

Appendix 2.3 One-Year Tactical Plan

Under the *Provincial Sales Tax Act*, all designated recipients, including designated recipients not subject to the renewal application requirement, must provide specific reports to the Province annually. As such, all designated recipients (or the designated recipient's service provider), are required to complete and submit the following One-year Tactical Plan **no later than November 30th each year for years two through five.**

If the One Year Tactical plan has been completed before November 30th, please submit the plan before the deadline. A Five-year Strategic Business Plan is required in year 1 and the One-Year Tactical Plan would be a part of your MRDT application submission.

The One-year Tactical Plan must be consistent with the Five-year Strategic Business Plan and be based on the calendar year.

A sample Tactical Plan template has been provided below. However, the format of the Tactical Plan may be developed specific to your community needs and resources.

Similar to the Five-year Strategic Business Plan, the One-year Tactical Plan must adhere to the MRDT program principles, regulations and guidelines (see box below).

Please ensure there is alignment between provincial tourism strategies and community tourism efforts. Additionally, designated recipients should make their One-year Tactical Plans available to tourism industry stakeholders.

If you wish to make material modifications to the Five-year goals, strategies or targets, the changes must be identified in the One-year Tactical Plan and may require approval from the Province (see Section 11: Amendments in Program Requirements).

Your One-Year Tactical Plan must contain the following information:

- Key learning and conclusions from the previous year
- An overview of the strategic direction from the Five-Year Strategic Business Plan
- Details about activities and tactics for the upcoming year
- Expected outcomes
- Availability of revenue from other sources to fund projects in addition to the funds from the MRDT tax (Reminder: funds from the tax must be incremental to existing sources of funding. The funds from the tax must not replace existing sources of tourism funding in a community)
- A proposed budget for the year ahead

For questions, please contact Destination British Columbia at MRDT@destinationbc.ca.

Quick Reference Guide (from the MRDT Program Requirements):

- *The intention of the tax is to assist designated recipients to fund tourism marketing, programs, and projects.*
- *Funds from the MRDT program are intended to augment current funding and cannot be used to replace existing sources of tourism funding in a community.*
- *The MRDT program is intended to contribute to the increase of local tourism revenue, visitation, and economic benefits and should be supported by local government and tourism stakeholders.*

The MRDT program principles are:

- *Effective tourism marketing, programs and projects*
- *Effective local-level stakeholder support, and inter-community collaboration*

One-Year Tactical Plan Template

Designated Recipient: City of Nanaimo

Designated Accommodation Area: Nanaimo and Region

Date Submitted: November 25, 2025

MRDT Repeal Date: June 2029

Five Year Period: January 1, 2025 - January 1, 2030

A description and instructions pertaining to each section is provided in grey text as a guide only. **The format of your One-Year Tactical Plan may be developed specific to your community needs and resources.** If using this template, please delete the blue text and provide your response accordingly. If using your own report template, please ensure it includes the following sections:

Section 1: Overview and Update to Five-year Strategic Business Plan	
Heading	Description
Strategic Direction	Background and Direction : Nanaimo In Motion Nanaimo’s visitor economy has long reflected the dynamic nature of the Island itself, steady in potential but rarely following a single, predictable trajectory. As the Island’s central hub, Nanaimo has long served as both a gateway and a base camp for regional exploration. Its market performance however, continues to evolve alongside shifting travel behaviour, accessibility, and investment in infrastructure that is changing the face of the city. In 2024, Tourism Nanaimo, working with local industry, Snuneymuxw First Nation, and the City, completed the community’s 5-Year Destination Development Strategy (2025–2030). This strategy extends beyond growing visitation; it envisions a circular, doughnut-aligned tourism economy that balances economic opportunity with environmental and social responsibility. Success for the tourism sector in Nanaimo is interdependent; it thrives on collaboration between industry innovation, Indigenous leadership, municipal investment, and community values. With the City advancing revitalization, safety, housing, and accessibility initiatives, the local tourism sector is evolving in step, anchored in sustainability, inclusion, and co-designed experiences. Together, these coordinated efforts ensure tourism acts not as a stand-alone industry, but as an integrated, regenerative force that strengthens Nanaimo’s economic resilience, community wellbeing, and environmental stewardship. Building on this foundation, Tourism Nanaimo has focused its efforts on execution and alignment within the community. Guided by the 5-Year Strategy (2025–2030) and the 2023 Memorandum of Understanding among the Vancouver Island Conference Centre (VICC), local accommodators, and the sport and business event sectors, the organization has made tangible progress positioning Nanaimo as a desirable and competitive host city for conferences, sport, and business gatherings. This framework has created a shared objective for pricing, bidding, and servicing, turning collaboration into measurable outcomes. Tourism Nanaimo working closely with the City and community partners has refreshed the Sport Tourism Strategy, using data-driven analysis to prioritize event attraction that fits venue capacity and local use patterns. This ensures minimal disruption while elevating Nanaimo’s reputation as an inclusive, capable, and welcoming host city. Additionally, facilitated LGTBQ+ training and education initiatives for operators and

front-line workers have strengthened destination readiness and advanced the city's reputation as an accessible, people-first place to visit.

Year 2 | Activate and Scale

Year 2 of the 5-Year Strategy (2025–2030) focuses on momentum and measured expansion, turning the industry's priorities into scalable, community-driven impact. These activations will continue to be grounded in community, and sector-supported initiatives and will deliver measurable outcomes aligned with the Strategy's long-term vision.

Key Focus Areas:

- Deepen sector collaboration and strengthen partnerships with Snuneymuxw First Nation through co-designed programming and shared storytelling.
- Scale sport tourism attraction and venue readiness to host right-sized bids that align with community capacity.
- Advance the business events strategy, targeting high-value conferences through joint marketing and coordinated sales activity.
- Increase partnerships in arts, culture, and downtown animation to enhance off-season visitation in collaboration with the City, BIAs, and arts & cultural organizations.
- Embed accessibility and inclusivity into experience development, adding distinctive value to existing products.
- Grow off-Island markets through campaigns aligned with Tourism Nanaimo's brand and Destination BC's *Iconics: Infinite Coast* Strategy.
- Sustain industry participation through co-design and collaborative governance of destination initiatives.

Pillars of the 2025-2030 Strategy

The 2026 Annual Strategic Plan is structured around four interconnected strategic pillars:

- 1. Be a Strong Ally** – A culture of inclusivity, equality, and support. Continuance of relations and partnerships with Snuneymuxw First Nation, build relationships with community and cultural associations, amplify accessible and inclusive experiences, and invest in community engagement to grow social license for tourism.
- 2. Better Together** – Strengthen industry alignment and capacity. Create strong connections within the tourism industry, build industry capacity and expertise through training and workshops, and advocate for tourism infrastructure including gathering spaces, trails, and transportation connectivity.
- 3. Build Out the Real Nanaimo** – Diversify and enhance visitor experiences. Co-develop signature events, support experienced operators in product development, tell resident stories through authentic marketing, and create itineraries that showcase Nanaimo's cultural, marine, and natural identity.
- 4. Elevate the Destination** – Position Nanaimo competitively. Grow sport tourism, expand business events and meetings capacity, strengthen brand awareness through strategic marketing, and optimize digital presence and conversion pathways.

These pillars are reinforced by four cross-cutting elements that guide every decision: Sustainability, Diversity-Equity-Inclusion-Accessibility (DEIA), Resident Engagement, and

	Data-Driven Decision Making Each tactical priority, whether advancing business events, sport, culture, or Indigenous partnerships, returns value to the community, reinforces sustainability, and strengthens Nanaimo’s standing within Vancouver Island and the broader BC tourism economy. Built on the City's principles of the Official Community Plan: <i>Nanaimo ReImagined</i>, the 5-Year Strategy (2025–2030) ensures that tourism acts as a circular, regenerative system designed to: • Drive prosperity without overextending capacity. • Expand inclusivity, accessibility, and belonging as foundational pillars. • Support long-term resilience through diversified markets, seasonal balance, and shared governance. Entering 2026, Tourism Nanaimo carries strong momentum, underpinned by brand growth, inclusive leadership, and MRDT stability, while remaining attentive to challenges such as labour shortages, housing pressures, seasonality gaps, and climate-related risks. Success in Year 2 depends on industry participation and collective ownership to bring Nanaimo’s full potential to fruition.																												
Key Learnings and Conclusions	State of the Market & Outlook Tourism does not operate in a vacuum. Every visitor decision, every booking, every extended stay is shaped by forces far beyond our immediate control, macroeconomic trends, shifting travel behaviors, climate patterns, reconciliation, and evolving technology. Tourism Nanaimo entered 2025 on a solid and continuous growth trajectory, with the hospitality sector demonstrating healthy fundamentals: rising visitor demand, a diversified accommodation mix, and stronger collaboration among the City, VICC, and local operators. According to the 2025 STR Hospitality Submarket Report¹, 12-month average occupancy reached 66.5%, ADR \$178.51, and RevPAR \$118.65, reflecting year-over-year gains of +7%, +1.2%, and +8.3% respectively. As of September 2025, occupancy approached 70%, ADR exceeded \$185, and RevPAR rose more than 10% over 2024. Despite a 2023 influx of new hotel inventory, the market has stabilized, with both upscale and midscale segments achieving steady rate recovery and sustained demand. <table><tr><th></th><th>Full Year 2022</th><th>Full Year 2023</th><th>Variance 2023 vs 2022</th><th>Full Year 2024</th><th>YTD 2025 September</th><th>Variance 2022 vs 2025</th></tr><tr><td>Occupancy</td><td>68.3</td><td>62.4</td><td>-8.60%</td><td>62.9</td><td>69.7</td><td>+1.4pts (+2.0%)</td></tr><tr><td>Average Daily Rate</td><td>172.16</td><td>179.27</td><td>4.10%</td><td>175.33</td><td>185.52</td><td>+13.36 (+7.8%)</td></tr><tr><td>RevPar</td><td>117.53</td><td>111.87</td><td>-4.80%</td><td>110.26</td><td>129.36</td><td>+11.83 (+10.1%)</td></tr></table> Nanaimo’s total inventory sits at 1,327 rooms across 24 properties, and is expected to remain stable through 2026, allowing operators to focus on yield management, longer stays, and higher-value segments rather than price competition. The City’s ongoing downtown and accessibility investments, coupled with the Tourism Nanaimo–VICC–hotel MOU, are strengthening midweek business and conference performance. Simultaneously, sport tourism continues to grow through data-informed bidding and economic impact modelling that balances local use with hosting capacity. Together, these		Full Year 2022	Full Year 2023	Variance 2023 vs 2022	Full Year 2024	YTD 2025 September	Variance 2022 vs 2025	Occupancy	68.3	62.4	-8.60%	62.9	69.7	+1.4pts (+2.0%)	Average Daily Rate	172.16	179.27	4.10%	175.33	185.52	+13.36 (+7.8%)	RevPar	117.53	111.87	-4.80%	110.26	129.36	+11.83 (+10.1%)
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dynamics suggest a healthy, maturing visitor economy transitioning toward performance stability. Looking ahead; steady growth is forecasted for 2026, supported by a stable supply base, sustained ADR growth, and diversified demand across leisure, business, and sport segments.

¹ 2025 STR Hospitality Submarket Report, Nanaimo (YTD September 2025)

² British Columbia's Travel Markets Outlook 2025 – The Conference Board of Canada

Brand Evolution, Reputation, and Positioning

2025 marked a significant step in Nanaimo's brand evolution. Building on the 2024 rebrand, Tourism Nanaimo translated creative strategy into measurable reach, awareness, and consideration across target markets.

The *Come As You Are* identity now reflects lived experience, anchored in authenticity, inclusion, and belonging. It positions Nanaimo as the *anti-resort*: a creative, real, year-round city rooted in culture and connection. In 2025, the brand was activated through integrated storytelling, consistent messaging, and strong media and PR alignment, reinforcing Nanaimo's reputation as a welcoming, culturally vibrant, and accessible destination aligned with the community's values of *Nanaimo ReImagined*, ensuring through unified adoption across partners, Nanaimo's brand will continue to drive measurable economic impact while remaining proudly rooted in place and purpose.

Results and Highlights:

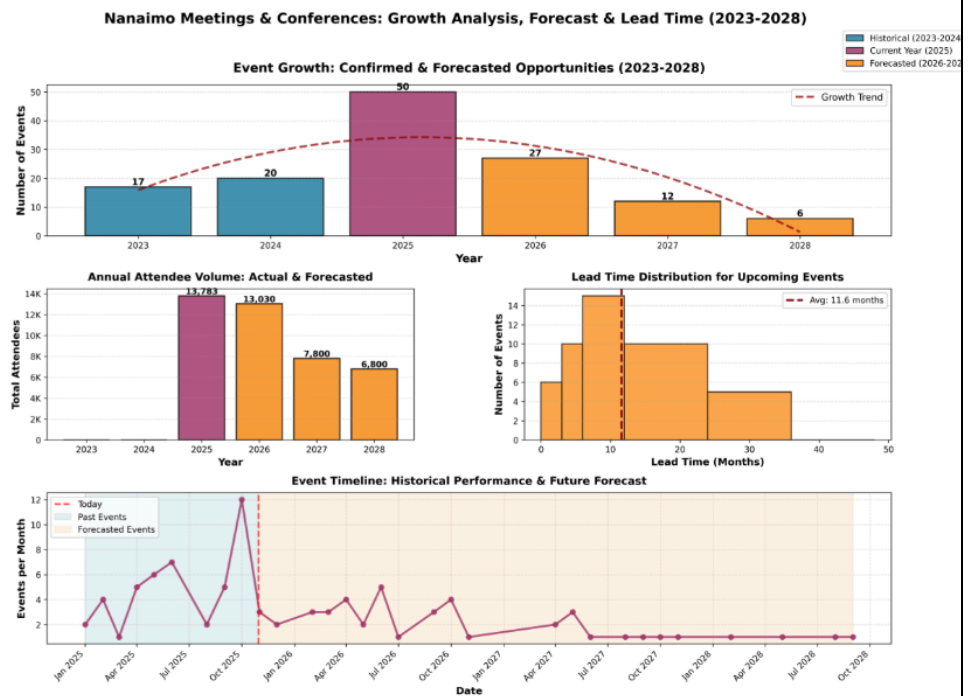
- **Earned Media:** *BC Business* recognized Nanaimo as one of BC's *Most Resilient Cities*; *Vancouver Magazine* and *Inspired Magazine* featured the city's walkability, inclusivity, and creative culture.
- **Cultural & Indigenous Collaboration:** Co-marketing with Snuneymuxw First Nation elevated visibility for *Snuneymuxw Days* and *Saysutshun Island*, underscoring authentic Indigenous-led tourism.
- **Influencer Partnerships:** Over a dozen creators, including *Jason Lucas*, *Mina Mercury*, *Justin Abit*, and *Josh Rimer*, showcased Nanaimo's outdoor, culinary, and cultural vibrancy.
- **PR Activations:** Campaigns such as *Luminous Paths*, the *JUNO Awards*, and *Pride* extended Nanaimo's cultural story far beyond single events.

