

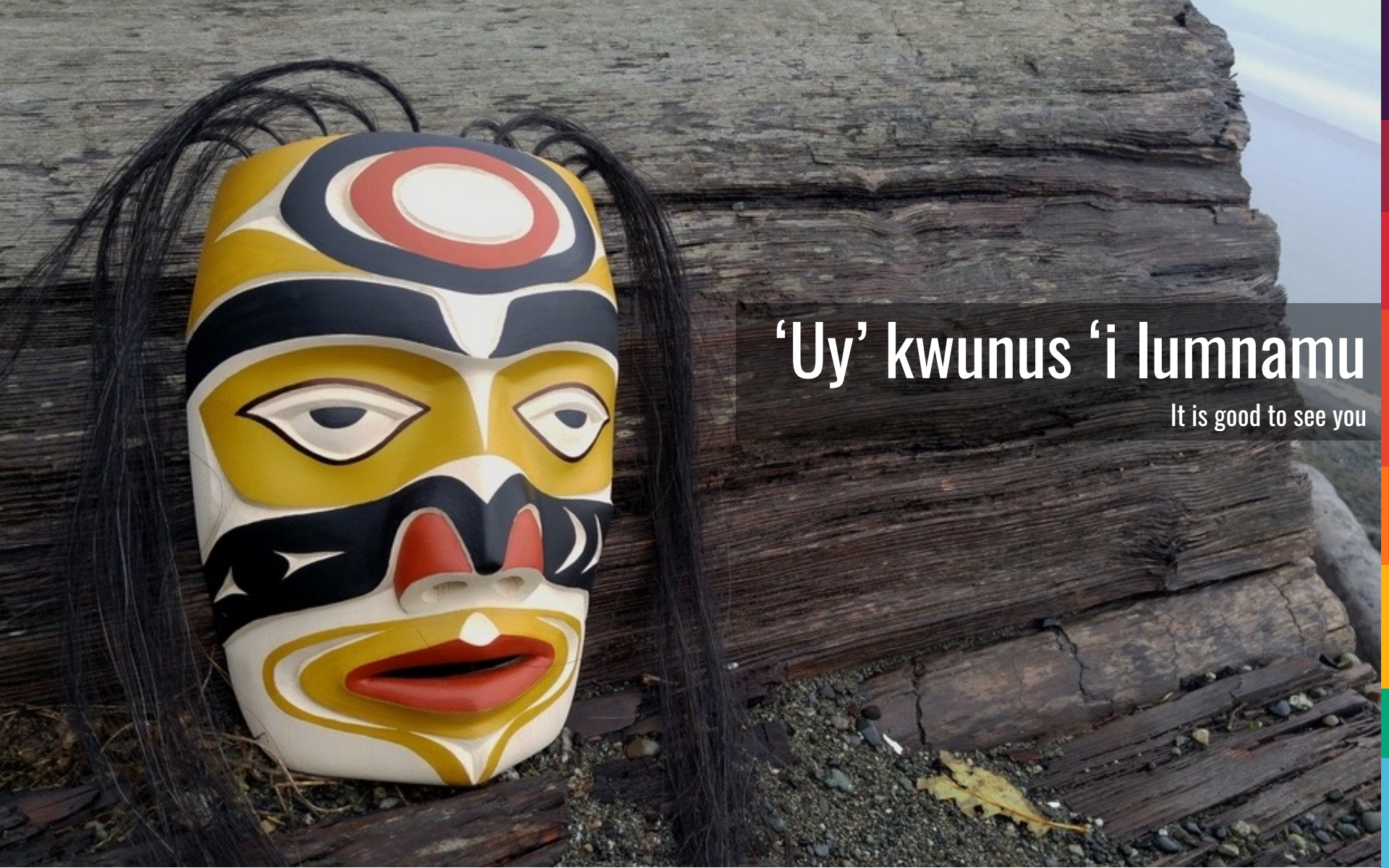
# 5-YEAR DESTINATION STRATEGY

TOURISM NANAIMO & THE NANAIMO  
HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION  
15 MAY 2024

STORMY  
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CONSULTING







‘Uy’ kwunus ‘i lumnamu

It is good to see you



**We respectfully acknowledge that Nanaimo lies within the Traditional Territory of Snuneymuxw First Nation who have lived, gathered, hunted, fished, farmed, harvested, traded and welcomed visitors on their lands since time immemorial.**



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# Our three intentions

A serene sunset over a large body of water. The sky is a warm, golden-orange color, transitioning to a darker orange near the horizon. The water is calm, reflecting the light from the sky. In the distance, there are silhouettes of mountains and trees. In the foreground, two swans are in flight, their wings spread, and their reflections are visible in the water.

We will be a strong ally for our residents and partners, particularly the Snuneymuxw First Nation.

We will be guided by the principles of sustainability, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility as we authentically showcase and encourage people to visit the real, unique Nanaimo.

We will only support tourism that is for the benefit of our community.

## **An honest assessment**

### **For the visitor, what is the “real Nanaimo”?**

- It is gritty, unvarnished and blue collar.
- It is generally good with pockets of cool character.
- It lacks tourism self-confidence.
- It has not fully realized its relationship with the Snuneymuxw First Nation.
- It has a long, ever changing and magical shoreline.
- It has a surprising abundance of parks, trails and beaches.
- Its out-of-market perceptions are rooted in the negative attributions.

We won't successfully develop tourism by trying to be someone we are not, but by leaning into who we are. The real Nanaimo and the real people of Nanaimo.

### **What we need to do:**

1. Be a strong ally – with our most important partner, the Snuneymuxw First Nation, and with our own community.
2. Ensure we are better together.
3. Embrace and build out the real Nanaimo.
4. Elevate the destination – in others' minds and in our own.

## Research and engagement

### Baseline research

Background documents, secondary research, and existing regional/provincial strategies and data were reviewed to understand the foundations to build upon and align with.

### Board primer

A joint Board meeting with Tourism Nanaimo and the Nanaimo Hospitality Association was held on February 22, 2024. A summary of the current tourism landscape, key strategic Destination Development issues, and a review of comparator destinations were discussed to lay the foundation for project understanding and strategic thinking moving forward.

### Dialogic research

Two 3-hour workshops were facilitated on March 11 (virtual) and March 19 (in-person). A total of 41 passionate Nanaimoites participated including residents, hotels and accommodations, operators, local businesses, tourism volunteers, the City of Nanaimo, events, arts and culture, and media.

The purpose was to inform and inspire the community, and understand industry and resident perspectives, ideas, insights, and priorities for Nanaimo's destination development.

### In-depth interviews

One-on-one in-depth interviews were conducted with a diverse pool of tourism industry leaders:

- Nanaimo MLA
- Snuneymuxw First Nation / Petroglyph Development Group
- LGBTQ consultant
- Sports Tourism consultant
- Tourism Management consultant
- MOU consultant
- 4VI
- BC Ferries
- Community members
- Port Authority
- Tourism Nanaimo Business Development Manager
- Tourism Nanaimo Marketing and Communications Manager

### Industry leadership workshop

A half-day workshop was facilitated in Nanaimo on March 20, 2024. A total of 17 tourism industry leaders participated. This included representatives from:

- Vancouver Island Ferry Company (Hullo)
- Vancouver Island North Film Commission
- Vancouver Island University
- Vancouver Island University World Leisure Centre of Excellence
- Wilson's Group - Wilson's Transportation Ltd
- Helijet
- Nanaimo Airport Commission
- Harbour Air Seaplanes
- Vancouver Island Conference Centre / OVG360
- City of Nanaimo
- BC Ocean Boating Tourism Association
- WildPlay Nanaimo
- City of Nanaimo
- Port of Nanaimo
- Nanaimo Hospitality Association (x2)
- Tourism Nanaimo





What we heard



## What we heard: engagement insights

### Nanaimo is most proud of:

- Access and connection to nature
- Energetic community and culture
- The spreading growth and potential

### Tourism successes

Success is being seen across sectors, including transportation and destination accessibility, access to parks and event growth, industry and small business supports, and improvements in marketing and overall perceptions of Nanaimo. There is a felt and noticeable improvement in Indigenous relationships and experience development.

### Tourism gaps

Many of the tourism gaps identified overlap with many of the successes – such as marketing and positive perceptions, industry supports, and transportation and accessibility. Beyond this, there is a call for improvements to the downtown, a need to demonstrate the value of tourism, a lack of industry alignment and gaps in required resources to get the work done. Finally, the waterfront is seen as huge opportunity to be better leveraged.

