



2025 MRDT Tactical Plan

Experience Comox Valley | 2024



Welcome - Thank you - Gilakas'la - ʔimot

Experience Comox Valley is grateful to live, work and play on the traditional and unceded territories of the K'ómoks First Nation



Overview

- **Vision:** The Comox Valley is recognized as the premier, year-round Vancouver Island destination for outdoor, culinary, and arts and cultural activities.
- **Mission:** Implement fiscally prudent destination marketing initiatives that are informed and tested through stakeholder engagement that are objectively focused on increasing overnight stays in the Comox Valley that drive economic benefit to business owners and residents.
- **Funding sources:**
 - Destination BC, MRDT (general), local government contribution, federal grants





Brand Strategy

- The Comox Valley's compelling uniqueness lies in its combination of diverse outdoor activities, rich culinary experiences and a welcoming community atmosphere.
- The strategic focus is on articulating this uniqueness in a cohesive, charming, and organized way, ensuring all marketing activities are aligned with a central theme that resonates with potential visitors.





Comox Valley Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC)

- Established in 2022
- 11 members from various sectors
 - Plus CVRD liaison & 4VI staff representatives
- Advise, review and recommend annual marketing and Destination Plan & budgets
- Work collaboratively and represent the best interests of tourism stakeholders in the Comox Valley



2025 Goals & Objectives



- **Support Sustainable Tourism Initiatives:** Promote and implement sustainable tourism practices that minimize negative impact and contribute positively to the environment and local communities.
- **Increase Revenue from Visitation:** Focus marketing efforts on attracting visitors year-round to boost revenue and stimulate the local economy.
- **Generate Leads for Businesses:** Develop and execute marketing campaigns that create business opportunities for local companies, enhancing their visibility and profitability.
- **Increase Competitiveness of the Comox Valley as a Desired Destination:** Enhance the region's appeal by showcasing its distinct offerings, including its blend of mountain and ocean activities, heritage, arts and vibrant community life.
- **Improve the Visitor Experience:** Continuously seek feedback to ensure visitors have memorable experiences that encourage repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth.
- **Increase Collaboration with Stakeholders:** Foster stronger partnerships with local businesses, Indigenous communities and other stakeholders to create a unified tourism environment.
- **Amplify Local Tourism Messaging:** Work closely with local businesses and tourism operators to amplify local messaging, with particular emphasis on regenerative tourism practices and experiences — those that increase the positive impact of tourism on the economy, community and environment while mitigating any negative effects.



Key Strategies

The 2025 Plan for Experience Comox Valley introduces key strategies designed to elevate the region as a destination:

- Position Destination Drivers
- Sustainable Tourism Practices
- Enhanced Brand Communication
- Strategic Growth Management
- Strengthened Stakeholder Collaboration
- Ongoing Market Research and Adaptation





Target Markets

Affluent, frequent travelers who are focused on touring and exploring new destinations. Individuals who seek to immerse themselves in local culture, nature and unique experiences.

- Explorer Quotient (EQ):
 - Rejuvenators, Authentic Experiencers, and Cultural Explorers
 - Free Spirits
- Geographic Locations:
 - Southern Vancouver Island, Lower Mainland
 - Alberta (Calgary, Edmonton), **Okanagan (Kelowna)**
 - Washington State
- Demographics:
 - Age 30+ couples and small groups
 - Families, particularly multi-generational groups
 - **Younger travelers** (20s & 30s) seeking high-energy, travel experiences



Marketing Always On

Year-round engagement with Experience Comox Valley for trip inspiration, local information, leads to businesses and increased click-throughs to ExperienceComoxValley.ca.

Organic Social Media:

- Content strategy & Engagement
- Amplify stakeholder content & events
- Crowdriff subscription

Website:

- Content & user experience enhancements
- **Events calendar revamp**
- **Itinerary builder integration**

Google Search Ads & Search Engine Optimization

Consumer Asset Development

- Written content
- Photography & Video



Marketing Campaigns

Encourage geographical and seasonal dispersion, and maximize budget allocation efficiency. Expand partnership network and collaborative promotional efforts to increase brand visibility, consumer engagement and direct bookings for travel to Comox Valley.

Media Advertising:

- Television
- Email Marketing
- Paid Social Media
- Display & Third Party Advertising

Partnership Marketing:

- DBC Consortiums (e.g. Golf VI, Ride Island, BC Ale Trail, BC Farmers' Markets, Paddle BC, Ahoy BC)
- Comox Valley Airport
- Other Strategic Partnerships (e.g. Island Taste Trail)



Marketing Other

Print Ads & Collateral Production:

Increase the distribution reach of printed materials, track engagement through QR code scans leading to website visits.

- 1 - 2 page ads/advertorials
- Annual Experience Comox Valley Guide
- **Sustainable Tourism Information Resource**
- **Cultural Heritage Guide**

Travel Trade & Media Relations:

Enhance travel trade partnerships by expanding the number of travel trade-ready stakeholders in the region.

- Media & trade FAMiliarization trips
- **Information and experience kits**
- **Tradeshow Participation**

Market Research:

Utilize insights to understand visitor behaviour & travel patterns.

- **Develop visitor personas**



Industry Development & Engagement

Collaborative tourism ecosystem with businesses implementing new sustainable practices, regenerative tourism products, and building innovative partnerships. Highly engaged owners & operators, organizations, and partners.

Tactics:

- Workshops
- Networking opportunities
- Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Local business & partner meetings
- Industry E-newsletters & communications
- Stakeholder survey
- Council presentations



Destination Development

Support event planners, businesses and organizations in the development and implementation of new and/or enhanced experiences, products and events that attract visitors to the region.

Events & Experiences Fund Grant Program

- Analyze 2023 & 2024 pilots
 - 6 recipients in 2023
 - 10 recipients to date in 2024
- Optimize a 2025 grant program



Visitor Centre & Information Services

Face to face interactions, email, phone and website inquiries are met with exceptional customer service, valuable information and useful resources.

Visitor Centre (open year round)

- Guides, maps, brochures, gallery displays, washrooms, consignment gift shop, picnic area & playground

Mobile Visitor Information Kiosks (Summer)

- Highly visible downtown locations in Courtenay, Comox and Cumberland
- Select events & festivals





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Questions?