Heading into 2026, the brand focus shifts from awareness to conversion:

- Extend awareness from consideration to loyalty through year-round campaigns.
- Continue cross-promotional storytelling with Snuneymuxw First Nation, local industry, and City partners.
- Strengthen reach in Alberta, Ontario, and U.S. short-haul markets through DBC co-op initiatives.
- Embed inclusivity, accessibility, and authenticity across all content.
- Leverage FIFA 2026 and DBC's *Icons: Infinite Coast* activations for high-visibility guerrilla marketing opportunities.

Business Meetings and Conferences

Nanaimo's meetings and events program has evolved from foundational groundwork to demonstrable market momentum. Between 2023 and 2025, the city experienced 194% growth in confirmed events—rising from 17 events in 2023 to 50 in 2025—while simultaneously building a robust pipeline of 45 forecasted ² opportunities through 2028. This trajectory reflects both strategic positioning and the power of coordinated industry collaboration. *Note: The below graphic figures do not include sport, film, crew (airlines), group tours/travel trade, leisure - these figures are Tourism Nanaimo's confirmed bookings, not overall growth with City wide partners.



The Team Nanaimo model has been instrumental in this growth. By uniting the Vancouver Island Conference Centre (VICC), local accommodators, Snuneymuxw First Nation, and Tourism Nanaimo under a single sales and marketing umbrella, the partnership has delivered shared bids, aligned pricing strategies, and cohesive destination messaging that strengthens competitiveness across all market segments. In a marketplace where meeting planners evaluate destinations against increasingly complex criteria, including cultural authenticity, sustainability commitments, and seamless logistics, fragmented efforts simply cannot compete. Working as one unified entity allows Nanaimo to present a compelling value proposition that addresses planner needs holistically while maximizing the economic impact distributed across the entire community.

Targeted initiatives such as hosted-buyer showcases with Outside the Box B.C., B2B digital campaigns, and comprehensive planner toolkits have generated tangible results: a stronger RFP pipeline, multiple confirmed site visits, and multi-year bookings that provide revenue certainty for local businesses. The data tells a clear story of momentum: 27 confirmed events are already secured for 2026, with 12 additional bookings confirmed for 2027, and average lead times of 11.6 months demonstrating planners' confidence in booking well in advance. Attendee volume reflects this growth trajectory, with 2025 hosting an estimated 17,395 delegates and currently a forecasted volume on confirmed events of 13,700 attendees annually through 2028.

Looking ahead, national trends underscore Nanaimo's opportunity. The Conference Board of Canada¹ projects that business events will surpass pre-pandemic levels by 2026, creating expanded demand for destinations that can accommodate association meetings, corporate gatherings, and increasingly, ESG-forward events. With major conventions and city-wide conferences filling capacity in Vancouver and Victoria, Nanaimo is strategically positioned to capture overflow and secondary market demand. The city's accessible location, competitive rates, walkable downtown core, and authentic partnerships with Snuneymuxw First Nation offer planners a distinct alternative—one that delivers cultural richness, sustainability credentials, and logistical ease within reach of both metropolitan hubs.

The future of MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) in Nanaimo depends on deepening this collaborative foundation. As the sector continues evolving toward hybrid formats, experiential programming, and values-aligned hosting, the Team Nanaimo partnership must remain agile, coordinated, and committed to shared success. By maintaining alignment across accommodators, venues, cultural partners, and destination marketing, Nanaimo can solidify its reputation as a capable, welcoming, and differentiated host, capturing not just bookings, but long-term relationships with planners and organizations seeking meaningful event experiences. The growth trajectory from 2023 through 2028 is a roadmap enabled by collaboration and sustained through collective commitment to seeing Nanaimo thrive.

¹ British Columbia's Travel Markets Outlook 2025 – The Conference Board of Canada

² YTD September 2025 Tourism Nanaimo Meetings and Conventions Reporting

Visitor Economy, Markets & Outlook

Total visitor spending in Nanaimo reached \$267.4 million (YTD August 2025), representing 1.38% of provincial tourism spending⁴. This recovery has been driven by intra-provincial and domestic travel, with shoulder-season gains from sport tourism, conference activity, and targeted short-haul markets in BC and Alberta.

Key Target Markets

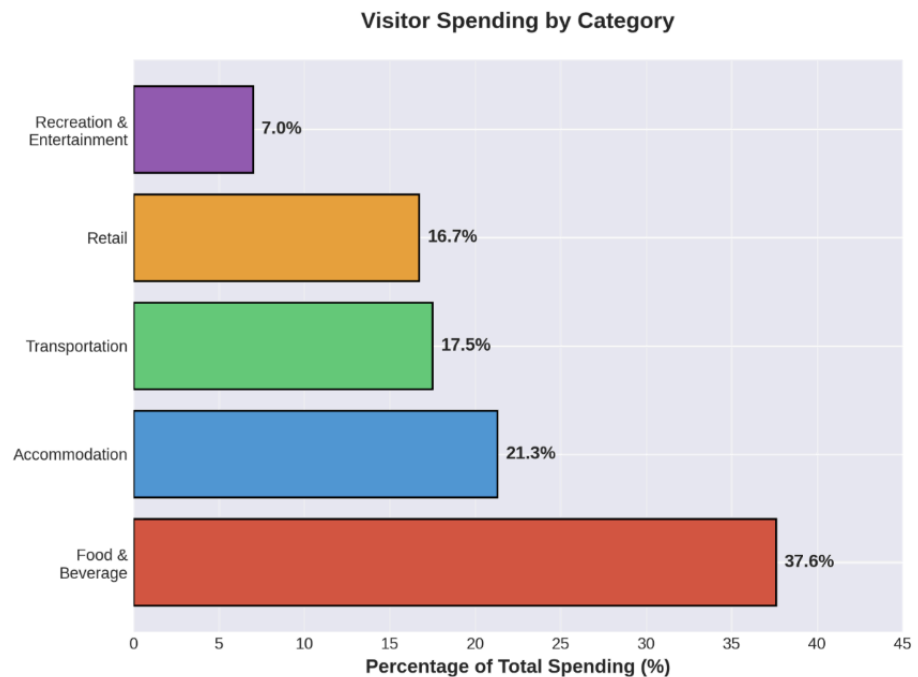
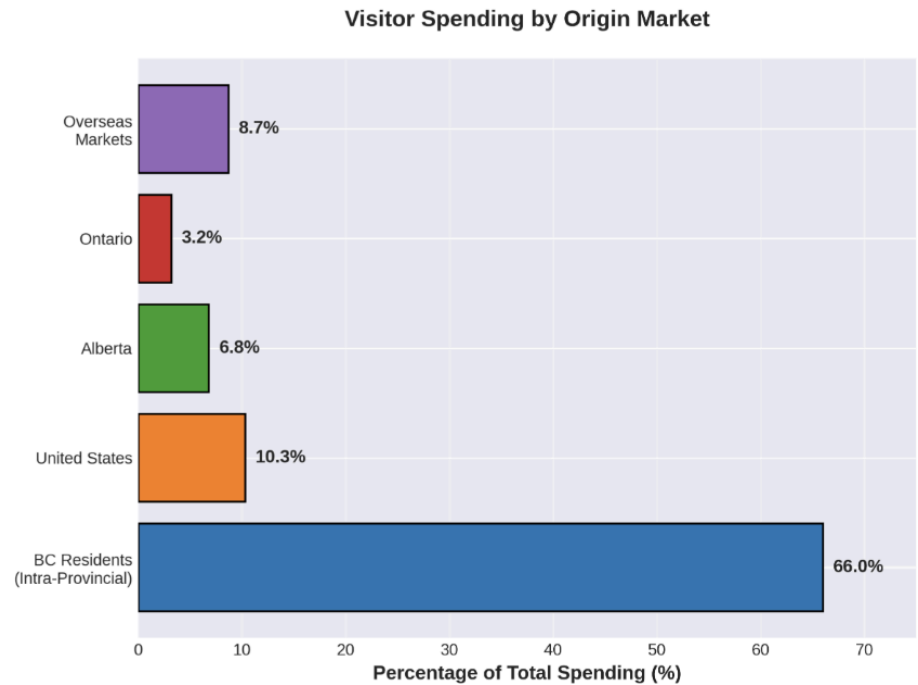
Primary Short-Haul Markets (Day Trip Focus)

- **Vancouver Island (Greater Victoria & Mid-Island):** Building awareness among Island residents and encouraging overnight extensions beyond traditional day trips
- **Greater Vancouver & Fraser Valley:** Primary drivers of shoulder-season visitation, with enhanced ferry access via Hullo creating new day-tripper opportunities
- **Washington State (Seattle):** Strong potential for short-lead U.S. travel supported by ferry and harbour air access

Secondary Markets (Overnight Focus)

- **Alberta (Calgary & Edmonton):** High-yield markets seeking authentic, non-resort experiences with value-for-experience mindset
- **Ontario (Toronto):** Emerging cultural and conference market

Nanaimo's Visitor Spending Analysis 2026 ⁴



Nanaimo's spending patterns reveal a distinctive competitive position. Visitors prioritize experiential investment over accommodation costs, channeling spending into local food and beverage, cultural venues, and retail—28% try local food and drink, 24% visit natural attractions, and 20% explore local markets⁴. This "value-for-experience" mindset directly benefits downtown businesses, craft breweries, restaurants, and cultural operators, creating a circular economy that keeps spending within the regional ecosystem through partnerships with Gabriola Island, Snuneymuxw First Nation, and surrounding communities. Expanded access via ferry, air, and harbour air carriers has shifted

perceptions, positioning Nanaimo as both approachable and distinctive. Tourism Nanaimo's *Come As You Are* brand continues to resonate with regional and national audiences, celebrating local businesses, culture, and experiences that embody inclusivity and authenticity.

Growth

BC's tourism outlook remains robust. Overnight visits increased 4.4% in 2025, 2.4% is forecasted for 2026, and average 1.3% annually through 2029¹. This growth is overwhelmingly domestic, Canadians are redirecting U.S. travel budgets toward destinations closer to home, with BC ranking as Canada's top travel consideration (51% of out-of-province travelers)².

This presents a strategic window: 17.3 million Canadians represent immediate two-year travel potential², actively seeking nature walks, oceanside beaches, and authentic local experiences - assets Nanaimo delivers naturally. Provincial visitor spending is projected to grow 5–7% annually³, driven by Vancouver, Alberta, and Washington State markets prioritizing accessibility, authenticity, and Indigenous cultural experiences.

Marketing partnerships with Destination BC and leveraging Destination Canada will be essential to capturing this growth, positioning Nanaimo's community-based experiences within BC's competitive landscape.

Constraints

Supply-side pressures threaten to limit growth. Province-wide short-term rental regulations⁴ have reduced accommodation inventory, creating advantage for markets like Nanaimo with stable hotel capacity. However, labour shortages persist, employment in accommodation and food services remains below pre-pandemic levels, with wage pressures escalating amid housing affordability challenges. Nanaimo requires continued investment in affordable housing for young professionals to retain talent.

Climate risk compounds these challenges. Extended wildfire seasons, drought conditions, and air quality disruptions directly impact visitation and require agile communication strategies in partnership with Destination BC, the BC Hotel Association, and regional authorities to maintain visitor confidence.

Net Promoter Score & Resident Sentiment

Critically, over 80% of residents affirm⁴ that visitors contribute meaningfully to the local economy, providing the social license necessary for sustainable growth. With 8.8% of jobs directly tied to tourism⁵, this resident support translates into authentic visitor experiences that strengthen Nanaimo's Net Promoter Score and drive repeat visitation.

Resident Engagement Strategy: Tourism Nanaimo is actively measuring and growing resident NPS through community campaigns, transparency about tourism benefits, and engagement in itinerary development—following proven models that show resident satisfaction translates directly to visitor satisfaction.

Economic Proof Points: With 8.8% of Nanaimo jobs directly tied to tourism⁵ and robust growth in accommodation, food services, and arts sectors, residents see tangible community benefits, strengthening the positive feedback loop between visitor experience and local pride.

Nanaimo's Tourism Virtuous Cycle

A Self-Reinforcing System for Sustainable Economic Growth



This model positions Nanaimo as Vancouver Island's emerging cultural and creative hub, where short-haul accessibility meets authentic local experiences, creating economic resilience through diversified visitor spending that directly benefits community stakeholders.

Critical Priority: Shoulder Season

Industry consensus identifies October-through-May performance as the decisive growth lever. Summer peaks create revenue volatility and limit year-round employment stability. Addressing seasonality is not merely a Tourism Nanaimo objective, it is an economic imperative shared by accommodators, restaurants, attractions, and transportation providers across the region.

¹ British Columbia's Travel Markets Outlook 2025 – The Conference Board of Canada

² Destination Canada – 2024 GTRP Highlights Report

³ World Travel & Tourism Council, 2025

⁴ Canadian Tourism Data Collective's Lodging Aligned Spend Reporting (LASR YTD August 2025)

⁵ City of Nanaimo – State of the Economy Report (2024)

BC Economy, Travel Trends, and Risks

Nanaimo's economy continues to diversify. The city's population now exceeds 107,000 and is attracting younger, working-age residents¹. Growth across accommodation, food services, and arts sectors signals Nanaimo's emergence as a cultural tourism hub within BC, with 8.8% of jobs in Nanaimo¹ being directly related to the Tourism Industry. Resident sentiment remains positive², with more than 80% agreeing visitors contribute meaningfully to the local economy.

Three macro shifts are shaping visitor behaviour:

1. **Value-for-experience:** Travellers prioritize cultural, culinary, and meaningful local experiences over luxury or convenience.
2. **Event and fandom travel:** Music, sport, and cultural events drive extended stays and repeat visitation.
3. **Built-in sustainability expectations:** Visitors now assume destinations are responsible, inclusive, and digitally intuitive.

For 2026, Tourism Nanaimo's focus will remain on short-haul markets, Greater Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, Alberta, and Washington State⁵, to strengthen shoulder-season occupancy. As international recovery continues, co-op marketing through Destination BC and Canada will amplify national exposure. Experience packaging, digital itinerary tools, and personalized content will enhance trip planning and conversion.

Key risks include transportation reliability, labour and housing pressures, and climate volatility. Addressing these requires:

- Coordinated marketing around travel alternatives and pacing during peak periods.
- Workforce retention programs and predictable event calendars.
- Adaptable programming and communication during wildfires, and or heat events.

Maintaining brand consistency and inclusive messaging, coupled by positive in destination experiences will sustain visitor confidence through these fluctuations.

¹ City of Nanaimo – State of the Economy Report (2024)

² DBC Resident Perceptions Report: Nanaimo (2025)

⁴ MMGY Global Compass 2025

⁵ World Travel & Tourism Council (2025)

⁶ RBC Quarterly Canadian Outlook, September 2025

Reconciliation and Indigenous Partnership: Actioning Co-Creation

The continued implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and advancing reconciliation legislation are fundamentally reshaping how tourism intersects with Indigenous governance, economic participation, and stewardship in British Columbia. Recent lands-back agreements, including the 2025 transfer of Mount Benson North to Snuneymuxw First Nation¹ and Cowichan Valley lands returned to Lyackson First Nation and Cowichan Tribes² signal actionable steps in province-wide shifts toward Indigenous stewardship and shared decision-making.