### Transportation needs improvement

It is not a seamless experience to get to Nanaimo from main transportation hubs, or to travel within the city.

### The downtown core

The Downtown needs improvement and more vibrancy, but we also need to get people outside the downtown and into other areas of the city.

### Nanaimo is unique

We need to embrace and enhance what exists today. We need to both show, tell, and celebrate our uniqueness with visitors and residents.

### Indigenous experiences

There is excitement to continue supporting these experiences as tourism, economic development, education, and reconciliation.

### Make Nanaimo vibrant and alive

We can make a city feel alive, safe, and energetic through our nightlife and events.

### Nanaimo is eager to make the leap

As a tourism destination, Nanaimo is envisioned as a place that is unique, strong, competitive, expert, fearless, exciting, and united. A sentiment exists among stakeholder that for too long the destination has not been living up to it's potential and is ready to break the mold.

### We need to prioritize resident experiences and perceptions through:

- Improved experiences
- Tourism education and awareness
- Positive messaging
- Representation in our brand and stories
- Stronger pride of place
- Invitations to participate

### Tourism leadership top tourism priorities include:

1. Product and experience development
2. Brand and marketing
3. Indigenous allyship
4. Meetings and conferences
5. Accessibility to experiences
6. Community support for tourism



## Setting the context

Nanaimo has only opportunity in front of it to be a top destination on Vancouver Island, and to be a city that provides quality of life for residents. And we can achieve this by being ourselves – by embracing the real, unique Nanaimo that we are today. But getting there is going to take honest, committed, and hard work.

In this Destination Development Strategy for Nanaimo, we are facing some difficult truths head-on. Despite all we have going for us, we're not hitting the mark as a tourism hotspot or as a city that its own residents fully embrace. We've been stuck in neutral and okay with mediocre for too long. We're not collaborating effectively and our disjointed approach to development is holding us back.

While we have 7 ports, we have 3 very strong competitors on Vancouver Island: Tofino, Victoria and Parksville Qualicum Beach. These give visitors lots of reasons to drive through rather than stay over.

We are a good destination, but this strategy is needed because good isn't good enough. It will

be our roadmap to success, and it's going to take all of us to get there. This is a call to action to step up and work together.

Nanaimo has something special to offer. We are not a cookie-cutter destination – we are perfectly imperfect and should embrace all that makes us unique. We've got the raw materials for something incredible and it's time to start putting them to good use.

We know our strengths lie in our unparalleled access to nature, our vibrant waterfront, and in the rich culture and energy of our communities, but we need to connect the dots and take advantage of the momentum that exists today. This includes the Hullo Ferry and the Marriot Hotel that have enhanced our downtown access, capacity, and flair.

Partnerships like the Prosperity Group and Team Nanaimo are driving innovation and building unity. Our sports and events tourism is growing, and our new Nanaimo brand will work hard to unite the sector and activate the real Nanaimo.

We're also seeing a burgeoning offering of Indigenous experiences from the Snuneymuxw First Nation and the development of Saysutshun. But still, we have a long way to go in building meaningful relationships. The Snuneymuxw First Nation are not only an important partner, but an integral part of who we are as a community.

All that said, we certainly have our fair share of challenges to overcome. Residents lack pride of place. Visitors see us as an entry point to the Island and a non-distinct destination with nothing to do. Both visitors and residents alike share concerns over safety in our downtown area, and it's generally difficult to get around and experience our place.

We've got our work cut out for us. But with determination, collaboration, and a healthy dose of Nanaimo pride, we know we can make Nanaimo the vibrant, welcoming, and unforgettable destination it was always meant to be.



# Our 2030 aspiration

Nanaimo is a top-of-mind, year-round destination on Vancouver Island. We are known for our bold, colorful, active and immersive experiences

Our operators, retailers, and service providers are not just selling products; they're curators of experiences, weaving together the threads of tradition and innovation that showcase the real Nanaimo. Visitors appreciate our blend of old and new that makes us truly special.

Stroll through downtown and you'll feel the heartbeat of history - the buildings, weathered yet proud to tell stories of generations past. Step inside and you're greeted with a mix of old-world charm and modern flair – quirky shops, cozy cafes, and galleries bursting with creativity. It's a symphony of sights and sounds, contrasts and colours.

And then there's nature's embrace. Nanaimo is a breath of fresh air, alive with the scent of cedar and sea as a gentle reminder of the island's untamed beauty. Whether it's a leisurely stroll along the waterfront or a hike through lush forests, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

From dining to diving to disc golf and more, visitors discover and curate their own diverse adventures to explore and connect with our place.

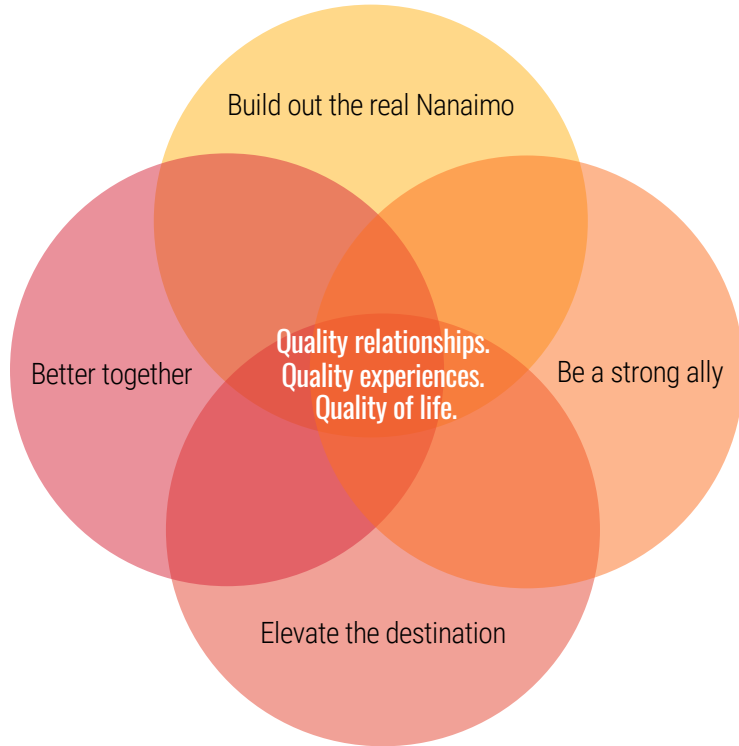
We don't just host events, we work hard to create unforgettable experiences. Nanaimo's character and creativity are infused into every moment, drawing in visitors with our unconventional and West Coast flavour. Visitors are greeted by land, air, and sea, embraced by our array of accommodators, and enchanted day and night by the eclectic and vibrant pulse of our city.

But what truly sets Nanaimo apart is its sense of community. Residents welcome visitors with open arms, eager to share their love for this place they call home. We are united, and proud of our city. Our bond with the Snuneymuxw First Nation is reciprocal and strong; together we uplift and educate our communities and our visitors, sharing the beautiful culture and true stories past and present of Nanaimo's original peoples.

Nanaimo is a proud one and only, and a shining beacon of authenticity, vibrancy, and possibility.



## Strategic framework



Through the project engagement and research, 4 strategic clusters emerged under which the destination strategy will be aligned.

