of the 3 strongest markets for New Westminister are Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley, which leaves Tourism New Westminister well positioned to capitalize during a tourism recovery.
- As tourism is competitive globally, destinations are increasingly looking to the execution of strong brands and development of unique product experiences to differentiate themselves and entice visitors. In order to increase its competitive position as a destination, a stronger focus on a unique identifier, a strong unifying theme, is needed for New Westminister.
- Destination BC's new 2020-2023 corporate strategy focuses on three strategic imperatives: integrated industry, destination stewardship and investment in iconics. The strategy encourages alignment with the BC destination tourism brand, provides funding through the Co-operative Marketing Partnerships Program, and offers resources to support the development of Remarkable Experiences.
- The digital shift to mobile and social media continues to increase in importance for travel planning and engagement in the destination. It will be critical for Tourism New Westminister to participate fully in the digital space to maximize opportunities to generate awareness, interest and conversion. In the beginning of the planning period, we will dedicate resources to visitor insights, visitor perceptions and basic visitor benchmarking. That will well position us to target appropriate markets, programs and messaging.

## New Westminster Positioning and Target Markets

### Positioning

The year-round products and experiences available within New Westminster that will be the focus of marketing efforts include:

- The Fraser River and the Waterfront
- Culinary
- Performing and Visual Arts
- Culture and the Heritage built environment
- Meetings and Conferences
- Festival and Events, including sport
- Film & Television Production Tourism
- Retail

### Overarching Messages

- Affordable – an experience for all budgets
- Acknowledgement – of the importance of Indigenous History and Culture
- Genuine – locals that welcome you into their community and lifestyles
- Connection – a discovery of Canada’s Royal City, its history and local culture
- Central – a hub connected by all modes of transportation
- Vibrant – a rich arts and culture scene
- Natural – mild climate and abundant green spaces near urban amenities

### Target Markets

Marketing campaigns will continue to attract more visitors from the following areas:

1. Metro Vancouver
2. Fraser Valley
3. B.C., Alberta & Pacific Northwest

Tourism New West will focus on the following key types of visitors:

1. Leisure and culture-seeking travellers
2. Meetings, retreats, weddings, sports teams, school groups and corporate
3. Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR)

Promotion and enhancement of overnight stays will be key in all marketing activities.

## Tourism Goals, Objectives & Strategies

### Goal 1 - Destination Marketing

Draw Visitors to New Westminster as their destination of choice with its distinctive identity, sense of place, and unique assets.

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#### The Objectives we aim to achieve in this area are:

- increase awareness of New Westminster as a destination
- increase visitation, average length of stay and perceived value of visit to New Westminster
- growth of local events and conferences
- greater visitor spending in local businesses

#### The Strategies we will use to meet the objectives include:

- developing, and implementing a communications plan
- establishing a baseline measurement and tracking method, for all digital platforms
- promoting accommodations and priority assets for overnight stays
- partnering with accommodators to implement guest surveying
- partnering with event organizers to expand reach, capacity, and access to resources
- supporting meeting and conference industry with resources for organizers and attendees
- building business-to-business relationships
- curating experience packages for various lengths of stay

#### The Targets we are aiming for:

- increase in digital platform interactions/engagement
- increase in accommodation occupancy and duration of stay
- visitor survey results
- visitor service resources provided to meetings/conferences
- increase in event attendance
- partnership development

## **Goal 2 - Visitor Services**

Ensure visitor information is available when and where visitors need it to enhance experiences and extend stays- whether they are planning their visit online or are in-destination enjoying an event.

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### **The Objectives we aim to achieve in this area are:**

- increase the total number of visitors served

### **The Strategies we will use to meet the objectives include:**

- developing and executing annual visitor servicing initiatives - online, in print, and in-person
- increasing staff to deliver higher service level

### **The Targets we are aiming for:**

- establish a 2021 baseline of visitors served
- increase the number of visitors served over 2021 baseline
- deliver a full-service Visitor Service program as part of DBC's network annually

### **Goal 3 - Destination Development**

Enhance the quality of tourism services, amenities, businesses and practices through effective planning and capacity-building to ensure New Westminster is well positioned to make future strategic decisions, address issues, and capitalize on opportunities.

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#### **The Objectives we aim to achieve in this area are:**

- increase services and satisfaction of local businesses
- affirm Tourism New West is the local recognized leader in destination management

#### **The Strategies we will use to meet the objectives include:**

- engaging stakeholders and partners to contribute to an enhanced tourism experience in New Westminster
- building organizational capacity to increase impact and enhance profile

#### **The Targets we are aiming for:**

- stakeholder satisfaction, measured through annual survey
- enhanced online presence of New Westminster tourism businesses
- regional campaign participation
- support for industry businesses and attractions looking to locate in New Westminster
- MRDT application is approved and collection established
- representatives contribute to 3 external committees or working groups
- board and committees have members from at least 6 key industry sectors

## **Funding Sources**

### **Current Funding**

Tourism New West has historically relied on an investment by the City of New Westminster for its core operating budget. While it will continue to work with the City as a funding partner, Tourism New West is in the process of applying for the MRDT for a sustainable source of revenue. MRDT funds will provide Tourism New West with the opportunity to grow and expand its promotion of the destination as early as Fall 2021.

### **Affordable Housing Funding**

In 2018, the BC government announced that online accommodation platforms (OAP) would be enabled to register to collect provincial sales tax and MRDT, where applicable.

Tourism New West supports affordable housing initiatives and will direct MRDT revenue generated from OAP to City of New Westminster affordable housing projects. Traditional MRDT (tax collected at hotels) will be dedicated to tourism marketing and implementation of this strategy.