For Tourism Nanaimo, this underscores an imperative; authentic partnership with

Snuneymuxw First Nation and neighbouring Nations to ensure destination growth advances reconciliation, shared prosperity, and respect for Indigenous rights and title. The Strategy (2025–2030) established 'Be a Strong Ally' as its first strategic pillar, centering reciprocal relationship-building with Snuneymuxw First Nation.

Year 2 tactics include:

- Continued consultation with Snuneymuxw First Nation leadership to support their tourism ambitions and explore development
- Co-marketing initiatives that elevate visibility for Snuneymuxw Days, Saysutshun Island, and Indigenous-led experiences, ensuring authentic, Nation-led storytelling.
- Working with Elders in the community on language revitalization and event protocols.
- Indigenous awareness and cultural training for tourism industry partners, developed in partnership with Snuneymuxw First Nation, ITBC, and DBC.
- Volunteer support at Nation-led events, demonstrating reciprocity beyond economic partnership.

This work cannot be rushed, nor can it be transactional. It requires patience, humility, and an unwavering commitment to following the Nation's lead. The pace of relationship-building is set by the Snuneymuxw Nation, Tourism Nanaimo's role is to listen, support, and act with integrity.

¹ Mount Benson North Transferred Petroglyph Development Group-Press Release

² B.C Government; Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation Lyackson First Nation, Cowichan

Inclusive Tourism 2SLGBTQIA+ Experience

Tourism Nanaimo's commitment to accessibility and inclusion is not a campaign or a checkbox, it is central to how we operate and how we build the destination together with community. Guided by the Strategy (2025–2030), this work goes beyond training and messaging to create tangible systems for listening, learning, and adapting alongside the community.

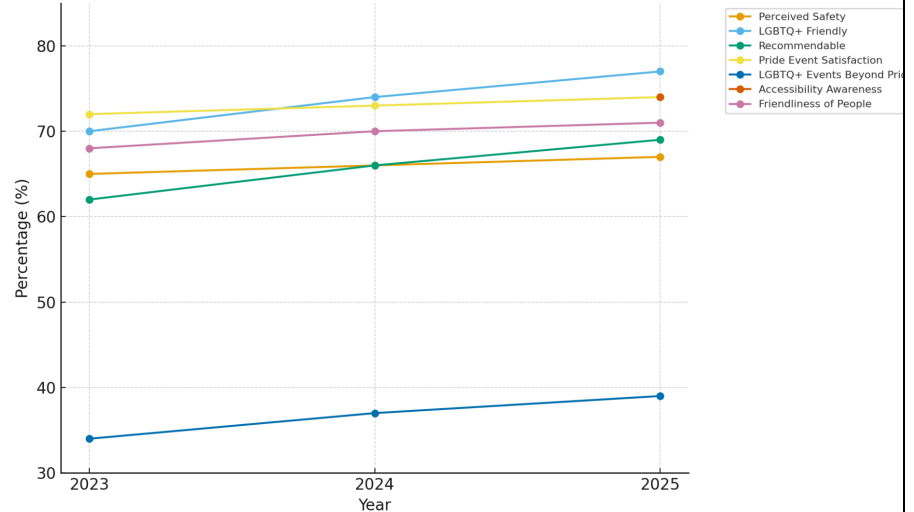
Over three consecutive years (2023–2025), Tourism Nanaimo has surveyed both residents and visitors to understand lived experiences across 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion, accessibility, and belonging. The 2025 survey expanded into new areas, disability, chronic conditions, and transportation, revealing that accessibility is no longer a niche concern, but a shared design imperative for how people experience Nanaimo.

Across all three years, the story has been consistent: Nanaimo's friendliness, authenticity, and grassroots connection remain its strongest assets. Pride continues to serve as a cornerstone of visibility and community celebration, while feedback points to a growing need for year-round queer and sober programming, improved accessibility, and clearer visibility of support and resources. These insights reinforce that inclusion is not just good practice, it's good economics.

As we continue to embed accessibility, safety, and authenticity into our destination development, the role of every partner—businesses, event organizers, and residents becomes vital. The path forward is about co-design: ensuring that all travellers can access and enjoy what makes Nanaimo distinct, and that our approach remains circular, community-driven, and grounded in belonging. Through this shared effort, Tourism Nanaimo and its partners will continue to build a destination where *welcome* is not

performative, it's lived and felt in each touchpoint and experience throughout the city.

Year-over-Year Progress: Inclusive Tourism & 2SLGBTQIA+ Experience (2023–2025)



¹Understanding 2SLGBTQIA+ Experiences in Nanaimo: A Three-Year Community Snapshot, 2023–2025

Cruise Development & Port Partnership

Cruise represents a strategically aligned growth opportunity for Nanaimo's visitor economy. Under the leadership of the Port of Nanaimo, 2026 will see eight confirmed ship calls, a balanced mix of boutique and expedition lines such as *Holland America's Noordam* and *Azamara Pursuit*. These calls mark Nanaimo's continued emergence as a boutique coastal port of call, positioned to compliment rather than compete with larger Island destinations.

Passenger demographics for these ships skew toward experienced, mature travelers seeking authenticity, culture, and connection. They value meaningful, walkable experiences and tend to spend more time and money onshore when the destination feels genuine and accessible. The average day-call passengers contribute \$150–\$200 in direct spending ² during their 4–8 hours ashore, while home-port (turn) operations generate upwards of \$400–\$600 per passenger through extended accommodation, transportation, provisioning, and pre/post packages. Crew spending during turn operations adds an estimated 25–30% incremental value through local retail and services.

For 2026, Tourism Nanaimo's role in the Port partnership will focus on destination readiness, aligning with partners on onshore experiences with the city's *Come As You Are* brand while ensuring that growth in cruise tourism reflects community values, sustainability principles, and Indigenous partnership. The organization will continue to manage the Ambassador Program at the passenger terminal and throughout the downtown core, ensuring visitors are greeted by informed local representatives who can direct passengers toward authentic, locally owned experiences.

The near-term opportunity is defined by value, not volume. Day calls drive meaningful shoulder-season visitation and provide testbeds for coordinated programming, cross-sector partnerships, and short-stay packages that encourage return travel. Long-term, the Port's 2025–2027 Cruise Development Framework outlines an ambition to

explore home-porting viability, a transition that would enable embarkation and disembarkation operations directly from Nanaimo. This model, while requiring significant infrastructure coordination (USCBP capacity, accommodation inventory, transportation services), would multiply economic impact across sectors, positioning Nanaimo as a fully integrated maritime hub.

For Tourism Nanaimo, this evolution aligns with the Five-Year Destination Development Strategy’s emphasis on sustainable growth, authentic representation, and collaborative governance. Cruise development offers a platform to showcase the city’s downtown revitalization, waterfront connectivity, and cultural assets, while supporting nearby partners such as the Vancouver Island Conference Centre, the Nanaimo Museum, the Port Theatre, and Snuneymuxw First Nation.

As cruise visitation increases, coordinated management is essential. The Port’s approach emphasizes accessibility, sustainability, and community readiness, values mirrored in Tourism Nanaimo’s strategic pillars. The Port promotes cross-sector coordination to guide program design, visitor flow, and new shore excursion development, ensuring benefits are distributed equitably and experiences remain aligned with local identity.

In the context of Nanaimo’s maturing visitor economy, cruise offers both a seasonal stabilizer and a strategic differentiator. It integrates marine travel into the city’s broader circular economy, supporting small businesses, extending stays in future, and reinforcing Nanaimo’s reputation as a welcoming host city. Growth in this sector will be measured not by the number of ships, but by the depth of impact in how effectively each arrival contributes to the story, economy, and identity of the destination itself.

Cruise Development Summary | Port of Nanaimo & Tourism Nanaimo (2026–2030)

Category	Details
Confirmed Ship Calls (2026)	8 total (1 disembarkation, 7 day calls)
Passengers per Call (Range)	500–1,900 passengers
Cruise Line Type	Boutique & Expedition Lines (<i>Holland America, Azamara</i>)
Average Time Ashore	6–8 hours
Primary Demographic	Mature, authenticity-seeking travelers (55+), primarily from U.S., Canada, U.K., and Australia

	Main Focus (2026–2027)	Increase day calls and strengthen onshore experiences through coordinated partnership programs
	Long-Term Goal (2028–2030)	Explore home-porting potential for full embarkation/disembarkation operations
¹Port of Nanaimo, 2025 Cruise Development Response, November 2025 ²Expedition Cruise Network Growth Report 2025 Local Industry Sentiment Tourism Nanaimo’s 2025 industry engagement for this year's tactical plan, encompassed 15 interviews, 105 survey responses, and the October sector workshop attended by 57 industry members; revealing a tourism landscape experiencing strong forward momentum while also confronting structural challenges that shape the conditions for the 2026 tactical plan. Partners consistently acknowledge that the sector is healthier, more coordinated, and more strategically aligned than in previous years, with particular recognition for successful brand development, strengthened cultural partnerships, and expanded capacity through key roles such as the Sport Tourism Coordinator. This positive sentiment reflects a growing sense of confidence in the direction of the 5-Year Destination Development Strategy and reinforces that the foundational work of Year One is now translating into visible progress across the sector. At the same time, industry feedback highlighted critical pressure points that inform tactical decisions in Year Two. Persistent fragmentation across operators, unclear role boundaries between the City, Tourism Nanaimo, Chamber etc., and fatigue caused by the need for clearer coordination mechanisms. Partners also identified ongoing perception challenges around safety and the evening economy as barriers to visitor experiences and destination competitiveness. The lack of packaged, multi-partner experiences; summarized locally as the lingering “What should we do tonight?” gap remains a priority for improvement, particularly in light of major opportunities such as the 2026 Beyond Van Gogh exhibition. Underlying all feedback is a strong consensus that industry cohesion is essential for progress. Partners express that “Better Together” is not just a strategic pillar but the prerequisite for achieving the outcomes envisioned in the strategy. There is a clear appetite for more structured collaboration spaces, digestible reporting, and practical tools, such as a centralized resource portal, that reduce friction and support shared success. Overall, the sentiment across the ecosystem reflects an industry that is optimistic, aligned, and ready for deeper collaboration, while also candid about the operational realities and systemic challenges that must be addressed throughout the industry. This collective perspective has formed the critical backdrop for the 2026 Tactical Plan and informs the strategic emphasis on coordination, narrative shift, experience packaging, and Indigenous partnership continuity.		

	Alignment with City Plan – Nanaimo Relimagined Tourism Nanaimo’s 5-Year Destination Development Strategy is intentionally anchored in the City Plan – <i>Nanaimo Relimagined</i>¹, the community’s Official Community Plan and long-range framework for how Nanaimo will grow to a thriving mid-sized urban centre of roughly 140,000 people. The City Plan adopts Doughnut Economics as its guiding model, seeking a “sweet spot” where community needs are met within the limits of ecological capacity and social foundations. It organizes this vision through five city goals: A Green Nanaimo, A Connected Nanaimo, A Healthy Nanaimo, An Empowered Nanaimo, and A Prosperous Nanaimo. As the City’s designated Regional Urban Centre within the Regional District of Nanaimo’s Growth Strategy, Nanaimo is expected to accommodate the largest share of population and employment growth while protecting forests, watersheds, agricultural lands, and waterfront assets. The City Plan’s integrated structure brings land use, mobility, climate action, accessibility, recreation, culture, and economic development into one layered framework, supported by an Integrated Action Plan and a Monitoring Strategy that will be reviewed and updated on a regular cycle. Within this context, Tourism Nanaimo’s role is to steward a visitor economy that strengthens, rather than strains, the city’s social and ecological foundations. Our tactical plans translate the City Plan’s high-level goals into tourism-specific actions: supporting compact, transit-served growth areas through downtown-focused events and meetings; encouraging low-impact outdoor recreation that protects watersheds, urban tree canopy, and greenways; and aligning our storytelling with Truth and Reconciliation, accessibility, equity, and inclusion. Tourism Nanaimo also contributes directly to the “Prosperous Nanaimo” goal by advancing tourism as a key driver of economic, social, and environmental capital—supporting business development, place-making, and investment attraction in ways that reflect Nanaimo’s waterfront identity, creative culture, and hub role on Vancouver Island. As the City Plan is implemented and monitored over time, Tourism Nanaimo’s annual tactical plans will continue to act as a delivery mechanism for tourism-related actions, ensuring that visitor growth is managed in line with the city’s long-term vision and collective responsibilities. ¹ City Plan - Nanaimo Relimagined
Overall Goals and Objectives	Year-2 Goals & Objectives These targets narrow in on the key performance indicators (KPIs) for 2026, each aligning with the four pillars of the 5-Year Destination Development Strategy (2025–2030). Developed collaboratively the Strategy is rooted in a circular, doughnut-aligned model that balances economic opportunity with environmental and social responsibility. While these KPIs provide measurable goals for Tourism Nanaimo, departmental strategies will continue to reflect the broader community-driven approach, gauging progress not only through numbers, but through shared impact and regenerative outcomes. It is important to recognize that <i>Team Nanaimo</i> represents an interconnected network of objectives managed collectively across partners, ensuring that success is measured holistically and in alignment with the principles that guide the Strategy itself. 1) Grow shoulder-season performance (Elevate the Destination) ● Objective: Lift Oct–May occupancy and RevPAR without discount erosion.

- **Targets:** +2.0–3.0 pts occupancy; +2–3% RevPAR vs. 2025 (Oct–May).
- **Levers:** 10–12 sport events hosted; 3 city-wides/complex meetings; two cultural “shoulder anchors.” (Luminous Paths, Beyond Van Gogh Exhibit)

2) Expand the business-events pipeline
(Elevate the Destination / Better Together)

- **Objective:** Secure more mid-week room nights tied to the VICC and cross city-hotel partners.
- **Targets:** 40 qualified RFPs; 10 site visits; 18 confirmed wins; 12,000 future room nights on the books; +1.0 pt Tue–Thu occupancy.
- **Levers:** Joint pricing/service standards; planner toolkits; hosted-buyer activations; ESG/legacy criteria in bids.

3) Scale sport tourism with community fit
(Elevate the Destination / Be a Strong Ally)

- **Objective:** Bid and host right-sized events that respect community calendars and access.
- **Targets:** 8 strategic bids; 14 hosted; \$4.0-6.0M est. economic impact; 80% resident satisfaction (post-event). Support Coast Salish Games with Snuneymuxw First Nation.
- **Levers:** Venue readiness checklist; inclusion/accessibility standards; early room-block protocol.

4) Convert brand consideration to bookings
(Build Out the Real Nanaimo)

- **Objective:** Move from awareness to conversion in priority markets (BC/AB/ON/WA).
- **Targets:** +20% sessions to bookable pages; site-wide conversion rate to 1.5–2.0%; email list +25%; 3 packaged/itinerary products live; creator CTR industry benchmark.
- **Levers:** Always-on short-haul; DBC Iconics “Infinite Coast” tie-ins; pass/offer testing; UGC/creator briefs aligned to “Come As You Are.” DBC Co-op partner messaging.