### **Be a strong ally**

- Solidify relationships with the Snuneymuxw First Nation
- Build relationships with local community and cultural associations
- Amplify and support the number of accessible and inclusive experiences
- Invest in community engagement

### **Better together**

- Create strong connections within the tourism industry
- Build industry capacity and expertise
- Advocate for tourism infrastructure

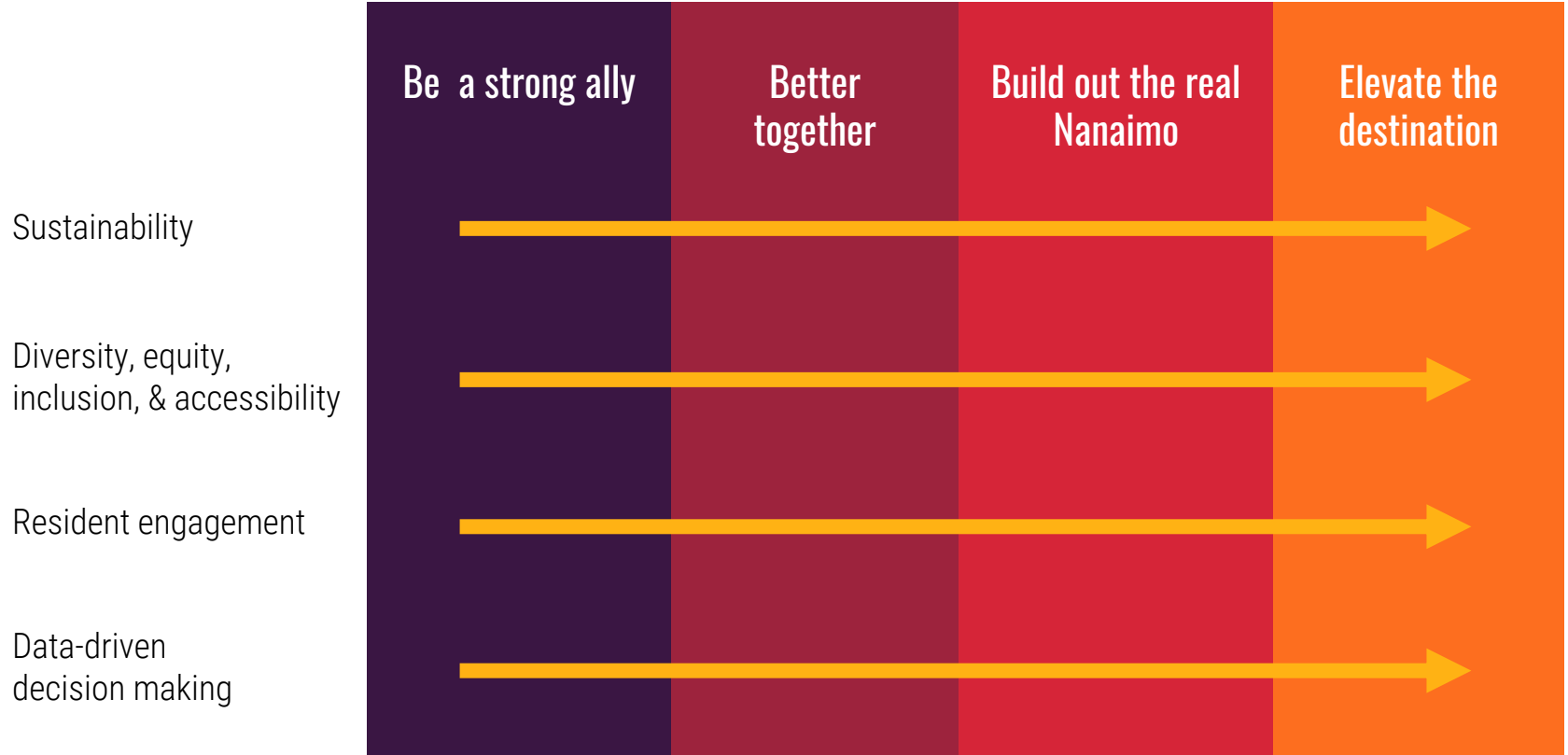
### **Build out the real Nanaimo**

- Develop tourism itineraries supporting multi-day visits
- Encourage the growth of the accommodations sector
- Improve destination accessibility

### **Elevate the destination**

- Build the Nanaimo destination brand
- Increase awareness in regional markets
- Enhance Nanaimo as a meetings and events destination
- Growth the capacity for Sports Tourism
- Improve destination placemaking and wayfinding

## Our cross-cutting elements





## Our cross-cutting elements

The development of this plan revealed a set of important elements that cut across all strategies, requiring consideration and activation in all we do.

### **Sustainable tourism**

What does sustainability mean for Nanaimo? This is something we need to define, measure, and monitor together. Principles of sustainability and regeneration need to become a part of every conversation. As we aim to build a resilient and prosperous tourism community, we must ask if what we are doing brings more benefits than harm to our environment, our people, and our economy.

From the material we use to our carrying capacity as a destination, it will be an ongoing effort to educate each other and our visitors. We need to support collective sustainably endeavors and raise awareness of the importance of building and preserving our place for future generations.

### **Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility**

We have a responsibility to ensure that as a destination we are inclusive and barrier free. Visitors and residents need to feel welcome, safe, and have equal access to all experiences. Beyond the physical world, we also need to ensure our programming, policies, marketing, and more are representative of our diversity. This not only enhances our experiences but enriches our community fabric with new ideas, perspectives, and an open mind that fosters a sense of belonging and unity.

Together let's build an inclusive place and a welcoming culture. DEIA will be a part of all our decisions and developments in Nanaimo.

### **Resident engagement**

Residents are a key partner in destination development. It is as much about their experiences of Nanaimo as it is visitors'. We need to know what our residents want, what they are thinking and how they are feeling. We need to build trust while generating awareness and understanding of our tourism industry.

Residents, including those experiencing homelessness, are integral stakeholders in the development of Nanaimo as a destination. Their experiences and perspectives are valuable contributions to understanding our city's dynamics and shaping our future.

Our role is to incorporate community considerations and feedback in how we can create better places and spaces to increase quality of life for all.

### **Data-informed decision-making**

A simple but critical element. We must invest in capturing and analyzing quality data at every turn to plan better, measure our impact, and understand our place, our visitors, and our opportunities. Data collection will help align us as an industry in strategic decision-making, where clear research informs our investments to drive sustainable growth, enhance the visitor experience, and ensure long-term success of the destination.

## Be a strong ally

### A culture of inclusivity, equality, and support

We are determined to be an inclusive destination for our community members and our visitors – supportive and welcoming of all people, cultures, ages and abilities. To achieve this, we will:

#### Solidify relationship with the Snuneymuxw First Nation

*The intention is to build stronger, reciprocal relationships, and to support Indigenous-led tourism development in Nanaimo. These are suggestions for initial areas of focus but require further consultation with the Snuneymuxw First Nation.*

- Build a reciprocal relationship with the Nation and support their tourism ambitions.
- Explore the idea of a dedicated Indigenous tourism strategy for Nanaimo.
- Consult with Snuneymuxw First Nation about Indigenous awareness and cultural appropriation training for the Nanaimo tourism industry.
- Provide volunteer support at Nation events.

#### Build relationships with community and cultural associations

- Engage with community groups such as the Nanaimo Pride Society and Tillicum Lelum.
- Engage with the VIU campus groups.

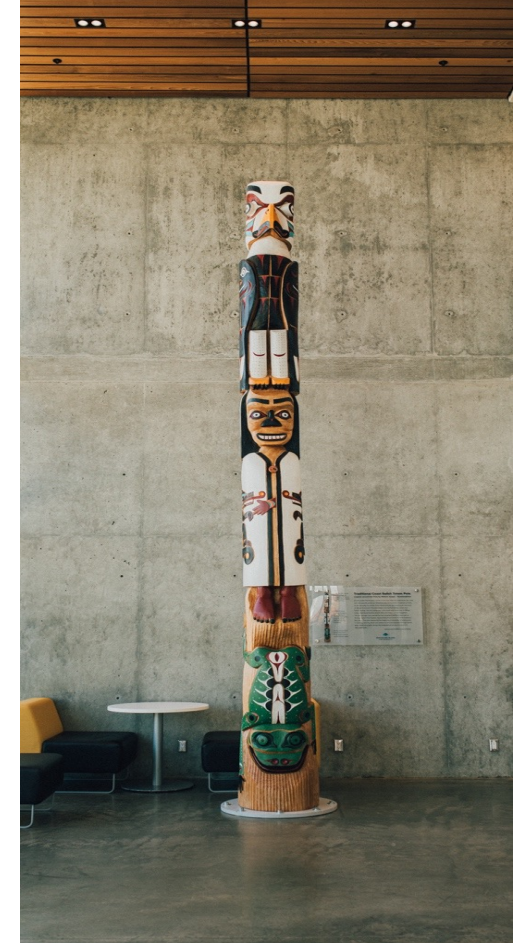
- Engage with local cultural associations such as the Nanaimo African Heritage Society, the Chinese Cultural Society.

#### Amplify and support the growth of accessible and inclusive experiences

- Measure the visitor economy and identify accessibility and inclusivity gaps.
- Support and inform City projects to develop adaptive and inclusive trails, trailheads, walkways, signage, and other information.
- Support and encourage businesses to become Rainbow Registered.
- Provide Nanaimo “super host” training for Accessibility and LGBTQ2AI+ education.