5) Advance co-designed Indigenous and cultural experiences
(Be a Strong Ally)

- **Objective:** Fund and launch new/expanded marketing of experiences with Snuneymuxw First Nation and cultural partners.
- **Targets:** 2 co-designed, market-ready products; 1 shared editorial calendar; 2 seasonal campaigns featuring Indigenous-led storytelling.
- **Levers:** Shared IP/brand guidelines; content sprints.

6) Make accessibility/inclusion visible and measurable
(Be a Strong Ally / Better Together)

- **Objective:** Normalize inclusive practice across the visitor journey.
- **Targets:** Accessibility & Inclusion Action Plan adopted; 25 partner businesses complete training; 50 new alt-text/accessible content assets; “Rainbow Registered” partners +10.
- **Levers:** Training series; asset kit; checklist embedded in event bids and partner onboarding.

	7) Data, governance, and risk readiness (All pillars) ● Objective: Industry awareness and alignment; ● Targets: Monthly MRDT dashboard with forecast variance 5%; public quarterly KPI report; crisis/wildfire comms playbook tested (table-top) by May; partner adoption of brand/ESG guidelines 75%. ● Levers: Monday.com or equivalent scorecard; shared reporting cadence; templated event after-action reviews.
Strategies	Tourism Nanaimo continues to follow the overall goals and intentions laid out in the Strategic Plan (2025-2030) maintaining a balanced approach that reflects industry needs while advancing Year-2 priorities; 2026 is informed by 2025 learnings, stakeholder input, and emerging market dynamics, as laid out in the intro and goals and objectives. The four pillars remain strong and in Year-2 the focus sharpens; Tourism Nanaimo will keep what's working, refine what isn't, and act quickly when new opportunities arise. Everything ties back to the same commitment: building a tourism economy that benefits visitors and residents alike, driving meaningful economic impact, and is rooted in partnership and collaboration. This isn't about growth for growth's sake, it's about growing with intention. Each year of the plan evolves as industry needs shift and opportunities for Nanaimo become clearer. That built-in flexibility is what keeps the strategy relevant, responsive, and aligned with the long-term direction of the city and the sector. Nothing substantial has changed since the development of the Strategic Plan (2025-2030) to cause a need to change strategy or direction.
Target Markets	Tourism Nanaimo sits at the heart of a connected regional network that includes Gabriola Island, the Nanaimo Regional District, Nanoose Bay, and surrounding communities. Central geography, diverse transportation links, and proximity to both mainland and Island markets position the city as a natural hub for exploration. In collaboration with the City of Nanaimo, Snuneymuxw First Nation, and regional partners, varying from transportation to destination experiences, Tourism Nanaimo continues to strengthen shared marketing, sustainable visitor management, and coordinated destination development. These partnerships amplify reach, reduce duplication, and align storytelling under a unified regional identity. By leveraging shared data and storytelling, Nanaimo and its partners are positioning the Nanaimo Region as Vancouver Island's creative and cultural hub. Market Prioritization <i>Primary Short-Haul Markets (Day-Trip Focus)</i> ● Vancouver Island (Greater Victoria & Mid-Island): Converting day trips to overnight stays. Encourage overnight extensions for Island travellers through media and ferry/air partnerships. ● Greater Vancouver & Fraser Valley: Shoulder-season drivers benefiting from enhanced Hullo ferry access - Primary short-haul and shoulder-season drivers for business and leisure. ● Washington State (Seattle): Short-lead U.S. market via ferry and harbour air

	<i>Secondary Markets (Overnight Focus)</i> ● Alberta (Calgary & Edmonton): High-yield, values-based markets seeking authentic, non-resort experiences. ● Ontario (Toronto): Emerging cultural and conference segment
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Major Category: Marketing PR & Engagement
Activity Title: 2026 Marketing Theme: Building on Momentum Pillar: Build Out the Real Nanaimo & Elevate the Destination Year 2 / of the 2025–2030 Five-Year Destination Development Strategy
STRATEGY - 2026 MARKETING Tourism Nanaimo’s Marketing Department enters 2026 with a clear goal: to elevate the city’s visibility as a vibrant, inclusive, and year-round destination. Building on the foundational growth achieved in 2025, the department will focus on storytelling that connects residents, visitors, and partners through the “Real Nanaimo” lens; one that celebrates community, culture, and authentic experiences to change perceptions and reputation. As Year 2 of the Five-Year Destination Development Strategy, 2026 is about deepening impact and expanding reach. Through seasonal campaigns, cross-regional partnerships, and inclusive brand development, Tourism Nanaimo will strengthen its position as Vancouver Island’s central hub; accessible, creative, and connected. Marketing efforts will prioritize collaboration across departments, leveraging synergies with Sport Tourism, Meetings & Events, PR and Engagement and Visitor Services to ensure every touchpoint reinforces a cohesive and credible brand story. The strategy will balance resident engagement and visitor attraction, ensuring that local pride, cultural integrity, and business prosperity grow together. Supported by strong partnerships with Snuneymuxw First Nation, Destination BC, the City of Nanaimo, and local businesses, 2026 will be a year of activation, amplification, and measurable brand growth. The year’s work will align under three strategic focus areas: 1. Brand Awareness & Conversion 2. Destination Storytelling & Cultural Amplification 3. Regional Partnerships & Year-Round Visitation These three strategic focus areas translate into: ● Brand Visibility: Increase regional and national awareness of Nanaimo through consistent, multi-channel storytelling. ● Campaign Integration: Align all marketing and communications with the 5-Year Strategy pillars and core values of inclusivity, sustainability, and community pride. Create toolkits for larger campaigns to ensure aligned industry messaging around key events and Nanaimo reputation initiatives. ● Seasonal Dispersion: Drive shoulder-season and off-season visitation through targeted Destination BC Co-op campaigns and “Always On” efforts. ● Community Alignment: Amplify local events, partners, and Snuneymuxw initiatives to ensure marketing reflects true cultural representation. ● Performance Measurement: Track campaign engagement, visitation metrics, and sentiment to continually refine tactics and optimize investment.

Key activities and tactics for 2026 include:

Brand Awareness & Conversion Drive awareness, engagement, and conversion through integrated paid, earned, and owned campaigns that keep Nanaimo top-of-mind across priority markets. Audience engagement through authentic storytelling, targeted campaigns, and inclusive marketing that reflects the destination's unique sense of place.

Quantifiable Objectives:

- Execute three DBC Co-op Off-Season Campaigns (Spring, Fall, Winter).
- Run four Always On campaigns (one per season) with seasonal refreshes.
- Achieve a 5% increase in website traffic year-over-year.
- Reach an average CTR of 1.5% across paid campaigns and engagement rate of 8–10%.
- Secure at least 15 million impressions across digital and social media platforms.
- Continue saturation of efforts in identified markets outlined in the beginning of this plan.

Rationale: Strengthened year-round presence through coordinated marketing, media partnerships, and cross-regional campaigns, focuses on translating awareness into measurable conversions by leveraging Destination BC's Co-op opportunities, expanding Always On visibility, and maximizing partnerships with Hullo, YCD, and air/ferry providers to stimulate year-round travel.

Key Actions:

- Launch DBC Co-op Off-Season campaigns (Spring, Fall, Winter) targeting BC, Alberta, and Washington State, highlighting Nanaimo's off-season charm and year-round appeal.
- Expand cross-promotion with Gabriola, Protection Island, and Saysutshun Island to promote regional dispersion and cultural experiences.
- Refresh Always On campaigns seasonally with new imagery, itineraries, and messaging. Always On ensures that Nanaimo maintains continuous digital visibility and reinforces brand identity.
- Collaborate with Hullo, Harbour Air, Helijet, and YCD on the *Day Tripper Campaign*, positioning Nanaimo as Vancouver's most accessible getaway.
- Launch the FIFA "*Escape the Noise*" campaign (Q1–Q3) to position Nanaimo as the coastal alternative during the 2026 World Cup.
- Optimize landing pages, Google Ads, and newsletter calls-to-action to increase conversions.
- Collaborate with PR & Engagement on earned media and influencer hosting for seasonal campaigns.

Partnerships & Resources: Destination BC, Hullo Ferries, Harbour Air, Helijet, Nanaimo Airport (YCD), City of Nanaimo, PR & Engagement Team, external media buyers.

Performance Measures:

- 3 DBC Co-op campaigns executed with measurable ROI.
- 4 Always On campaigns refreshed seasonally with a minimum 10% engagement lift year-over-year.
- 10+ media placements and 12 influencer visits hosted tied to seasonal campaigns.
- Increase in Nanaimo-related searches and social engagement (CTR and conversions up by 15%).
- Paid campaign CTR 1.5%
- 15M+ impressions annually.
- YoY increase in website sessions.

Cross-Department Integration: PR & Engagement (media hosting, influencer content), Visitor Services (event collateral distribution), Sport Tourism (FIFA dispersal content), Meetings & Events (delegate-facing collateral).

Destination Storytelling & Cultural Amplification Celebrate Nanaimo's diversity, creativity, and cultural depth through authentic storytelling, event amplification, and user-generated content integration across all marketing channels. Working in partnership with the Nanaimo Arts Council, Nanaimo Art Gallery, Nanaimo Museum, Port Theatre, and Cities Parks, Recreation and Culture department, we can showcase local identity through storytelling that highlights our vibrant arts scene, inclusivity, and community-focused campaigns.

Quantifiable Objectives:

- Support and promote key cultural campaigns: Luminous Paths, Nanaimo Pride, Snuneymuxw Days/Coast Salish Games, Saysutshun Island, Historic Tours, plus signature arts events co-presented with cultural partners
- Partner with Nanaimo Arts Council, Nanaimo Art Gallery, Nanaimo Museum, and Port Theatre to co-develop and promote a minimum of 4-6 arts-focused tourism experiences annually, including gallery tours, public art walks, artist studio visits, and cultural performances
- Launch the *Local Sentiment Project* to capture resident, operator, artist, and cultural worker stories, amplifying authenticity and creative economy narratives
- Collaborate with Snuneymuxw First Nation to ensure all marketing materials and campaigns reflect cultural respect and accurate representation
- Integrate Indigenous, cultural, arts, and accessibility messaging into 100% of paid and organic marketing channels
- Asset creation will focus on representation
- Generate 50+ pieces of user-generated content from arts experiences annually
- Integration of Hul'q'umi'num' in marketing E-news to residents and potential visitors
- Integration of Hul'q'umi'num' in marketing Snuneymuxw Days, and Saysutshun Island initiatives
- Continue working with Snuneymuxw Elders around language, stories and imagery as capacity presents

Rationale: Tourism Nanaimo's marketing approach centres on authentic representation. By working alongside Snuneymuxw First Nation, cultural partners, and local businesses, storytelling will showcase Nanaimo's identity through art, inclusivity, and shared community pride, creating resonance with both residents and visitors. Tourism Nanaimo recognizes that arts and cultural organizations are essential infrastructure for destination appeal. Marketing will prioritize venues and experiences that showcase local creativity while supporting the sustainability of cultural institutions. The concentration of cultural venues creates a walkable 'Cultural Quarter' that drives downtown vibrancy, particularly during evening hours.

Key Actions:

- Deliver fully integrated campaigns for Pride, Luminous Paths, Snuneymuxw Days/Coast Salish Games, Saysutshun Island, Historic Tours, and seasonal arts programming
- Develop 4 'Creative Nanaimo' content series featuring monthly artist profiles, studio tours, and behind-the-scenes gallery/theatre content
- Create arts-themed itineraries linking galleries, public art, studios, theatres, and creative spaces for self-guided cultural tourism
- Produce professional photo and video content highlighting people, places, experiences, and creative spaces
- Launch the *Local Sentiment Project* in partnership with PR & Engagement to spotlight operator, resident, artist, and cultural institution voices
- Integrate storytelling across digital campaigns, newsletters, Voyager Magazine features, and arts-focused content channels
- Integrate public art locations and artist information into wayfinding and digital tourism tools
- Support evening gallery openings, art walks, and cultural performances as key drivers of downtown vibrancy after 5pm
- Promote accessible arts programming and venues, highlighting sensory-friendly gallery tours, ASL-interpreted performances, and barrier-free creative workshops
- Establish quarterly Arts & Culture Tourism Working Group with representatives from Nanaimo Arts Council, Nanaimo Art Gallery, City of Nanaimo, Museum, Theatre, and Library to coordinate programming, marketing, and visitor experience development
- Work with all identified partners to execute objectives

Partnerships & Resources: Snuneymuxw First Nation, Petroglyph Development Group, Nanaimo Pride Society, Nanaimo Museum, local photographers/videographers, Voyager Magazine, PR & Engagement Team.

Performance Measures:

- 15% increase in engagement on owned channels.
- 20% growth in UGC submissions.
- 12 new blogs/itineraries published.
- 4 seasonal content libraries capturing Nanaimo's people, landscapes, and stories.
- 5+ earned media placements linked to cultural activations.
- At least 6 resident and operator features published.
- 100% of campaigns include Indigenous and inclusive representation.
- Measurable uplift in community engagement metrics (survey, sentiment, event participation).

Cross-Department Integration: PR & Engagement (Local Sentiment Project, earned storytelling), Visitor Services (event and cultural collateral), Sport Tourism (shared photo/video resources), Destination Development (cultural accessibility storytelling).

Regional Partnerships & Year-Round Visitation Play off of Nanaimo's position as the gateway to central Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands by deepening regional partnerships and promoting cross-promotional itineraries.

Quantifiable Objectives:

- Execute Day Tripper campaign with Hullo and Vancouver market outreach.
- Deliver on the DBC Co-op program with partners as laid out in the Co-op plan for 2026.
- Launch integrated island itineraries connecting Nanaimo, Saysutshun Island, Gabriola, and Protection Islands.
- Achieve 2 million digital impressions on regional campaigns.
- Grow partner participation in shared marketing initiatives by 25%.
- Secure 4 regional media features highlighting the hub-and-spoke experience.

Rationale: As the Island's connective hub, Nanaimo's marketing success depends on collaboration. Coordinated regional promotion extends visitor stays, enhances off-season resilience, and strengthens partnerships across transportation, accommodation, and community sectors.

Key Actions:

- Deliver *Day Tripper* and cross-island campaigns with Hullo, Harbour Air, and Gabriola partners.
- Produce itineraries and blogs highlighting multi-day and regional experiences.
- Integrate Saysutshun Island and Gabriola storytelling into off-season campaigns.
- Collaborate with Visitor Services for partner distribution of itineraries.
- Participate in regional DBC Co-op initiatives and maintain joint communications with 4TVI and neighbouring DMOs.

Partnerships & Resources: Hullo Ferries, Harbour Air, Helijet, Gabriola Chamber, Saysutshun Island, Petroglyph Development Group, City of Nanaimo, Visitor Services, 4TVI, Destination BC.

Performance Measures:

- 2M+ digital impressions on regional campaigns.
- 25% increase in partner collaboration.
- 4 regional/national media features.
- 10% increase in itinerary downloads and click-throughs.

Cross-Department Integration: Visitor Services (itinerary distribution, product knowledge), Meetings & Events (delegate extension packages), PR & Engagement (regional press content), Sport Tourism (shared cross-Island visibility).

Implementation Timeline (Q1–Q4 2026)

Quarter	Core Activities
Q1 (Jan–Mar)	Launch FIFA “Escape the Noise” campaign; Luminous Paths activation; DBC Co-op Spring planning; Always On refresh; Pride planning and cultural partner meetings.
Q2 (Apr–Jun)	Execute DBC Co-op Spring campaign; Pride activation; Day Tripper campaign launch; Voyager & newsletter expansion, continuance FIFA “Escape the Noise”.
Q3 (Jul–Sept)	DBC Co-op Fall campaign planning; cross-promotional regional campaigns (Gabriola, Satsutshun); media visits; asset capture.
Q4 (Oct–Dec)	Launch Fall/Winter Co-op campaigns; Support Local storytelling; Always On refresh; annual marketing report and asset library update.

Overall Partner Roles:

Delivery of the 2026 plan requires collaboration with;

- Destination BC: Co-op campaign funding, research, and amplification.
- City of Nanaimo: Activation support, media liaison, and public space coordination.
- Snuneymuxw First Nation: Cultural representation, storytelling, and partnership guidance.
- Transportation Partners (Hullo, YCD, Harbour Air, Helijet): Route marketing and cross-promotion.
- Nanaimo Port Authority and Local Businesses: Campaign amplification and content collaboration.
- Gabriola Island and Regional DMOs: Shared content and event promotion.
- Arts & Culture Representatives: storytelling, partnership guidance, sharing information.

Nanaimo’s marketing direction in 2026 is clear: grow reach through authenticity and connection. As brand equity strengthens, Tourism Nanaimo will continue building trust with residents, credibility with partners, and curiosity among travellers. Through integrated storytelling, inclusive campaigns, and strong collaboration, Nanaimo will further solidify its reputation as a welcoming, dynamic, and proudly local destination, one that thrives in every season and tells its story with integrity and heart.

STRATEGY - PR & Engagement

Theme: Building on Momentum Through Connected Leadership

Pillars: Be a Strong Ally | Better Together | Elevate the Destination

In 2025, Tourism Nanaimo strengthened its reputation as a trusted industry partner by re-establishing communication channels, rebuilding partner trust, and improving clarity on the organization's role and value. Through initiatives such as *Media Familiarization Tours*, *Messaging Toolkits*, the *Industry Influencer Hosting Series*, the *Front Desk Recommendation Guide*, and *monthly Partner E-Newsletters*, Tourism Nanaimo reconnected with stakeholders across the city and region.

As we enter 2026, the PR & Engagement Department will build on that foundation by stepping confidently into a leadership and coordination role. Stakeholder feedback has identified Tourism Nanaimo's greatest value as being the "industry glue" the convener that unites partners, aligns planning across sectors, and amplifies shared efforts while addressing gaps and duplication.

Guided by the pillars of Be a Strong Ally, Better Together, and Elevate the Destination, the department will move from rebuilding trust to orchestrating collaboration, removing barriers between partners, and ensuring that tourism's story is told collectively, confidently, and authentically.

The 2026 plan advances three strategic focuses designed to drive alignment, transparency, and collective impact across Nanaimo's visitor economy:

1. Be a Strong Ally – Industry Engagement & Active Partnership Facilitation
2. Better Together – Communication, Coordination & Ecosystem Alignment
3. Elevate the Destination – Public Perception & Unified Storytelling

These focuses align with the broader organizational pillars to:

- Deepen industry relationships and expand collaboration across sectors.
- Strengthen communication clarity and partner education.
- Amplify Nanaimo's real stories to build civic pride and public understanding.
- Reinforce accountability through transparent reporting and measurable outcomes.

The department's work interconnects with Marketing, Sport Tourism, Meetings & Events, and Visitor Services to ensure every touchpoint and message reflects the *Real Nanaimo* brand and values.

Key activities and tactics for 2026 include:

Be a Strong Ally – Industry Engagement & Active Partnership Facilitation Position Tourism Nanaimo as the central connector within the local tourism ecosystem — facilitating partnerships, strengthening networks, and ensuring no stakeholder operates in isolation.

Quantifiable Objectives:

- Host 4 Industry Mixers (30 attendees per event) featuring structured networking and thematic discussions.
- Facilitate 20 new cross-sector partnerships through the Connector Program.
- Complete 100+ in-person business visits (2 per week).
- Establish 4 Sector Advisory Committees (Hospitality, Culture, Transportation, Retail) meeting quarterly.
- Achieve 90% partner satisfaction and 80% "essential connector" rating in the 2026 Partner Survey.

Rationale: Tourism Nanaimo’s strength lies in its ability to connect people, ideas, and opportunities. In 2026, the department will focus on being proactive matchmakers, bridging small and large operators, linking public and private sectors, and uniting community partners toward shared objectives.

Key Actions:

- Host *Tourism Nanaimo 101* (Q1) to align partners on roles, priorities, and the Five-Year Strategy.
- Launch the Connector Program (Q2) linking accommodations, attractions, and cultural sites into market-ready “Stay & Play” experiences.
- Conduct regular in-person visits across key sectors to identify collaboration opportunities.
- Partner with Snuneymuxw First Nation to ensure Indigenous perspectives are represented in all engagement planning.
- **Quarterly Industry Mixers:**
 - *Q1: Partnership Possibilities* — B2B matchmaking.
 - *Q2: Small Business Spotlight* — local collaboration.
 - *Q3: Corporate Meets Community* — large-small operator alignment.
 - *Q4: Celebration & 2027 Preview* — reflection and recognition.
- Quarterly Sector Advisory Roundtables (hospitality, culture, transport, retail).

Performance Measures:

- 20 new partnerships facilitated (tracked via CRM).
- 4 Sector Committees active and meeting quarterly.
- 100+ business visits completed.
- 90% partner satisfaction / 80% connector rating.
- 120 total Industry Mixer attendees.
- “Partnership Success Index” launched to track collaboration outcomes.

Cross-Department Integration:

- *Marketing:* Joint promotion of mixers and partner storytelling.
- *Visitor Services:* Feedback loops from ambassadors and kiosks.
- *Sport & M&E:* Shared roundtables and sector briefings.

Better Together – Communication, Coordination & Ecosystem Alignment Enhance communication infrastructure, clarify messaging, and create unified systems that improve collaboration and eliminate duplication across Nanaimo’s tourism network.

Quantifiable Objectives:

- Launch Partner Portal 2.0 (Q2) with 80% adoption rate.
- Publish 12 newsletters (45% open rate, 10% CTR).
- Release 4 Quarterly Stakeholder Toolkits with campaign insights and partner tools.
- Host 4 operator workshops (80% satisfaction).
- Reduce “initiative confusion” among partners by 50% (Q1–Q4 comparison).
- Publish 4 Data Snapshot Reports (quarterly performance summaries).

Rationale: Clarity and coordination strengthen the entire tourism ecosystem. By simplifying information flow and creating

shared tools, Tourism Nanaimo enables operators and partners to better align efforts and focus on opportunities that support the Five-Year Strategy.

Key Actions:

- Develop and launch Partner Portal 2.0 (Q2) featuring: resource library, data dashboards, and campaign toolkits.
- Establish a Unified Messaging Framework (Q1) with City, Chamber, and BIAs to align language and reduce mixed messaging.
- Introduce a Partner Content Program spotlighting local operators in newsletters and on digital channels.
- Collaborate with Destination BC, 4TVI, and The Collective to deliver operator-focused education sessions on marketing, packaging, and sustainability.
- Deliver Quarterly Training Series (Q1–Q4) focused on marketing skills, storytelling, inclusivity, and business development.

Coordination & Alignment Mechanisms

- Host Quarterly Alignment Summits with tourism-adjacent organizations to coordinate marketing calendars and resource planning.
- Develop a Joint Initiative Protocol to reduce duplication and clarify lead roles across projects.

Performance Measures:

- Partner Portal launched with 80% active adoption.
- 12 newsletters with partner-contributed content.
- 4 Partner Toolkit Playbooks published.
- 45% open rate / 10% CTR on email communications.
- 4 training workshops delivered (80% satisfaction).
- 50% reduction in partner confusion indicators from Q1 baseline.

Cross-Department Integration:

- Marketing: Data visualization, campaign alignment.
- Visitor Services: Information sharing for partner-facing materials.
- Sport & M&E: Shared training and resource alignment.

Elevate the Destination – Public Perception & Unified Storytelling Lead unified storytelling and proactive reputation management that strengthens civic pride, highlights inclusivity, and communicates tourism’s community value.

Quantifiable Objectives:

- Secure 8 earned media placements (regional/national).
- Host 4 media FAM tours (≥ 80% coverage rate).
- Improve resident Tourism NPS by +5 points.
- Achieve 90% message consistency across partner communications.
- Generate 50 partner amplifications of key Tourism Nanaimo messages.
- Respond to issues within 2 hours via the Crisis Communication Protocol.

Rationale: A unified narrative strengthens Nanaimo’s reputation and supports a cohesive brand voice across organizations. Strategic storytelling and responsive communications ensure that the community understands tourism’s benefits and feels pride in its success.

Key Actions:**Unified Storytelling Framework**

- Develop Stakeholder Toolkit(s) (Q1): key messages, visual assets, and social templates.
- Produce media kits for campaigns and milestone events.
- Coordinate joint PR features on topics like downtown revitalization, arts, and accessibility.
- Launch Stories of Nanaimo Campaign (Q2–Q4) amplifying diverse partner voices.
- Manage Year in Review Publication (Q4) capturing 2026 highlights and tourism impact.

Proactive Reputation Management

- Implement Reputation Monitoring Dashboard tracking media sentiment, social mentions, and resident perceptions.
- Maintain Crisis Communication Protocol for rapid response to issues or misinformation.
- Coordinate Partner Summit (Q4) celebrating collaboration and outlining 2027 priorities.

Performance Measures:

- 8 earned media placements; 4 media FAM tours (80% coverage).
- +8-point improvement in resident Tourism NPS.
- 90% message consistency across campaigns (audited quarterly).
- 50 partner message amplifications.
- “Year in Review” completed by Q4.

Cross-Department Integration:

- Marketing: Co-created media stories and campaign integration.
- Visitor Services: Resident-facing storytelling.
- Destination Development: Accessibility and sustainability communications.

The 2026 PR & Engagement Tactical Plan positions Tourism Nanaimo as the ecosystem orchestrator, shifting from a traditional communications role to one of proactive coordination, facilitation, and leadership. Through structured engagement, two-way communication channels, and unified storytelling, the department will connect partners, amplify shared impact, and shape how tourism is understood and celebrated in Nanaimo. Success will be measured by how effectively the industry and community tell the story of Nanaimo.

Major Category: Destination Development
Activity Title: Destination Development 2026 Evolution | Research and Insights
Tactics:

Theme: Building Capacity and Credibility through Inclusion and Partnership | Pillar: Be a Strong Ally | Better Together | Elevate the Destination

Year 2 / of the 2025–2030 Five-Year Destination Development Strategy

STRATEGY - 2026 DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Destination Development remains the cornerstone of Tourism Nanaimo’s Five-Year Strategy, ensuring that all growth in the visitor economy is guided by values of inclusivity, accessibility, and collaboration. This work focuses on improving the destination’s overall maturity, strengthening the systems and partnerships that shape Nanaimo’s competitiveness and community well-being.

In 2025, Tourism Nanaimo established an important foundation with the completion of Nanaimo’s 2SLGBTQ+ Inclusion Framework, Rainbow Registered Accreditation, Snuneymuxw Cultural event support, and Accessibility & Inclusion Action Plan, initiatives that set a clear standard for how destination development and inclusivity intersect.

In 2026, efforts will shift from planning to activation and integration, embedding inclusive design, sustainability, and collaborative programming into the fabric of Nanaimo’s tourism infrastructure. By advancing inclusive events, pursuing Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) accreditation, and enhancing data-driven decision-making, Tourism Nanaimo strengthens its role as both facilitator and standard-bearer for destination excellence.

Key activities and tactics for 2026 include:

Partnerships & Experience Development

Tourism Nanaimo continues to prioritize initiatives that strengthen the city’s destination maturity through sustained, partnership-driven programming. By supporting the creation and amplification of month-long events and cultural activations, the organization fosters opportunities for collaboration, packaging, and extended visitor stays.

Key Actions:

- Ongoing support for the Nanaimo Pride Society and Pride events in June, aligning with inclusive and community-driven programming proven (2023–2025 survey data) to drive overnight visitation and civic pride.
- Partnering with the VICC, Nanaimo Museum, and Port Theatre to deliver the *Beyond Van Gogh* immersive exhibit (July 14–August 29, 2026), creating packaging and promotional opportunities that highlight Nanaimo’s readiness for large-scale cultural experiences.
- Supporting Luminous Paths (Winter 2026) a month-long light and arts festival by collaborating with the City and local artists to drive shoulder-season visitation and build community engagement.
- Supporting Snuneymuxw Days events, by collaborating with the Nation and its representatives, on community messaging, visuals, activations and volunteer support where needed.
- Hosting industry development sessions to ensure ongoing alignment and partner readiness for collaborative packaging and storytelling.
- Integration of community artists in hosting opportunities with Meetings and Events, to provide opportunities for exposure.

Performance Indicators:

- 3 month-long or extended partner activations supported.
- 10+ cross-promotional packages created.
- 10% increase in overnight visitation tied to event programming.
- 100 partner engagements across festivals and development sessions.

Accessibility & Inclusion

Objective: Embed inclusive design, accessibility, and diverse representation into destination assets, policies, and partner practices to ensure Nanaimo is a welcoming and barrier-free destination for all. As we look toward 2026, the focus is on deepening impact. The next chapter is about continuing to grow your inclusive culture into every experience, space, and story shared. Tourism Nanaimo's work moving forward will centre on real systems of access, safety, and representation that support operators, residents, and visitors alike. Together, we're shaping a destination that reflects the world we want to live in: one where everyone, regardless of identity or disability, can explore, connect, and feel at home.

Key Actions:

- Implement the Accessibility & Inclusion Action Plan through partner training, staff development, and accessibility audits.
- Launch the Accessible Photo & Video Program featuring authentic local representation and diverse lived experiences.
- Update and distribute the Inclusive Events Checklist for use by conference planners and event organizers.
- Align with the City of Nanaimo and Snuneymuxw First Nation to advance accessible public space and wayfinding improvements.
- Strengthen operator-facing resources focused on:
 - Inclusive language, communications and signage
 - Safe and accessible customer experiences
 - Supplier diversity and workforce inclusion
- Facilitate new partnerships and business spotlights that showcase Nanaimo's queer-owned, BIPOC-owned, and accessibility-forward operators.

Performance Indicators:

- Inclusion and accessibility criteria embedded into 100% of Tourism Nanaimo events and partner toolkits.
- 6 inclusion training sessions hosted throughout 2026.
 - 2SLGBTQ+ Inclusive Service
 - Accessible Tourism & The Culture of Yes
 - Queer & Trans Inclusive Hiring Practices
 - Double Workshop: Auditing Policy for Inclusion & Creating an Inclusive Dress Code
 - Coffee Chat: Addressing Racism in Outdoor Rec with Judith Kasaima, Colour the Trails
 - Creating a Transition Support Policy
- Accessibility and inclusion information integrated into annual reporting.