#### Invest in community engagement

- Conduct resident-specific campaigns to increase positive local perceptions.
- Engage residents in itinerary development and in-destination accessibility planning.
- Increase resident awareness of visitor experiences and tourism benefits.
- Grow social license for tourism among residents. Benchmark and measure resident Net Promoter Score.





## Better together

### Industry alignment and collaboration, connecting the dots

As a tourism industry we need to work closely to make our vision a reality. Through greater engagement, relationship building, and collaboration we can strengthen our impact and influence. We will be better together if we:

### Create strong connections within the tourism industry

- Leverage and support the Prosperity Group in experience development.
- Host industry engagement events.
- Celebrate product launches and quick wins: new experiences, accessibility, and infrastructure.
- Create a tier of membership for retail stores and service providers.
- Partner with the VIU tourism programs for research and visitor services .
- Elevate relationships with cultural groups and organizations (such as Nanaimo Art Gallery, Nanaimo Museum, Port Theatre, and Vancouver Island Regional Library) to support events and experience development.
- Continue to work collaboratively with Team Nanaimo.

### Build industry capacity and expertise

- Build an industry database of key partners.
- Bring best practices and expertise to the tourism community through online and in-person workshops.
- Foster strong alignment with Economic Development to support business development.
- Support operators to become market and export ready.

### Advocate for tourism infrastructure

- Support/advocate for more unique gathering spaces– such offsite places for meetings, events, and community gathering.
- Support community recreation development initiatives, such as the Mount Benson trail developments.
- Support the transportation industry in major hub developments and expansions.



## Build out the real Nanaimo

### Product and experience development

Nanaimo needs more to do, and it takes a group effort to catalyze new experience development. Tourism Nanaimo will enable and support product development, and rely on our dedicated industry partners to lend their ideas, investment, and voice to support the following:

### Develop tourism itineraries supporting multi-day visits

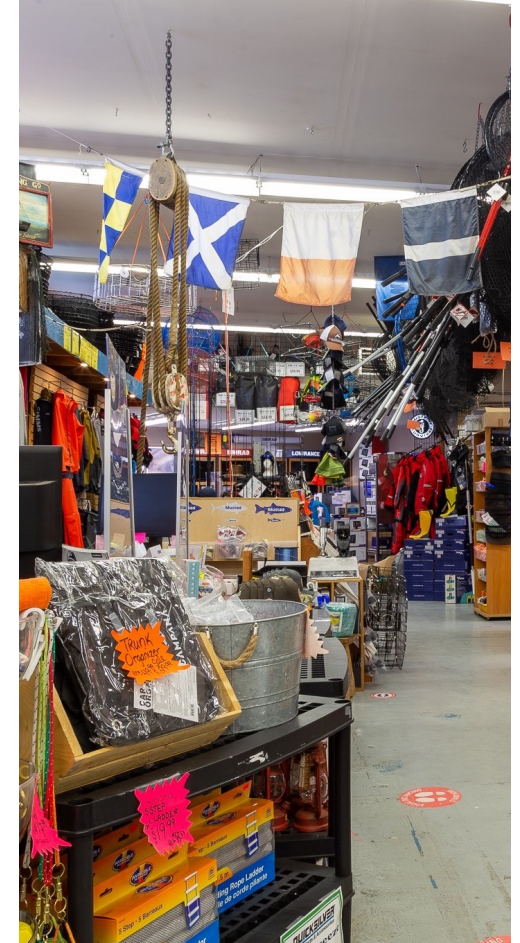
- Support development of the waterfront.
- Create iconic, hyper-local, “real” Nanaimo experiences: Indigenous, shoreline, food and drink, ocean above and below, downtown.
- Support the development of tourism products on neighboring Islands: Saysutshun, Gabriola, Protection.
- Leverage the Visitor Centre to activate local experiences, events, and tourism partners.
- Support development of the downtown and nighttime economy. Work with the Downtown Nanaimo Business Association to engage business in these discussion, focusing on both leisure visitors and Meetings and Events attendees.
- Curate a diversity of initiatives and events to revitalize downtown Nanaimo in the evening and after hours.

### Encourage the growth of the accommodations sector

- Encourage accommodations development that enhances the experience (such unique, boutique hotel).
- Grow accommodations by 1) showcasing the demand, and 2) supporting economic development through outreach to property managers.

### Improve destination accessibility

- Amplify car sharing program messaging and opportunities.
- Support the City to implement appropriate parking that meets bike, car sharing and other mobility needs.
- Support/encourage the development of shuttle services and other transit for visitors.
- Advocate for additional air travel capacity.
- Advocate for connectivity within the destination.
- Support the City in strategic endeavors to develop walking/cycle/rolling and other accessible transit options, inclusive of trail developments.





## Elevate the destination

### Branding and marketing

The real Nanaimo needs to be seen, heard, and discovered. We have a lot to offer that goes unnoticed, but through strong branding and targeted marketing, we can elevate our destination to showcase our opportunities to our many visitor groups. To be successful, we need to:

#### Build the Nanaimo destination brand

- Invest in awareness and adoption of the new brand – especially with The City, Prosperity Group, and residents.
- Build video and photo assets to showcase Nanaimo locally, to visitors, to potential businesses, and to enhance our reputation.
- Leverage local ambassadors as storytellers and to spotlight experiences.
- Tell the stories of Nanaimo and its residents.

#### Increase awareness in regional markets

- Conduct seasonal marketing, promoting visitation in the winter for regional and short haul markets, and direct flight routes.
- Grow the long-haul visitors over 5 years.
- Conduct marketing campaigns to target

short haul day trippers from Vancouver.

- Market regional experiences (Gabriola and Satsutshun, Cedar and Yellowpoint – the lands of the Snuneymuxw, Snaw-naw-as, and Stzuminus peoples).
- Elevate the mid island as a destination to compete with Vancouver and Victoria by developing regional marketing and experiences packages.

#### Enhance Nanaimo as a Meetings and Events destination

- Continue to foster partnerships and collaborative marketing strategies that include VICC, hotels, the DMO as well as other partners such as VIU.
- Continue marketing Nanaimo as accessible, affordable and unique Meetings and Events destination with capacity to host. Leverage the “Outside the Box BC” partnership.
- Work with partners to identify and develop a flagship annual event.
- Improve industry engagement and communications for event planning.



## Elevate the destination

### Grow the capacity for Sports Tourism

- Continue supporting and partnering with the Snuneymuxw First Nation on Indigenous Sports as a key market.
- Advocate for a sports tourism coordinator/manager. A dedicated position is required to connect with The City, partners, and community organizations and spaces.
- Conduct a capacity and infrastructure audit and identify infrastructure gaps.
- Solicit sporting events that fit with what we have and within our capacity. Work with partners to focus efforts and enhance incentives.
- Engage local sport organizations as key partners in event hosting, grants and bidding. Communicate the benefit, role, and impact of this partnership.
- Support the initiation of the next Sports Tourism Strategy development.
- Work with partners to conduct an economic impact assessment for sports tourism in Nanaimo.

### Improve destination placemaking and wayfinding

- Improve wayfinding in the Downtown and Old City Quarter districts.
- Enhance digital wayfinding for the greater Nanaimo region including trail heads, recreation opportunities, attractions, and neighborhoods.
- Work with the City to inform and align with current wayfinding initiatives.







# Our future visitors



## Our future leisure visitor

Nanaimo's visitors are much like the city's identify – undifferentiated – a mix of many types of people enjoying many types of activities.\* The segments representing Nanaimo's most frequent visitors at best are only 20% more likely to visit Nanaimo than the BC and Alberta average.

We see this as freeing – Nanaimo is not bound to the particular tastes of any visitor groups. We can choose the direction in which we'll grow visitation and the visitors that we'll host.

Among the groups already more likely to visit, the best potential for growth is among **Urban Younger Singles** and **Couples and Upscale Urban Families**. These educated, active travellers are adventurous enough to find the best of Nanaimo's "flawsome" character. At the moment, Nanaimo has strength to build from in both BC and Alberta among Urban Young Singles and Couples. Nanaimo is strong in Alberta with Upscale Urban Families and can look to grow visitation from members of this segment in BC.

There are a few key themes that unite these target segments.

### Mixing nature and culture

Nanaimo offers a mix of active outdoor and cultural activities that appeal to our target segments.

Both target groups are active. Urban Younger Singles and couples tend towards soccer, fitness classes and health clubs, while Upscale Urban Families participate in a wide range of sports and leisure activities including hockey, cycling and golfing.