Education, Co-Creation & Shared Tools

Objective: Empower businesses and partners to adopt inclusive and sustainable practices through shared learning, accessible resources, and co-created tools.

Key Actions:

- Launch the Inclusive Business Portal housing resources for accessibility, inclusivity, and 2SLGBTQ+ readiness.
- Relaunch for the 4th year, the 2SLGBTQ+ Experience Survey in collaboration with the Pride Society and Snuneymuxw First Nation to gather data on lived visitor and resident experiences.
- Maintain and promote the Accessible Business Directory and Public Washroom Map, supporting visitor comfort and wayfinding.
- Partner with the Chamber and Pride Society to highlight inclusive businesses through local and regional communications.
- Present the 2026 Experience Survey results in a public “What We Heard” session to maintain transparency and trust.
- Integrate the “Travel is for Everyone” positioning across digital and print marketing.

Performance Indicators:

- 100 partner engagements through workshops and portal activity.
- 50% increase in adoption of accessibility checklists by partners.
- 400 responses to the 2026 2SLGBTQ+ Experience Survey.
- 40 partners accessing inclusive business tools.

Advancing Destination Development Best Practices

Objective: Strengthen organizational credibility and performance by pursuing Destination International’s Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) a globally recognized benchmark of excellence in destination management.

Key Actions:

- Complete internal DMAP readiness audit and gap analysis (Q1).
- Implement alignment updates across governance, financial management, and sustainability practices.
- Submit **DMAP application by Q4 2026**, achieving full compliance by year-end.

Performance Indicators:

- Internal audit completed by Q1.
- 100% compliance with DMAP accreditation criteria by Q4.
- Accreditation achieved or pending review by December 2026.

Research & Insights

Objective: Leverage data and analytics to guide decision-making, evaluate program impact, and monitor visitor trends across the region.

Key Actions:

- Utilize STR / CoStar Analytics to monitor accommodation performance and MRDT forecasting.
- Participate in Destination Canada’s Tourism Data Collective to benchmark Nanaimo’s growth and competitiveness.
- Conduct quarterly insights reporting to inform marketing, events, and sport alignment.
- Integrate research insights into the 2026 *Destination Development Impact Report* and partner updates.

Performance Indicators:

- 4 quarterly reports produced.
- MRDT forecasting accuracy within +5%.
- Insights integrated into 100% of tactical planning cycles.

Cross-Department Integration

Department	Integration Focus
Marketing	Inclusion storytelling, Pride and Luminous Paths amplification, destination imagery.
PR & Engagement	Accessibility storytelling, impact reporting, transparency communications.
Visitor Services	Accessible itinerary development and training.
Meetings & Events	Inclusive event checklist integration for delegates and planners.
Sport Tourism	Gender inclusion and accessibility alignment in hosting protocols.

Measurement and Evaluation Tourism Nanaimo will monitor Destination Development performance through a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators:

Category	Indicators
Participation & Adoption	Partner training attendance, checklist use, portal analytics.
Accessibility Metrics	Number of accessible business listings and physical audits.
Sentiment Tracking	Resident NPS, partner confidence, inclusion sentiment.
Visibility & Awareness	Blog readership, media coverage, and partner amplification metrics.

Outcomes will be compiled in the 2026 Destination Development Impact Report and shared publicly at the Annual Partner Summit. Destination Development represents the foundation of Nanaimo’s long-term tourism success. In 2026, Tourism Nanaimo will transition from intent to measurable impact working to remove barriers, elevating inclusivity, and strengthening collaboration across the tourism ecosystem.

By aligning inclusive design, data-driven strategy, and global accreditation, Tourism Nanaimo ensures that the destination evolves with purpose, creating a community and visitor experience that is accessible, and credible.

Major Category: **Visitor Services - Community Engagement**

Activity Title: Theme: **Connection** | Pillar: **Elevate the Destination**

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Cross-Program Integration: *Visitor Services serves as the connective layer between visitors, residents, and partners—bridging the work of Marketing, Sport Tourism, and Meetings & Events.*

STRATEGY - VISITOR SERVICES

Visitor Services is the front line of Tourism Nanaimo’s brand experience and a vital bridge between visitors, residents, and industry partners. In 2025, the team expanded its volunteer ambassador base, improved kiosk visibility, and supported record cruise visitation while piloting new digital tools and itinerary resources.

As we move into 2026, under the current Strategy, Visitor Services will focus on building operational excellence, deepening community engagement, and expanding its role in destination storytelling. Through stronger alignment with Marketing, Meetings & Events, and Sport Tourism, the department will help ensure that every visitor touchpoint reflects the “Real Nanaimo” experience.

This year’s direction emphasizes accessibility, inclusion, and authentic storytelling, continuing the evolution from a transactional visitor support model to an integrated Ambassador Program that drives connection, brand advocacy, and community pride. With growing momentum in downtown activation, cruise arrivals, and ambassador engagement, 2026 will focus on refining systems, enhancing training, and embedding local and Indigenous perspectives into the visitor journey.

The department’s primary mandate remains to elevate Nanaimo’s visitor experience, ensuring that every interaction, whether at the Visitor Centre, the waterfront kiosk, or a community event, reinforces Tourism Nanaimo’s core values of inclusivity, collaboration, and excellence.

Key activities and tactics for 2026 include:

Elevate Visitor Experience Enhance frontline service delivery through empowered ambassadors, improved visibility, and refreshed visitor-facing resources. Programming will create consistent, recognizable, and inclusive touchpoints across the destination.

Key Actions:

- Ambassadors; Introduce updated uniforms with clear branding to improve volunteer visibility and professionalism by Q1.
- Launch updated stakeholder listings on the Tourism Nanaimo website featuring enhanced business profiles, integrated event links, and real-time reporting capabilities by Q2.
- Introduction of new event listings on the Tourism Nanaimo website featuring detailed information on host, location, time, and cost to enhance visitor wayfinding and trip planning Q2.
- Relaunch annual training and engagement sessions to align volunteer knowledge and enthusiasm with new destination priorities. Re-engage and train 25+ volunteer ambassadors by Q2.

- Develop ready-made itineraries for grab-and-go and online use, supporting wayfinding and local business promotion. Update the resource, Recommendation Guide distributed to frontline desks.
- Maffeo Sutton Waterfront Kiosk Setup & Seasonal Staffing; Fully operationalize the Maffeo Sutton Waterfront Kiosk by June, supported by summer counsellors. Achieve 90% visitor satisfaction rating across all service touchpoints.

Rationale: Ambassadors are the storytellers of the destination. By improving their visibility, tools, and training, Tourism Nanaimo strengthens the quality and consistency of the visitor experience across every interaction.

Performance Indicators:

- 100% of ambassadors outfitted with new branding by Q2.
- 40 active ambassadors retained and re-engaged by mid-year.
- Event listing engagement up 20% year-over-year
- 3 printed and digital itineraries produced and published by Q2.
- Kiosk open and operational June–September with 95% staffing coverage.

Partnerships & Resources: Marketing (design, branding), local printers, volunteer network, Nanaimo Museum, White Rabbit Creative, Elite Image.

Performance Measures:

- Volunteer retention rate
- Visitor satisfaction score
- Resource distribution and online engagement metrics.

Community Connection & Partnership Provide accessible, welcoming, and culturally inclusive visitor touchpoints that reflect Nanaimo’s diverse identity. Strengthen the link between Tourism Nanaimo and local residents, businesses, and event organizers through visible participation and shared experiences.

Key Actions:

- Attend and support signature community events including Bathtub Weekend, Silly Boat Regatta, Dragon Boat Festival, Pride Parade & Festival, and the Commercial Street Night Market, Luminous Paths through on-site presence and local partnerships.
- Expand collaboration with Downtown Nanaimo Business Association and Old City Quarter to identify opportunities for event and retail alignment.
- Lead VIU collaborations (Tourism Program, Rock VIU, Volunteer Fair) to attract and mentor new ambassadors and connect with emerging tourism professionals, and to build visibility and brand trust.
- Maintain cruise reception coordination with the Nanaimo Port Authority and City, hosting seven ship receptions from April–October.
- Attend 10 major community events with a Visitor Services presence.
- Support season opening of Satsutshun Island with ambassador presence and print resources.

Rationale: Visitor Services not only greets travelers, it connects them to the destination’s cultural and community heartbeat. By integrating Snuneymuxw storytelling and inclusive representation across all activities, Tourism Nanaimo reinforces its commitment to reconciliation and accessibility.

Performance Indicators:

- 10 community events attended or supported.
- 7 cruise ship receptions, serving an estimated 10,000 visitors.
- 15% increase in volunteer recruitment through VIU collaborations.

- 10 partnerships formalized with local associations and organizations.

Partnerships & Resources: Snuneymuxw First Nation, Nanaimo Port Authority, City of Nanaimo, Downtown BIA, Nanaimo Pride Society, community event organizers.

Performance Measures:

- Cruise reception satisfaction survey
- Art map downloads and print distribution
- Event attendance metrics.
- Nanaimo Pride event activation.

Awareness, Inclusion & Capacity Building Strengthen cross-department collaboration, regional partnerships, and frontline capacity through training, shared activations, and integrated storytelling, with the result of embedding cultural understanding and accessibility in visitor resources and programming.

Key Actions:

- Hire and train 2–4 seasonal Visitor Services Counsellors by Q2.
- Conduct 2 FAM tours (Gabriola Island, Satsutshun).
- Achieve 100% quarterly reporting compliance with integrated departmental metrics, by Q2.
- Conduct Satsutshun Island FAM Tour to strengthen cultural literacy among staff and ambassadors.
- Conduct Gabriola Island FAM tours to improve product knowledge.
- Snuneymuxw representation and storytelling in itineraries and on-site visitor materials.
- Support Marketing and Sport in delegate/athlete servicing and visitor experience delivery.

Rationale: Effective visitor servicing is rooted in knowledge, collaboration, and alignment. By working closely with other departments, and community partners, Visitor Services enhances storytelling consistency and ensures the destination delivers seamless experiences year-round.

Performance Indicators:

- Two cross-cultural FAM experiences completed (Satsutshun Island, Gabriola Island)
- 100% of visitor-facing staff complete Indigenous awareness training.
- Accessibility and cultural inclusion feedback integrated into Q3 reporting.

Partnerships & Resources: Tourism Nanaimo Marketing & PR, Meetings & Events, Sport Tourism, VIU, local business associations, DBC Visitor Centre Network.

Performance Measures:

- FAM participation count
- Interdepartmental collaboration tracking
- Quarterly progress reports shared on Industry Portal Q2.

Brand & Retail Development Increase visibility of Tourism Nanaimo through high-quality retail and print materials that inspire pride and generate revenue.

- Expand retail merchandise selection and integrate local artist collaborations.
- Renew and grow the Visitor Guide distribution network across Vancouver Island.
- Relaunch Racking Program with updated agreements and data management.
- Capture branded visuals at events and waterfront kiosks to enhance future marketing content.

Performance Indicators:

- Retail revenue increased by 15% over 2025.
- 100% of racking partners renewed or onboarded.
- Visitor Guide distribution expanded to 25+ partner centres.
- Retail and print materials align fully with updated brand standards.

Overall Partner Roles:

Success in 2026 depends on collaboration with:

- City of Nanaimo: logistics support for kiosks, downtown activations, and public spaces.
- Nanaimo Port Authority: cruise coordination and passenger experiences.
- Snuneymuxw First Nation: partnership on cultural programming and storytelling resources.
- Vancouver Island University: student recruitment, volunteer pipeline, and co-learning.
- Downtown Nanaimo Business Association & Old City Quarter: shared events and retail exposure.
- Local artists and businesses: merchandise, itineraries, and map co-creation.

Visitor Services remains the heart of Tourism Nanaimo’s storytelling; the first impression and lasting connection between visitors, residents, and partners. In 2026, the team will enhance visibility, inclusivity, and operational excellence through renewed ambassador engagement, cultural partnerships, and close collaboration with Marketing, Meetings & Events, and Sport Tourism. Every interaction whether at the waterfront kiosk, port, or community events, will reflect the authentic warmth, pride, and welcoming spirit of Nanaimo and its residents.

Major Category: Meetings, Conventions & Sport
Activity Title: 2026 Meetings, Conventions & Sport Tactical Plan

Theme: Building on Momentum | Pillar: Elevate the Destination

Year 2 / of the 2025–2030 Five-Year Destination Development Strategy

STRATEGY - MEETINGS & CONVENTIONS

Tourism Nanaimo’s Meetings and Events program enters 2026 focused on converting the city’s growing awareness into sustained business performance and year-round demand. Building on the measurable momentum achieved through 2024–25, the department will deepen its presence in key domestic markets, strengthen collaboration under the *Team Nanaimo* framework, and sharpen conversion systems to attract high-value, multi-day events that drive overnight stays and community impact.

With the destination becoming recognized for its accessibility, affordability, and distinctive coastal character, 2026 efforts will concentrate on growing corporate, association, and government meeting segments while expanding reach into the incentive and small-conference market. Strategic participation in major tradeshows—including CMEE, GO WEST, Destination Direct Hosted Buyer and CSAE National Conference—will reinforce Nanaimo’s brand as a credible, connected, and inclusive mid-Island meeting hub.

Sales activities will be grounded in data and relationship development, supported by the integration of an enhanced CRM platform and coordinated marketing through *Outside the Box BC* and other provincial partnerships. Working closely with the Vancouver Island Conference Centre, local accommodators, and the Nanaimo transportation partners, the team will continue to improve the booking experience, promote accessible travel options, and align bids with Nanaimo’s sustainability and Indigenous partnership commitments.

The goal for 2026 is to elevate Nanaimo’s share of the provincial meetings and events market by increasing qualified leads, achieving stronger RFP conversion, and embedding consistency in how the destination presents itself to planners. Through unified storytelling, strategic prospecting, and disciplined follow-through, the Meetings and Events team will position

Nanaimo for long-term competitiveness and balanced, year-round growth.

Key activities and tactics for 2026 include:

Growth & Conversion Advance lead generation, bid conversion, and event retention to strengthen Nanaimo's Meetings & Events pipeline and increase economic yield.

Quantifiable Objectives:

- Achieve a 10% increase in confirmed conference bookings over 2025.
- Grow average delegate spend by 8% through the Nanaimo Unlocked Bandwango program
- Secure at least two national-level and five provincial-level events for 2027 onward.

Rationale: Nanaimo's improved air access, revitalized downtown, and strong mid-Island positioning create ideal conditions to convert higher-value business. Building predictable event demand enhances hotel occupancy and off-season stability.

Key Actions:

- Launch Meetings & Conferences Toolkit providing key resources and information to help event planners make informed decisions when selecting Nanaimo as their meeting and conference destination.
- Implement targeted digital and relationship marketing to association and corporate planners in BC and Alberta.
- Expand the *Local Host Program* to recruit university, health, and industry champions.
- Co-develop bids and sales assets with VICC and hotels to improve conversion rates.
- Leverage Sport Tourism crossovers through joint sales and site visits for multi-use venues.

Partnerships & Resources: VICC, City of Nanaimo, VIU, Snuneymuxw First Nation, 4TVI, Tourism Nanaimo Marketing Team.