Both groups also seek out cultural activities. Both target segments are avid concert goers. Urban Younger Singles and Couples also lean toward galleries/museums, exhibitions/fairs, specialty movie theatres, live theatre and arcades. Upscale Urban families prefer sporting events, zoos/aquariums and parks.

### Travelling without children

Most visitors in these groups are travelling without children. Many of the target visitors do not have children in their households (77% for Urban Younger Singles and Couples; 50% for Upscale Urban Families). Those with children have them old enough to stay home alone over a weekend or in the care of friends / family.

### Wintertime seasonal dispersion

Both target groups are most likely to visit Nanaimo in the summer, regardless of their origin, but there is a strong difference between winter-time travel between Albertans and British Columbians. Albertans are much less likely to choose Nanaimo as a destination in the winter – when Nanaimo is competing with sunnier long-haul destinations in the Southern US, Mexico and the Caribbean. We expect winter visitation to remain predominantly short-haul or conference/event driven.



# Urban Younger Singles and Couples

Selected analysis below taken from Environics' PRIZM report (2023)

Urban Younger Singles and Couples consist of young urbanites who enjoy travelling across Canada and abroad. They tend to do so in order to gain new social experiences.

## Demographic overview

- Urban Younger Singles and Couples are comprised of younger individuals, most likely without children at home. They tend to live in older apartment buildings across the main cities of British Columbia and Alberta.
- Although this group currently has a modest household income of \$109K, they show potential for upward mobility due to their university degrees and jobs in business and finance, sciences, education and government.

## Lifestyle and behavioural overview

- These individuals feel that environmental destruction is unacceptable and can be mostly attributed to corporations; they will look for brands/companies that share their concern about the environment. However, they also tend to gain satisfaction through acquiring new products and services. Together with the "green" factor, they will also put emphasis on aesthetics over utility reasons.

## Media highlights

- This group tend to be light users of TV and radio. They prefer to watch documentaries, sci-fi, and crime drama shows and are likely to listen to news talk on radio stations while relaxing at home.

Urban Younger Singles and Couples							
<b>Total Households</b>				<b>Total Population</b>			
Target Group: 621,197 (16.9%)				Target Group: 1,244,749 (12.9%)			
Total Market: 3,672,703				Total Market: 9,655,834			
<b>HH Maintainer Age</b>	<b>Avg. HH Income</b>	<b>HH w/ Children at Home</b>		<b>Visible Minority</b>			
< 35	\$109K	23.4%		34.4%			
<b>Visitor Behaviour (2022)</b>				Trips per Visitor: 1.5 (100)			
				Nights per Trip: 2.3 (99)			
Visitation Pattern by Origin (2022)							
Origins	Market Size		Visitor Behaviour				
	Count	% Comp*	% Pen	Index			
Alberta	495,206	11.0%	1.9%	111			
British Columbia	749,543	14.5%	7.3%	117			
Seasonality of Visitors from Alberta (2022)							
Winter		Spring		Summer		Fall	
12.8%	87	25.6%	99	48.9%	101	21.0%	107
Seasonality of Visitors from British Columbia (2022)							
Winter		Spring		Summer		Fall	
20.5%	97	28.6%	97	43.3%	102	27.8%	99

\*Audience analysis is based on Nanaimo Hospitality Association's Visitor Segmentation report prepared by Environics in August 2023 based on traveller data from 2021 and 2022.

# Upscale Urban Families

Selected analysis below taken from Environics' PRIZM report (2023)

Upscale Urban Families consist of middle-aged to older couples living with their children in urban areas. They pursue a healthy lifestyle and seek out opportunities to travel locally.

## Demographic overview

- Upscale Urban Families are comprised of middle-aged to older couples with children at home. Children living at home are likely to be in their final years of high school, in university, or are young adults.
- Adults in this group tend to hold university degrees, and work in white-collar occupations such as management, business and finance, and education and government. Their annual incomes are well above the British Columbia and Alberta average, at \$208K.
- This group tends to make a balance sheet out of every decision they make, including their leisure activities. Price might not be at the top of their concerns; however, other factors such as accommodations, and cultural and physical activities might be taken into consideration when planning vacations. These families will benefit from having details about Nanaimo and the different options available for visitors within the area.

## Travel highlights

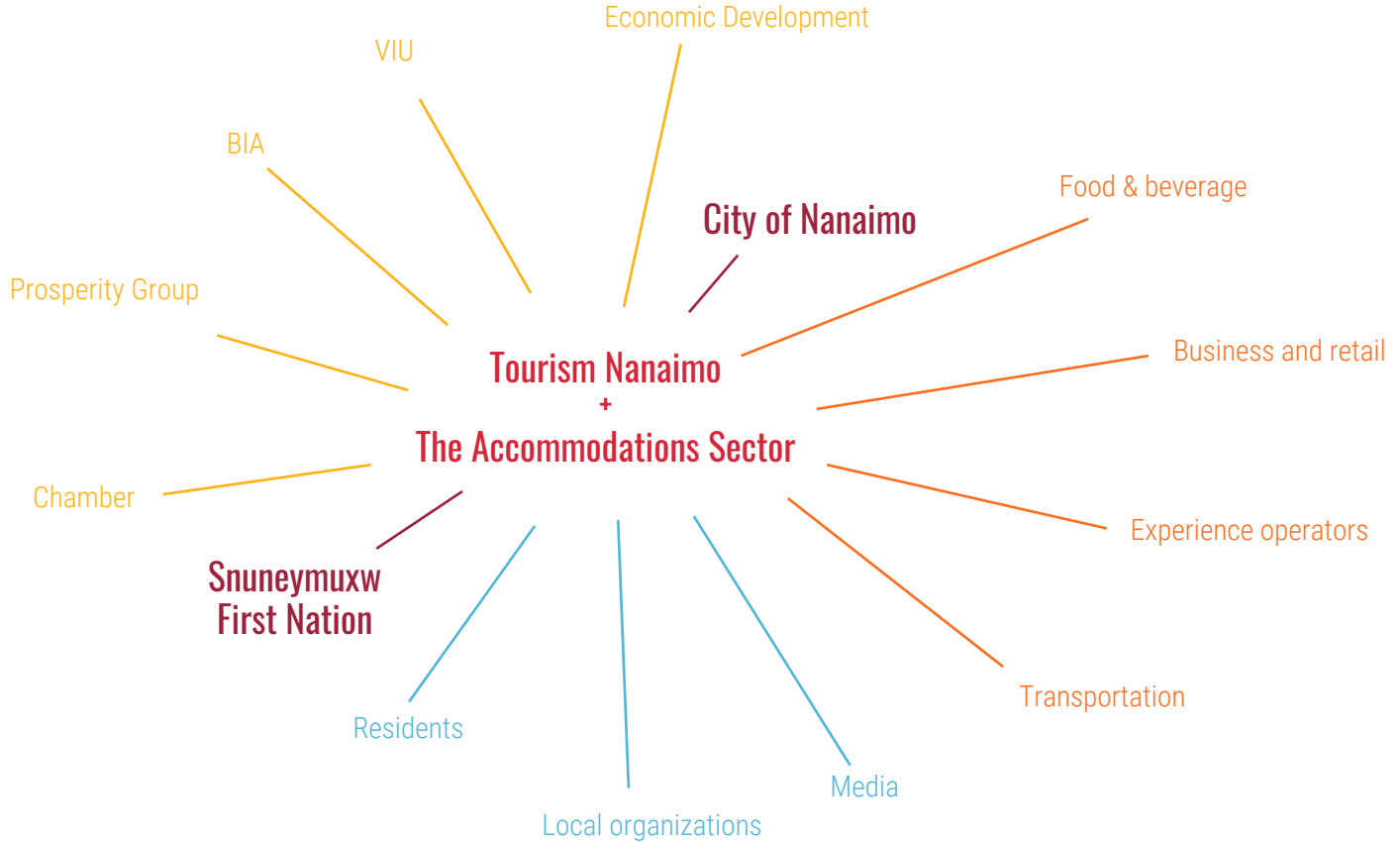
- Upscale Urban Families have less financial concern and are willing to spend more on vacations, with 24% spending more than \$3K on their most recent vacation. They are also able to vacation out-of-town more frequently – 83% have taken at least one out-of-town vacation, and 57% have taken three or more over the past three years.

Upscale Urban Families							
<b>Total Households</b>				<b>Total Population</b>			
Target Group: 362,789 (9.9%)				Target Group: 1,087,865 (11.3%)			
Total Market: 3,672,703				Total Market: 9,655,834			
<b>HH Maintainer Age</b>	<b>Avg. HH Income</b>	<b>HH w/ Children at Home</b>	<b>Visible Minority</b>				
45+	\$208K	49.6%	26.1%				
<b>Visitor Behaviour (2022)</b>				Trips per Visitor: 1.4 (94)			
				Nights per Trip: 2.4 (106)			
Visitation Pattern by Origin (2022)							
Origins	Market Size		Visitor Behaviour				
	Count	% Comp*	% Pen	Index			
Alberta	626,811	14.0%	2.0%	121			
Seasonality of Visitors from Alberta (2022)							
Winter		Spring		Summer		Fall	
14.2%	97	24.6%	96	49.9%	103	19.8%	101

\*Audience analysis is based on Nanaimo Hospitality Association's Visitor Segmentation report prepared by Environics in August 2023 based on traveller data from 2021 and 2022.



## The partnership ecosystem



# THANK YOU

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# ACTION PLAN

A person in a brown shirt is pouring coffee from a metal pitcher into a white cup. The scene is set at a coffee bar with a coffee machine and a blurred customer in the background. The text "ACTION PLAN" is overlaid in large white letters on the left side of the image.

## Action plan legend

A&C	Arts & Culture groups/partners	PA	Port Authority
BCF	BC Ferries	PDG	Petroglyph Development Group
DBC	Destination BC	PQBT	Parksville Qualicum Beach Tourism
DNBA	Nanaimo Downtown Business Association	RDN	Regional District of Nanaimo
CBIA	Chemainus Business Improvement Association	SFN	Snuneymuxw First Nation
ED	Economic Development	ST	Sports Tourism groups/partners
GICC	Gabriola Island Chamber of Commerce	TCS	Tourism Cowichan Society
GNCC	Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce	TN	Tourism Nanaimo
HAS	Harbour Air Seaplanes	TNT	Tourism Nanaimo Team
ITBC	Indigenous Tourism British Columbia	VICC	Vancouver Island Conference Centre
M&E	Meetings and Events	VIFC	Vancouver Island Ferry Company (Hullo)
NHA	Nanaimo Hospitality Association	VIU	Vancouver Island University
NPC	Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation	YCD	Nanaimo Airport
NPS	Nanaimo Pride Society	4VI	4 Vancouver Island

# BE A STRONG ALLY

A culture of inclusivity, equality, and support.

## 1. Solidify partnerships with the Snuneymuxw First Nation

### Actions:

- Build a reciprocal relationship with the Nation and support their tourism ambition. Discuss the development of a Consultations Executive Team: Snuneymuxw Elder + TN + NHA to consult with Chief and Council
- Support the development of an Indigenous tourism strategy for Nanaimo
- Work with Snuneymuxw First Nation to provide Indigenous awareness and cultural appropriation training to the Nanaimo tourism industry
- Provide volunteer support at Nation events

*Note: the intention is to build stronger, reciprocal relationships with the Snuneymuxw First Nation and to support Indigenous-led tourism development in Nanaimo. These strategies are suggestions for initial areas of focus but require engagement and input from the Snuneymuxw First Nation.*

Tactics	Timeline	Lead	Key partners
Develop and continue relationships and consultation processes as led by the Snuneymuxw First Nation.	Ongoing	SNF	TN, NHA
Attend Snuneymuxw First Nation events and offer volunteer support	Ongoing	TN	Industry
Revise the 5-year Destination Development plan based on the input of Snuneymuxw First Nation.	Ongoing	TN	SFN
Begin discussions on potential collaboration areas and support for the Nation's tourism ambitions. Discuss the development of a dedicated Indigenous Tourism Strategy.	Y1	SNF	TN, NHA
Work with the Tourism Nanaimo Board Chair and partners in the Petroglyph Development Group to schedule initial consultations that follow protocol.	Y1	TN	PDG, NHA



# BE A STRONG ALLY

## 2. Build relationships with community and cultural organizations

### Actions:

- Engage with community groups such as the Nanaimo Pride Society and Tillicum Lelum
- Engage with local cultural associations such as the Nanaimo African Heritage Society, the Chinese Cultural Society, and others.
- Engage with VIU campus groups.

Tactics	Timeline	Lead	Key partners
Review the Destination Development plan with the Nanaimo Pride Society and intentions to partner. Discuss collaborative initiatives.	Y1 Q1	TN	PNS
Research and identify local Nanaimo cultural associations and key contacts engagement. Initiate discussions with locals to explore collaboration opportunities.	Y1 Q3	TN	A&C
Attend events hosted by VIU to network with faculty and students. Discuss potential collaborations.	Y1 Q3	TN	VIU
Co-host collaborative community and cultural events.	Y2 Q1	TN	VIU, A&C
Identify annual experiences and events opportunities.	Y2 Q4	TN	A&C, City
Evaluate effectiveness and impact of VIU and cultural group partnerships. Adjust accordingly	Y3	TN	TNT
Continue engagement and collaboration for successful initiatives and new ideas, introducing new partners to build industry relationships.	Y4	TN	
Begin planning joint priorities and initiatives for the next 5-year Nanaimo Destination Development strategy.	Y5	TN	

# BE A STRONG ALLY

## 3. Amplify and support the growth of accessible experiences

### Actions:

- Measure the visitor economy and identify accessibility and inclusivity gaps
- Support and inform City projects to develop adaptive and inclusive trails, trailheads, walkways, signage, and other information
- Support/encourage businesses to become rainbow registered
- Provide Nanaimo “super host” training for Accessibility and LGBTQ2AI+ education.

Tactics	Timeline	Lead	Key partners
Work with the Pride Society and other inclusivity groups and experts to develop a Nanaimo "super host" training program, focusing on accessibility and LGBTQ2AI+ inclusivity.	Y1 Q1	TN	NPS, others, TNT
Launch a campaign to encourage businesses to become Rainbow Registered, providing resources and support.	Y1 Q2	TN	NPS
Assess accessibility and inclusivity gaps in the visitor economy, involving key stakeholders: City, Nanaimo Prosperity Corp.	Y1 Q4	TN	City, NPC
Develop a framework for measuring the effectiveness of accessibility initiatives.	Y1 Q4	TN	City, NPC
Explore partnerships with disability advocacy groups to enhance inclusivity efforts.	Y1 Q4	TN	TNT, NHA
Implement the Nanaimo Super Host training program. Monitor participation and feedback from businesses and individuals enrolled in the training program.	Y1 Q4	TN	NPS, others, TNT
Expand accessibility initiatives to include other topics as identified, collaborating with relevant stakeholders.	Y3	TN	Industry, experts
Celebrate successes and milestones in accessibility and inclusivity efforts through public events and recognition programs. Share best practices and lessons learned with and industry partners.	Y3	TN	TNT, City
Evaluate the effectiveness of accessibility initiatives and adjust based on feedback and evolving needs.	Y4	TN	City
Explore opportunities for further collaboration with disability advocacy groups to advance inclusivity efforts.	Y4	TN	TNT
Engage with businesses and organizations to promote ongoing commitment to inclusivity and accessibility.	Y4	TN	
Assess the overall impact of accessibility and inclusivity initiatives on Nanaimo's tourism industry and visitor experience. Identify opportunities for further innovation and improvement in accessibility standards and practices.	Y5	TN	City

# BE A STRONG ALLY

## 4. Invest in community engagement cont.

### Actions:

- Conduct resident-specific campaigns to increase positive local perceptions of Nanaimo
- Engage residents in itinerary development and in-destination accessibility planning
- Increase resident awareness of visitor experiences and tourism benefits
- Grow social license for tourism among residents. Benchmark and measure resident NPS.