Performance Measures: Expand the business-events pipeline: Number of confirmed events and room nights; delegate spending estimates; conversion rate from leads to bookings; economic impact assessments.

- Objective: Secure more mid-week room nights tied to the VICC and cross city-hotel partners.
- Targets: 40 qualified RFPs; 10 site visits; 18 confirmed wins; 12,000 future room nights on the books; +1.0 pt Tue–Thu occupancy.
- Levers: Joint pricing/service standards; planner toolkits; hosted-buyer activations; ESG/legacy criteria in bids.

Strategic focus is on:

- Expanding year-round meeting activity through shoulder-season growth and national market penetration.
- Increasing room nights by 5–6% year-over-year, closing the 30,000-night gap identified by the accommodation sector.
- Strengthening Team Nanaimo partnerships to deliver unified, high-quality hosting support.
- Embedding inclusivity, sustainability, and Indigenous partnerships in all bids and activations.

Access & Competitiveness Enhance accessibility, transportation options, and venue readiness to make Nanaimo a seamless and competitive choice for event organizers.

Quantifiable Objectives:

- Increase delegate arrivals via air and sea by 10%.
- 3 new or reinstated routes marketed with YCD, and transportation partners.
- Average delegate stay: 3 nights (↑0.2 nights).
- Co-branded itineraries featuring Indigenous or cultural experiences.
- Achieve a minimum delegate satisfaction score of 90% for access and mobility.

Rationale: Improved transportation connectivity is essential to compete with Victoria and Parksville Qualicum Beach. Reliable access reduces travel friction and increases Nanaimo's appeal for regional and national conferences.

Key Actions:

- Leverage air route advocacy with YCD to secure improved frequency and affordability of key routes.
- Advocate for enhanced ferry schedules and downtown mobility links to event venues.
- Work with the City to improve signage, wayfinding, and delegate transport options.
- Collaborate with Sport Tourism to complete a shared venue capacity audit and align bidding protocols across sectors.
- Coordinate early with VICC, VIU, and the Port Theatre for breakout-space optimization.
- Create "Island Access, Mainland Ease" messaging in all trade collateral.
- Package pre/post event tours with Snuneymuxw and ferry partners to increase delegate length of stay (+0.2 nights average)
- Launch Sport Tourism Toolkit in Q1 providing key resources and information to help local organizers plan, host, and promote sporting events that support the growth of sport tourism in Nanaimo.

Partnerships & Resources: YCD Airport Commission, Hullo Ferries, City of Nanaimo Transportation Department, VICC, Sport Nanaimo Partners, Downtown Nanaimo Business Association, Devon Transport.

Performance Measures: Transportation arrivals linked to events; venue readiness scores; delegate satisfaction surveys; joint infrastructure initiatives completed.

Community & Brand Integration Integrate Meetings & Events into Nanaimo's wider brand story, linking delegates, residents, and local businesses to the shared benefits, deepening local alignment and positioning of events within the city as a source of civic pride.

Quantifiable Objectives:

- Increase local business participation in delegate itineraries and discount programs by 20%.
- Expand community volunteer and ambassador involvement in events by 15%.
- Strengthen positive resident perception of tourism (NPS +5 points over 2025).

Rationale: Embedding business events within the destination brand builds community pride and drives visitor spending into local shops and cultural spaces. It also supports Tourism Nanaimo's intention to align economic impact with resident benefit.

Key Actions:

- Launch a Delegate Experience Program with Visitor Services to connect attendees to local tours, restaurants, and events.
- Co-brand meetings with Nanaimo's destination marketing campaigns to extend digital reach.
- Integrate Snuneymuxw First Nation protocol and storytelling in welcome and opening sessions.
- Partner with local creators and venues to build authentic in-market experiences for delegates.
- Implement joint communications forums with VICC, hotels, and planners every quarter.
- Integrate MICE storytelling into consumer campaigns and PR efforts.
- Maintain accessibility standards in all promotional materials.

Partnerships & Resources: Visitor Services Team, Nanaimo Art Gallery, Port Theatre, Snuneymuxw First Nation, Downtown BIA, local restaurants and retail partners.

Performance Measures: Delegate spend tracked through partner reporting; number of local business participations; resident sentiment survey; earned media and brand alignment metrics.

Overall Partner Roles:

- VICC for coordinated sales, co-branded booths, and unified pricing strategy.
- City of Nanaimo for hosting advocacy, grants, and infrastructure collaboration.
- Transportation Partners for route marketing and media partnerships.
- Snuneymuxw First Nation for co-developed hosting protocols and experience integration.
- Regional partners for national representation and lead sharing.

STRATEGY - SPORT IN NANAIMO

Cross-Program Integration: Aligns closely with Meetings & Events through shared venue audits, bid development, and economic-impact reporting.

Tourism Nanaimo's Sport Tourism program will enter 2026 with a clear mandate: to grow Nanaimo's reputation as a premier mid-Island sport host city while ensuring that every event delivers meaningful benefit to residents, athletes, and partners. Building on the strong results of the inaugural Sport Hosting Grant program and the foundational partnerships established with the City of Nanaimo, PacificSport, and local sport organizations, this year's focus is on deepening collaboration, increasing event attraction, and embedding Snuneymuxw partnership and accessibility into every level of sport development.

With the city's readiness to host, 2026 emphasizes *refinement and expansion*. The department will formalize an Event Attraction Strategy aligned with Nanaimo's facilities, accommodation inventory, and community resources, while completing a Sport Infrastructure and Resource Audit to identify priority investments and gaps. Partnerships will be strengthened through semi-annual Local Sport Organization (LSO) meetings and the creation of new recognition and engagement tools such as the Community Sport Partner and Community Sport Ambassador programs, fostering pride and visibility for local sport advocates.

The Sport Hosting Grant program will continue to evolve, targeting higher-impact events and measuring success through economic return, seasonality balance, and community benefit. Alongside these efforts, Tourism Nanaimo will work with Snuneymuxw First Nation to explore the development of an Indigenous Sport Strategy and support Nation-led events such as the Coast Salish Games. Co-hosted community experiences, including the FIFA 2026 activations and other cultural activities, will connect residents and visitors alike through sport.

Marketing alignment will play a key role in amplifying Nanaimo's visibility, from targeted Hullo and Vancouver-based campaigns to expanded sport content and digital storytelling. As the city readies for national and international hosting opportunities, the Sport Tourism portfolio will continue to unify partners, build capacity, and ensure that growth remains inclusive, sustainable, and true to the values that define "Team Nanaimo." The year's direction emphasizes growing the event pipeline, developing attraction criteria that reflect community values, and expanding both the economic and social return of sport in Nanaimo.

Key activities and tactics for 2026 include:

Growth & Event Attraction Expand the Sport Hosting Grant and develop a Sport Event Attraction Strategy aligned with Nanaimo's infrastructure, capacity, and brand.

Quantifiable Objectives:

- Support 15 events through the Sport Hosting Grant (+10% YoY).
- Complete a full Sport Infrastructure & Resource Audit by Q3.
- Co-develop 3 major event bids in 2026 (1 national scale).
- Develop an Event Attraction Strategy and infrastructure audit to identify priority sport events for 2027–2030.
- Build resident participation through fan experiences, watch parties, and volunteer involvement.
- Support the Snuneymuxw First Nation's sport ambitions and explore capacity for a dedicated Indigenous Sport Strategy.
- Strengthen relationships among LSOs, businesses, and sport partners through engagement and recognition programs.

- Deliver more than \$4 million in direct visitor spending through sport-hosted events and grants.
- Launch Sport Tourism Toolkit in Q1 providing key resources and information to attract sport organizers to host events in Nanaimo.

Rationale: Targeted investment and data-driven attraction improve Nanaimo’s competitiveness and increase off-season room nights. Collaboration with Meetings & Events, and Team Nanaimo ensures resources and venues are optimized for multi-purpose use.

Key Actions:

- Develop and implement the Sport Event Attraction Strategy that outlines priority event types, facility readiness, and hosting criteria.
- Conduct a Sport Infrastructure and Resource Audit to identify facility gaps, accessibility needs, and opportunities for investment.
- Support LSOs in co-developing event bids and grant applications, providing letters of support, data, and tourism resources.
- Expand the Sport Hosting Grant Program, allocating increased funding to events that meet community benefit criteria (off-peak timing, youth participation, inclusion).

Partnerships & Resources: City of Nanaimo, Sport Tourism Committee, PacificSport, local sport clubs, accommodation partners, Hullo Ferries, YCD Airport, VICC.

Performance Measures:

- Completion of the Event Attraction Strategy and Infrastructure Audit by Q2.
- 3 new national or provincial event bids supported or co-developed.
- 15+ events supported through the Sport Hosting Grant program.
- \$4M+ in direct sport-related economic impact generated.

Access & Competitiveness Strengthen transportation, accommodation, and partner alignment to make hosting in Nanaimo efficient, accessible, and visitor-friendly.

Quantifiable Objectives:

- Establish quarterly meetings with transportation partners (Hullo, BC Ferries, Harbour Air, HeliJet, YCD) to coordinate sport travel promotions.
- Launch “Getting to the Game” resources and maps highlighting walking, cycling, and transit access for key venues.
- Collaborate with the City and accommodation sector to ensure competitive room block management and flexible pricing for multi-day events.
- Partner with local businesses to create the Community Sport Partner Program, recognizing organizations that support recreation and hosting initiatives.

Rationale: Improved connectivity supports both sport and meeting delegate arrivals, while sustainable mobility aligns with Destination Nanaimo’s environmental goals.

Key Actions:

- Partner with Hullo, HeliJet, Harbour Air, and BC Ferries on fan travel promotions.
- Integrate active-transportation options into event planning materials.
- Launch Hullo “Day Trip for FIFA Fans” marketing with Marketing & PR.

Partnerships & Resources: Transportation partners, City of Nanaimo Engineering, Marketing & PR Team.

Performance Measures:

- 4 quarterly transportation partner meetings completed.
- 2 new sport travel promotions executed with partners.
- Community Sport Partner Program launched with 20 local business participants.
- 90% of major events include sustainable travel and access messaging.

Community & Brand Integration Deepen community participation in sport, amplify local stories, and align brand assets with the Nanaimo identity. Build local pride in sport hosting and ensure residents are engaged in the visitor experience.

Quantifiable Objectives:

- 1,000+ residents attend sport activations such as the FIFA Watch Parties hosted by local venues.
- 2 new sport itineraries published and distributed online.
- 4 ambassadors engaged and featured through Tourism Nanaimo channels.
- 100+ new sport photo and video assets added to Tourism Nanaimo's brand library.

Rationale: Sport builds belonging. By linking residents and visitors through shared experiences, Tourism Nanaimo strengthens social license and drives repeat visitation. Content captured also feeds into Meetings & Events marketing assets.

Key Actions:

- Launch "Community Sport Partner" recognition program.
- Feature athletes and volunteers through photo/video shoots.

Partnerships & Resources: City of Nanaimo, Downtown BIA, Snuneymuxw First Nation, local teams (Clippers, Timbermen, NightOwls), Marketing & Visitor Services.

Performance Measures: This marks the first full year with a dedicated Sport Tourism Coordinator at Tourism Nanaimo, during which baseline performance measures will be established.

- Community participation rate
- Ambassador engagement metrics
- Event attendance to events
- Resident sentiment score.

Inclusion & Indigenous Partnership Support Snuneymuxw First Nation's leadership in sport and ensure Indigenous perspectives are represented in Nanaimo's sport landscape.

Objectives:

- Attend and volunteer at Snuneymuxw Days and other SFN-led events.
- Explore collaboration opportunities for hosting the Coast Salish Games and develop dialogue toward an Indigenous Sport Strategy.
- Have Snuneymuxw representation on the Sport Tourism Committee.
- Align Sport Tourism programming with Snuneymuxw's broader tourism ambitions and community-led planning.

Performance Indicators:

- Snuneymuxw member appointed to Sport Tourism Committee by Q2.
- Ongoing consultation meetings established by Q1.
- Collaborative discussions on Indigenous Sport Strategy initiated by Q3.

- At least one Snuneymuxw-led sport event will be supported in 2026.

The 2026 Sport Tourism Tactical Plan strengthens Nanaimo's position as a year-round sport destination, with the intent to drive economic impact, resident engagement, and brand visibility. Working in lockstep with Meetings & Events and Marketing, Sport Nanaimo will continue to attract high-value events that showcase the real Nanaimo and leave a lasting legacy for the community.

2026 Tradeshow Sales Activity Plan (Meetings & Sport)

Key Markets: Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary (National), Vancouver, Victoria (Provincial) and Victoria, Nanaimo (Regional)

Sales Event	Date/Location	Partnership Opportunity
Hosted Buyer Program - Go West	Edmonton Jan 31-Feb 1, 2026	Partnership with OTBBC
Go West Conference & Tradeshow	Edmonton February 1-3, 2026	Partnership with OTBBC Opportunity for partners to attend as delegates
Venue Series - Go West	Edmonton - February 2026	Partnership with OTBBC
Destination Direct Program	Ottawa February 22-26, 2026	VICC Partnering
CSAE Tete a Tete Tradeshow	Ottawa February 25, 2026	OTBBC Partnership
Venue Series - SEC	Mississauga March 2026	Sport Tourism Coordinator Attending
Sports Event Congress	March 9-12, 2026 - Mississauga	Sport Tourism Coordinator Attending City of Nanaimo Representative
Venue Series	Vancouver May 14, 2026	Tourism Nanaimo
Red Carpet Tour - Local Planners	Nanaimo April or May 2026	Tourism Nanaimo VICC Hotelier Partners
MPI BC Schmooze	Vancouver June 2026	Tourism Nanaimo VICC Hotelier Partners
Canadian Society of Professional Event Planners Conference	Regina June 24-26, 2026	Tourism Nanaimo VICC Hotelier Partners
Hosted Client Luncheon	Vancouver June or July 2026	Tourism Nanaimo VICC Hotelier Partners
Canadian Meetings & Event Expo	Toronto August 2026	Tourism Nanaimo VICC
Venue Series	Vancouver	Tourism Nanaimo

	September 2026	VICC
Venue Series	Calgary September 2026	Tourism Nanaimo VICC
Hosted Client Luncheon	Vancouver October 2026	Tourism Nanaimo
SPOHO Experience	November 2026 St. John, NB	Sport Tourism Coordinator Attending
CSAE National Conference	St Johns, NF October 2026	Tourism Nanaimo
Sport Event Exchange BC	November 2026	Tourism Nanaimo
<i>*Note: This does not include events that Tourism Nanaimo will fund for Team Nanaimo representatives to attend, but will not participate directly.</i>		

Major Category: **Administration**

Tourism Nanaimo's administrative function underpins the organization's credibility, governance, and long-term stability. As the steward of MRDT funds and a lead convener of Nanaimo's tourism ecosystem, strong administrative performance ensures accountability to the City of Nanaimo, Snuneymuxw First Nation, industry partners, and provincial funders. In 2026, administrative priorities will focus on transparent reporting, disciplined financial management, evidence-based decision-making, and strengthened board governance aligned with the Five-Year Destination Development Strategy (2025–2030).