Tactics	Timeline	Lead	Key partners
Develop resident-specific campaigns in collaboration with partners.	Y1 Q1	TN	City, TNT
Create materials to raise resident awareness about tourism benefits.	Y1 Q2	TN	TNT
Engage residents through online and offline channels to gather input on itinerary development and accessibility.	Y1 Q3	TN	Community
Launch resident campaigns and collaborate with local media to showcase positive stories.	Y1 Q4	TN	Local media
Organize community forums (in person or online) to discuss tourism benefits and gather feedback.	Y2 Q1	TN	
Explore strategies to increase resident participation in tourism activities.	Y2 Q1	TN	TNT, NPG, DNBA, VIU
Conduct surveys to measure resident Net Promoter Score (NPS) regarding tourism.	Y2 Q4	TN	VIU, TNT
Evaluate effectiveness of resident-specific campaigns and adjust tactics as needed.	Y3	TN	
Develop strategies to address concerns identified through resident feedback.	Y3	TN	TNT
Implement strategies to sustain and strengthen social license for tourism among residents.	Y3	TN	NPG, TNT
Adjust strategies based on comprehensive review of NPS results. Address any identified concerns or areas for improvement.	Y3	TN	
Continue monitoring the impact of resident campaigns and initiatives and conduct a second NPS survey and compare results with the first.	Y4	TN	VIU, TNT
Enhance communication and transparency with residents regarding tourism initiatives.	Y4	TN	
Identify long-term strategies to sustain resident support for tourism. Develop a plan for ongoing communication and engagement beyond the 5-year period.	Y5	TN	TNT, NPG, VIU



# BETTER TOGETHER

Industry alignment, collaboration, and connecting the dots

## 1. Create strong connections within the tourism industry

### Strategies:

- Leverage and support the Prosperity Group in experience development
- Host industry engagement events
- Celebrate product launches and quick wins: new experiences, accessibility, and infrastructure.
- Create a tier of membership for retail stores (and service providers)
- Partner with the VIU tourism programs for research and visitor services
- Elevate relationships with arts and culture groups and organizations (such as Nanaimo Art Gallery, Nanaimo Museum, Port Theatre, and Vancouver Island Regional Library) to support events and experience development
- Continue to work collaboratively with Team Nanaimo.

Tactics	Timeline	Lead	Key partners
Continue celebrating wins and new products/experiences.	Ongoing	TN	All
Initiate meetings with Prosperity Corp to align tourism strategies. Share and discuss the Destination Development Plan.	Y1 Q1	TN	NPC
Develop method to celebrate new launches and quick wins for tourism. Begin asap.	Y1 Q1	TN	
Organize an industry engagement event(s) for year 1.	Y1 Q2	TN	TNT
Develop the retail/service providers membership program. Engage retailers/service providers to raise awareness.	Y1 Q3	TN	Retailers, DNBA
Engage with VIU and arts and cultural organizations. Discuss collaborative partnerships.	Y1 Q3	TN	VIU, A&C
Launch the retail/service provider member program.	Y2 Q1	TN	
Expand and refine industry events and evaluate the Year 1 initiatives.	Y2 Q1	TN	TNE, M&E
Strengthen partnership with Prosperity Group.	Y2 Q1	TN	PG
Deepen research collaboration with VIU and events collaborations with arts & culture.	Y2 Q2	TN	VIU, TN, A&C
Assess and adjust retail membership program.	Y2 Q2	TN	DNBA
Collaborate on signature events with cultural groups.	Y2 Q4	A&C	TN
Integrate student research into tourism planning.	Y3	TN	VIU
Continue and institutionalize industry engagement events.	Y3	TN	TNT
Recognize retail member contributions.	Y3	TN	TNT

# BETTER TOGETHER

## 2. Build industry capacity and expertise

### Strategies:

- Build an industry database of key partners
- Bring best practices and expertise to the tourism community through online and in-person workshops
- Foster strong alignment with Economic Development to support business development
- Support operators to become market and export ready

Tactics	Timeline	Lead	Key partners
Expand and update the industry database.	Ongoing	TN	
Establish a comprehensive database of Nanaimo tourism partners.	Y1 Q1	TN	All
Conduct initial industry assessment for training needs.	Y1 Q2	TN	TNT, PG
Identify industry training and education workshop topics and co-hosts/experts.	Y1 Q3	TN	TNT
Organize online and in-person workshops covering identified industry training and education topics.	Y1 Q4	Experts	TN
Forge partnerships with Economic Development & The Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce	Y2 Q1	TN	ED, GNCC
Provide guidance on market readiness for businesses/operators.	Y2 Q3	DBC, ITBC	TN
Collaborate with Economic Development on joint projects for business development.	Y3	ED	TN
Support operators with market research and networking.	Y3	TN	DBC
Diversify workshop offerings based on industry trends. Partner with professional associations for certifications as identified.	Y4	TN	TNT, experts
Evaluate implemented strategies and gather feedback.	Y5	TN	
Refine plans for the next 5-year Destination Development Plan.	Y5	TN	All

# BETTER TOGETHER

## 3. Advocate for tourism infrastructure

### Strategies:

- Support/advocate for more unique gathering spaces– such as the cultural center, other offsite places for meetings, events, community gathering
- Support community recreation development initiatives (i.e. Mount Benson trail developments)
- Support transportation industry in major hub developments and expansions.

Tactics	Timeline	Lead	Key partners
Collaborate with transportation stakeholders for integration with Nanaimo's development.	Ongoing	TN	City, PDC, RDN, transport.
Identify tourism infrastructure gaps with partners like arts & culture groups, Team Nanaimo, NPG.	Y1 Q4	TN	A&C, TNT, NPC
Assess the need for new meeting and event venues with local stakeholders.	Y1 Q4	TNT	TN, VICC, SFN
Initiate discussions with the City and NHA for community recreation initiatives alignment.	Y1 Q4	TN	City, NHA
Collaborate with transportation industry for tourism support and identify areas for improvement.	Y2 Q1	TN	VIFG, BCF, YCD, RDN
Support ongoing developments like the Mount Benson trail with a focus on visitor perspective and marketing.	Y2 Q1	TN	The City, NHA
Partner with local businesses and organizations to support community recreation initiatives.	Y2 Q2	TN	NHA
Explore public-private partnerships for community gathering spaces opportunities.	Y3	TNT	NPC, TN
Gather community input for future improvements and developments.	Y3	TN	The City
Develop marketing for new recreational opportunities.	Y3	TN	The City
Continue to address transportation challenges and improve connectivity with industry partners. Advocate for transportation infrastructure investment to enhance accessibility.	Y4	City	TN, NCP, YCD, M&E
Continue marketing efforts for recreational opportunities and gathering spaces.	Y4	TN	City, TNT
Identify infrastructure gaps for the next 5-year plan. Gather feedback from stakeholders and community for future planning.	Y5	TN	



# BUILD OUT THE REAL NANAIMO

## Product and experience development

### 1. Develop tourism itineraries supporting multi-day visits

#### Strategies:

- Support development of the waterfront
- Create iconic, hyper-local, "real" Nanaimo experiences: Indigenous, shoreline, food and drink, ocean above and below, downtown.
- Support the development of tourism products on neighboring Islands: Saysutshun, Gabriola, Protection
- Leverage the Visitor Centre to activate local experiences, events, and tourism partners.
- Support development of the downtown and nighttime economy. Work with the Downtown Nanaimo Business Association to engage business in these discussion, focusing on both leisure visitors and Meetings and Events attendees.
- Curate a diversity of initiatives and events to revitalize downtown Nanaimo in the evening and after hours

Tactics	Timeline	Lead	Key partners
Establish partnerships for immersive experiences showcasing Nanaimo's uniqueness.	Y1 Q1	TN	SFN, operators
Expand Visitor Centre offerings and train staff to promote local experiences effectively.	Y1 Q4	TN	Operators
Brainstorm and develop iconic Nanaimo-specific itineraries with key stakeholders.	Y1 Q4	TN	Operators, residents, NHA
Collaborate with stakeholders to identify and enhance waterfront experiences.	Y2 Q1	City	NPC, TNT, SFN
Build relationships with the Downtown Nanaimo Business Association for downtown revitalization.	Y2 Q1	TN	GNBA
Collaborate with neighboring islands to develop cross-promotional strategies.	Y2 Q3	TN	GICC, PDG
Launch marketing campaigns targeting both locals and tourists.	Y2 Q3	TN	City
Continue encouraging and supporting iconic itinerary development. Forge partnerships with and between tourism operators and local businesses for local itinerary development	Y2 Q3	TN	TNT
Encourage businesses to extend operating hours and participate in revitalization efforts.	Y2 Q3	GNBA	TN, City
Organize initiatives and events to attract diverse audiences to downtown Nanaimo.	Y2 Q4	GNBA	TN, City, A&C
Launch developed iconic itineraries	Y3-4	TN	
Continue engaging downtown businesses and stakeholders.	Y3-4	TN	GNBA

# BUILD OUT THE REAL NANAIMO

## 2. Encourage the growth of the accommodations sector

### Strategies:

- Encourage accommodations development that enhances the experience (unique, boutique).
- Grow accommodations by 1) showcasing the demand, and 2) supporting economic development through outreach to property managers.