Tourism Nanaimo will maintain open, timely access to records, plans, audited financials, and performance data to ensure industry, government, and residents can clearly see the value generated through MRDT investment.

Key Commitments:

- Publish updated strategic plans, annual tactical plans, and MRDT tracking on the Tourism Nanaimo website.
- Maintain a clean audit and adhere to best-practice financial controls.
- Provide quarterly KPI updates to the Board, City, and stakeholders.

2026 Success Indicators:

- Clean annual audit with no major findings.
- 75% partner confidence in MRDT reporting and organizational transparency captured through the annual satisfaction survey as part of MRDT reporting.

Alignment with Community, City & Snuneymuxw Priorities; Tourism Nanaimo's activities will continue to support the City of Nanaimo's Official Community Plan—*Nanaimo Reimagined*, the 5-Year Destination Strategy, and shared priorities with Snuneymuxw First Nation.

Key Commitments:

- Align annual tactical plans with municipal strategies and Indigenous partnership goals.
- Regular participation in the City's emergency communication and planning networks to support coordinated visitor communication when required.

- Maintain strong alignment with Snuneymuxw First Nation on protocols, cultural representation, and co-created initiatives.

Governance Excellence & Board Engagement; Tourism Nanaimo is committed to a high-performing Board that provides strategic oversight, policy stewardship, and community accountability.

Key Commitments:

- Quarterly Board meetings supported by clear governance packages and performance reporting.
- Annual Board training session on governance best practices, Indigenous relations, and strategic oversight.
- Annual Board retreat focused on strategy, organizational performance review, and organizational health.

2026 Success Indicators:

- All Board seats filled with active participation.
- Governance policy review completed and updated.
- 85% Board satisfaction with reporting and transparency.

Annual AGM & Member Reporting; Tourism Nanaimo will continue to report annually to members, partners, and the public through a transparent and accessible AGM.

Key Commitments:

- Present previous year results, audited financials, and the upcoming tactical plan.
- Release a public-facing *Year in Review* and MRDT Performance Snapshot ahead of the AGM.

2026 Success Indicators:

- Successful, well-attended AGM with clear year-over-year reporting.

Research, Insights & Evidence-Based Decision-Making; Tourism Nanaimo uses data to inform strategy, measure impact, and provide partners with actionable insights.

Key Commitments:

- Continue monthly monitoring of STR/CoStar, Destination Canada LASR, DBC sentiment data, and mobility patterns.
- Maintain Nanaimo's participation in the Tourism Data Collective and DBC insights programs.
- Expand the annual Economic reporting, building toward a full economic impact study in 2027.

2026 Success Indicators:

- Quarterly Insights Reports shared publicly.
- Monthly MRDT dashboards delivered with $\pm 5\%$ forecasting accuracy.
- Increased partner usage of insights through newsletters, playbooks, and the Partner Portal.

Financial Stewardship & Operating Reserves; Strong financial management ensures long-term organizational sustainability and risk readiness.

Key Commitments:

- Work up to and maintain an operating reserve of 10% of annual budget, consistent with industry standards.
- Strengthen ESG-aligned operational policies, including environmental responsibility in procurement and event

practices.

2026 Success Indicators:

- Reserve targets met and reviewed annually by the Board.
- Procurement and event guidelines updated with sustainability criteria.

Partner & Resident Feedback Mechanisms; Tourism Nanaimo will implement structured feedback loops to ensure industry and resident sentiment informs decision-making.

Key Commitments:

- Annual partner and resident sentiment surveys.
- Structured post-event/activation evaluations with partners.
- Quarterly partner feedback integrated into PR & Engagement and Destination Development actions.

2026 Success Indicators:

- Annual partner survey completed (75% positive rating).
- Resident Tourism NPS improves year-over-year.
- Feedback loops documented and embedded into planning cycles.

Administration is the foundation of Tourism Nanaimo's performance and reputation. In 2026, the organization will continue to strengthen transparency, governance, data usage, and fiscal stewardship, ensuring that MRDT investments are well-managed, community-aligned, and positioned for long-term impact. These commitments support the guiding principles of the Five-Year Strategy, trust, collaboration, and accountability and reinforce Tourism Nanaimo's role as a responsible, values-driven leader within the regional tourism ecosystem.

Industry and Provincial Environmental Scan (PESTEL)

Tourism Nanaimo utilizes the PESTEL framework to remain responsive to external forces shaping tourism success.

PESTEL : Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal

Political:

The BC First Quarterly Report² (Sept 2025) projects stability entering Budget 2026, with a focus on program reviews rather than major new spending. At the time of this report, the federal budget has not been passed, and there is unrest across Provincial and Federal governments, along with municipal elections on the horizon for the fall of 2026. External risks include Canada–U.S. trade tensions, which could affect air capacity and consumer confidence. Ongoing global conflicts, including the war in Ukraine, unrest in the Middle East, and civil instability in other regions could deter international travel and influence visitor confidence.

Economic:

Provincial GDP is forecasted to grow 1.9% in 2026, improving to 2.1% by 2029⁴. Inflation continues to ease, though affordability challenges persist. Labour markets remain balanced but face tightening due to federal caps on temporary residents and post-study work permits⁵. Tourism Nanaimo will monitor macroeconomic indicators to align marketing and spending flexibility.

Social:

Visitors continue to prioritize destinations that feel safe, inclusive, and socially stable. Canada's reputation for safety remains a strength. However, major events such as FIFA 2026 could heighten resident concerns about costs, crowding, and housing. Tourism Nanaimo will work with local and provincial partners to emphasize inclusive programming, youth engagement, and regional dispersion. With FIFA 2026 expected to create a temporary accommodation shortfall, estimated by Airbnb at 70,000 nights⁶, Tourism Nanaimo will promote legitimate booking options, early room blocks, and visitor messaging that maintains Nanaimo's position as an alternate destination.

Technological:

With AI increasingly shaping trip planning, Tourism Nanaimo will double down on owned channels, ensuring data-rich, bookable content and credible local information are discoverable by AI-powered tools. Optimized conversion paths and packaging will turn interest into bookings.

Environmental:

The organization's environmental focus remains on inclusion, accessibility, and sustainability. Real-time monitoring of seasonal dispersion, drought, and wildfire risks will guide

communications and joint responses with DBC and the BC Hotel Association, and local messaging ensuring visitor safety and business continuity.

Legal / Legislative:

The continued implementation of UNDRIP and advancing reconciliation legislation are reshaping how tourism intersects with Indigenous governance and economic participation in British Columbia. Recent lands-back agreements, including the transfer of Mount Benson North to Snuneymuxw First Nation (2025) ⁷ and the Cowichan Valley lands returned to ⁸ Lyackson First Nation and Cowichan Tribes, signal a province-wide shift toward Indigenous stewardship and shared decision-making. These landmark moves demonstrate growing Indigenous ownership and leadership within the visitor economy, an evolution from consultation to co-management and co-creation. For Tourism Nanaimo, this underscores the imperative of authentic partnership with Snuneymuxw First Nation and neighbouring Nations to ensure destination growth advances reconciliation, shared prosperity, and respect for Indigenous rights and title.

¹ Scanning the Environment: PESTEL Analysis

² First Quarterly Report – Government of British Columbia (Sept 2025)

³ Vancouver 2026 FIFA World Cup Economic Impact Report (May 2024)

⁴ TD Provincial Economic Forecast (Sept 2025)

⁵ BC Labour Market Outlook 2024–2034

⁶ Airbnb Report: Accommodation Shortfall for FIFA 2026

⁷ Mount Benson North transferred from B.C. to Snuneymuxw First Nation - BC Government Press Release (July 2025)

⁸ Lyackson First Nation, Cowichan Tribes, B.C. complete land transfer- BC Government Press Release (May 22, 2025)

Tourism Nanaimo & City Plan – Five City Goals

Appendix 2.2 to 2026 Tactical Plan | Tourism Nanaimo

This appendix outlines how Tourism Nanaimo's 2026 One-Year Tactical Plan directly supports and advances the goals of *City Plan – Nanaimo ReImagined*, the community's Official Community Plan and long-term vision. City Plan establishes the framework for how Nanaimo will grow into a thriving, connected, climate-ready mid-sized city. By mapping each tactical area to the City Plan's integrated policy structure, this appendix demonstrates the clear alignment between tourism initiatives and broader municipal priorities, including reconciliation, mobility, sustainability, arts and culture, waterfront stewardship, economic resilience, and community wellbeing.

Tourism Nanaimo's mandates—destination development, inclusive experience design, industry alignment, marketing, meetings and conventions, sport hosting, and visitor services—intersect closely with the City's five overarching goals: **A Green Nanaimo, A Connected Nanaimo, A Healthy Nanaimo, An Empowered Nanaimo, and A Prosperous Nanaimo**. The alignment captured here illustrates how tourism serves as an implementation mechanism for City Plan, translating high-level policy into on-the-ground actions that benefit residents and visitors while supporting long-term sustainability.

By transparently documenting this alignment, the appendix reinforces Tourism Nanaimo's commitment to shared stewardship, cross-government collaboration, and ensuring that MRDT-funded initiatives contribute meaningfully to Nanaimo's future as envisioned in the City Plan.

1. Marketing & Brand

Tactical Area	Key 2026 Activities	Supported City Plan Policy Codes	Policy Area Name
Brand Marketing	Year-round campaigns; inclusive storytelling; regional and national brand penetration	C4.2, C4.5, C4.7, C5.6	Equity & Inclusivity; Culture; Public Art; Tourism
Digital Conversion & Content	Bookable content, itinerary tools, shoulder-season messaging	C2.1, C2.2, C5.5	Connected Communities; Integrated Transit/Active Mobility; Placemaking & Investment Attraction
PR & Media Relations	Earned media, creator partnerships, Indigenous narratives	C4.1, C4.3, C4.10	Truth & Reconciliation; Access for All; Waterfront Use & Protection
Campaign Alignment	Leveraging DBC Iconics, Infinite Coast, FIFA opportunities, DBC Co-op (Regional Partnerships)	C5.1, C5.3, C5.6	Economic Capital; Human/Social/Environmental Capital; Tourism

2. Meetings, Conventions & Business Events

Tactical Area	Key 2026 Activities	Supported City Plan Policy Codes	Policy Area Name
Team Nanaimo Sales Model	Unified bids, coordinated pricing, joint marketing	C5.1, C5.5, C5.6	Economic Capital; Placemaking; Tourism
Event Attraction & Conversion	Hosted buyers, tradeshow, association targeting	C4.8, C4.5, C4.4	Events & Gatherings; Culture; Political Voice & Engagement to address community Reputation
Indigenous Partnerships in Events	Co-host protocols, cultural integration	C4.1, C4.2, C4.6	Truth & Reconciliation; Equity & Inclusivity; Archaeology & Heritage
Transportation & Accessibility for Delegates	Travel information, multimodal options, downtown walkability	C2.1, C2.2, C2.5	Connected Communities; Integrated Walk/Roll/Cycle; Complete Streets

3. Sport Tourism

Tactical Area	Key 2026 Activities	Supported City Plan Policy Codes	Policy Area Name
Sport Hosting & Bids	Prioritized events aligned with venue capacity	C4.8, C3.6	Events & Tournaments; Recreation, Culture & Wellness
Venue Readiness & Scheduling	Minimize community impact; maximize economic return	C3.1, C3.3	Community Safety; Intergenerational Spaces
Inclusive Host Protocols	Gender inclusion, accessibility frameworks	C4.2, C4.3	Equity & Inclusivity; Access for All
Active Mobility Integration	Promoting transit, walking, rolling between venues	C2.1, C2.2	Connected Communities; Integrated Active Mobility

4. Visitor Services

Tactical Area	Key 2026 Activities	Supported City Plan Policy Codes	Policy Area Name
Kiosk Operations & Waterfront Activation	Ambassadors, cruise welcome, itineraries	C4.10, C4.8, C2.1	Waterfront Use & Protection; Community Events; Connected Communities
Racking, Guides & Wayfinding	Visitor guide distribution; print/digital access	C4.3, C2.2, C5.6	Access for All; Integrated Mobility; Tourism
Cultural Interpretation & Partnership	Snuneymuxw storytelling; inclusive representation	C4.1, C4.5, C4.7	Truth & Reconciliation; Culture; Public Art
Community Engagement	Local-first orientation, resident-facing info	C4.4, C3.6	Political Voice & Engagement; Recreation & Wellness

5. Destination Development

Tactical Area	Key 2026 Activities	Supported City Plan Policy Codes	Policy Area Name
Inclusive Experience Development	Training, accessibility checklists, 2SLGBTQIA+ readiness	C4.2, C4.3, C4.5	Equity & Inclusivity; Access for All; Culture
Industry Capacity Building	Workshops, partner portal, shared tools	C5.2, C5.3, C5.5	Human/Social/Environmental Capital; Business Development; Placemaking
Destination Accreditation (DMAP)	Governance, sustainability, accountability	C1.1, C1.2, C5.1	GHG Reduction; Climate Adaptation; Economic Capital
Research & Insights	STR, CoStar, benchmarking, quarterly reporting	C5.1, C5.6	Economic Capital; Tourism

6. Cruise Development (Port Partnership)

Tactical Area	Key 2026 Activities	Supported City Plan Policy Codes	Policy Area Name
Cruise-at-Port Operations	Passenger experience, ambassador presence	C4.10, C4.8, C5.6	Waterfront Use & Protection; Events; Tourism
Environmental Stewardship	Low-impact shore strategies, waste protocols	C1.4, C1.3, C1.1	Watersheds; Urban Tree Canopy & Greenways; GHG Reduction
Place-Based Storytelling	Snuneymuxw-first narratives at the waterfront	C4.1, C4.6	Truth & Reconciliation; Archaeology & Heritage
Mobility Integration	Safe routes between port, Downtown, and Centres	C2.1, C2.2, D4.3	Connected Communities; Active Mobility; Centres

7. Communications, PR & Resident Engagement

Tactical Area	Key 2026 Activities	Supported City Plan Policy Codes	Policy Area Name
Resident Tourism NPS	Surveys, community updates, transparency	C4.4, C3.1	Political Voice & Engagement; Community Safety
Impact Reporting	Public dashboards, partner updates	E6.2, C5.6	Monitoring & Review; Tourism
Inclusive Messaging	“Travel is for Everyone”; accessibility storytelling	C4.2, C4.3	Equity & Inclusivity; Access for All
Emergency Communications	Wildfire/drought messaging with City & DBC	C1.2, C3.5	Climate Adaptation; Emergency Management

8. Administration & Organizational Excellence

Tactical Area	Key 2026 Activities	Supported City Plan Policy Codes	Policy Area Name
Governance & Accountability	Transparent MRDT management; reserves; reporting	C5.1, E6.2, E5	Economic Capital; Monitoring; Relationships
Sustainability & ESG Practices	Procurement updates; green operations	C1.1, C1.2	GHG Reduction; Climate Adaptation
Cross-Government Coordination	City collaboration, Snuneymuxw partnerships	C4.1, E5	Truth & Reconciliation; Inter-Jurisdictional Relationships
Data Stewardship	Forecasting, dashboards, insights-sharing	C5.6, C5.1	Tourism; Economic Capital