Tactics	Timeline	Lead	Key partners
Work with partners to compile data on visitor demographics, travel patterns, and accommodation preferences to demonstrate the potential for growth accommodations. Promote the economic benefits of enhancing the accommodations sector.	Y2 Q2	TN	NHA, NPC
Highlight the demand for accommodations in the area, targeting both potential investors and existing property owners. Conduct outreach and connect property owners/investors to identified vacant areas with development potential.	Y2 Q3	TN	NHA, NPC
Provide resources and assistance to property owners interested in upgrading or diversifying their offerings to meet the demand for unique and quality experiences. Encourage both large and boutique accommodations development that service both groups and individuals.	Y3	NPC	NHA
Explore the ability to offer incentives that encourage investments in accommodations development.	Y3	TN	City, NPC
Collect industry feedback on product development over last 4 years to adjust strategies and foster innovation.	Y5	TN	
Sustaining efforts to grow and enhance the accommodations sector.	Y5	TN	NPC, GNCC, ED, NHA

# BUILD OUT THE REAL NANAIMO

## 3. Improve destination accessibility

### Strategies:

- Amplify car sharing program messaging and opportunities.
- Support the City to implement appropriate parking that meets bike, car sharing and other mobility needs.
- Support/encourage the development of shuttle services and other transit for visitors
- Advocate for additional air travel capacity
- Advocate for connectivity within the destination
- Support the City in strategic endeavors to develop walking/cycle/rolling and other accessible transit options, inclusive of trail developments.

Tactics	Timeline	Lead	Key partners
Support airport initiatives with tourism insights and growth projections.	Ongoing	TN	YCD, TNT
Enhance visibility of local car sharing programs through marketing campaigns.	Y1 Q2	TN	Modo, City
Promote car sharing to residents and visitors.	Y1 Q2	TN	City
Identify connectivity gaps and prioritize them with partners.	Y1 Q3	City	TN, RDN
Assess current parking infrastructure against tourism needs with City officials.	Y1 Q4	City	TN
Support City plans for parking solutions accommodating various mobility needs.	Y2 Q1	TN	City
Seek/encourage partnerships and opportunities to expand and integrate shuttle services with transit networks.	Y2 Q1	TN	YCD, VIFC, Wilsons, NPC
Promote walking, cycling, and accessible transit options.	Y2 Q1	TN	City
Advocate for airport expansion and improved infrastructure.	Y2 Q2	YCD	TN
Advocate for investments in pedestrian-friendly pathways, bike lanes, and transit hubs.	Y2 Q2	TN	City, RDN
Showcase newly developed trails and promote active transportation.	Y3	TN	City
Evaluate car sharing program success and identify expansion opportunities.	Y3	TN	
Explore partnerships for comprehensive mobility networks.	Y4-5	TN	



# ELEVATE THE DESTINATION

## Branding and marketing

### 1. Build the Nanaimo destination brand

#### Strategies:

- Invest in awareness and adoption of the new brand – especially with The City, Prosperity Group, and residents.
- Build video and photo assets to showcase Nanaimo locally, to visitors, to potential businesses, and to enhance our reputation.
- Leverage local ambassadors as storytellers and to spotlight experiences.
- Tell the stories of Nanaimo and its residents

Tactics	Timeline	Lead	Key partners
Continue building the Tourism Nanaimo brand assets library highlighting unique attractions and experiences.	Ongoing	TN	
Launch a comprehensive marketing and education campaign introducing the new Nanaimo brand to The City, Prosperity Group, and residents.	Y1 Q1	TN	
Collaborate with local influencers and community leaders to amplify the brand and garner support.	Y1 Q3	TN	Community
Engage residents and business owners to gather authentic stories showcasing Nanaimo's diversity and vibrancy.	Y2 Q1	TN	Industry, community
Identify passionate individuals within the community to serve as local ambassadors.	Y2 Q2	TN	
Provide training and resources to equip ambassadors with storytelling skills and knowledge about Nanaimo's key attractions.	Y2 Q2	TN	DBC, ITBC
Launch storytelling campaigns capturing and sharing the diverse narratives of Nanaimo's residents and history	Y2 Q4	TN	A&C, SFN, PDC
Encourage community members to submit their stories, photos, and videos showcasing their connection to the city. Curate and showcase these stories to foster a sense of pride and belonging among residents.	Y2 Q4	TN	A&C
Evaluate the effectiveness of brand building strategies and initiatives. Identify opportunities for refinement and expansion based on stakeholder and audience insights.	Y3	TN	NPC
Collaborate with local ambassadors to curate unique experiences highlighting different aspects of Nanaimo.	Y3	TN	Industry, operators
Launch ambassador-led experiences to promote Nanaimo's attractions.	Y3	TN	
Continue investing in brand awareness, content creation, and community engagement efforts.	Y4	TN	
Celebrate achievements and milestones reached during the implementation period. Acknowledge the collective efforts of the community in promoting Nanaimo as a premier tourism destination.	Y4	TN	
Plan for sustaining momentum through the next 5-year plan and driving long-term brand growth.	Y5	TN	

# ELEVATE THE DESTINATION

## 2. Increase awareness in regional markets

### Strategies:

- Market regional experiences (Gabriola and Satsutshun, Cedar and Yellow Point – the lands of the Snuneymuxw, Snaw-naw-as, and Stzuminus peoples)
- Elevate the mid island as a destination to compete with Vancouver and Victoria by developing regional marketing and experiences packages
- Seasonal marketing – promote visitation in the winter for regional and short haul markets, and direct flight routes
- Grow the long-haul visitors over 5 years
- Conduct marketing campaigns to target short haul day trippers from Vancouver

Tactics	Timeline	Lead	Key partners
Continue marketing regional experiences from nearby islands, Lantzville, and Cedar/Yellow Point.	Y1 Q1	TN	
Develop a winter promotion campaign targeting regional and short-haul markets.	Y2 Q1	TN	YCD, VIFC
Develop targeted marketing campaigns in Vancouver and on the Hullo Ferry to attract day trippers. Highlight easy access via ferry or direct flights and unique experiences for day trippers.	Y2 Q1	TN	VIFC, HAS, Seair, Helijet
Advocate for additional flight routes to increase accessibility during the winter season.	Y2 Q1	YCD	TN
Launch targeted marketing campaigns in Vancouver and on the Hullo Ferry	Y2 Q2	TN	VIFC, HAS, Seair, Helijet
Establish partnerships with regional partners and local businesses to identify new experiences for promotion.	Y2 Q3	TN	GNCC
Launch winter campaigns to attract visitors.	Y2 Q3	TN	YCD
Begin developing strategies to attract long-haul visitors.	Y2 Q4	TN	YCD
Engage Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) in mid-Vancouver Island to share the Nanaimo Destination Development Plan and discuss collaboration opportunities.	Y3	TN	PQBT, CTS, GNCC, CBIA
Evaluate the effectiveness of winter efforts and make necessary adjustments.	Y3	TN	
Expand regional partnerships and marketing efforts to position the mid-island as a competitive destination.	Y3	TN	PQBT, CTS, GNCC, CBIA, 4VI
Continue evaluating marketing strategies for attracting long and short -haul visitors. Work with industry partners to strategize initiatives.	Y4	TN	NHA, TNT, YCD
Analyze visitor trends and feedback to inform future marketing efforts in the next Destination Development Plan.	Y5	TN	NHA, TNT

# ELEVATE THE DESTINATION

## 3. Enhance Nanaimo as a meetings and events destination

### Strategies:

- Continue to foster partnerships and collaborative marketing strategies that include VICC, hotels, the DMO as well as other partners such as VIU.
- Continue marketing Nanaimo as accessible, affordable and unique Meetings and Events destination with capacity to host (+ leverage the "Outside the Box BC" partnership)
- Work with partners to identify and develop a flagship annual event
- Improve industry engagement and communications for event planning

Tactics	Timeline	Lead	Key partners
Continue highlighting Nanaimo's accessibility, affordability, and unique offerings.	Ongoing	TN	
Leverage "Outside the Box BC" partnership to amplify campaign reach targeting event planners. Prioritize accessibility, affordability, and uniqueness of Nanaimo in all initiatives.	Ongoing	TN	YCD
Collaborate with Team Nanaimo to identify potential flagship event concepts.	Y1 Q2	TN	TNT, M&E
Identify and engage new partners like VIU to support Nanaimo's development as a Meetings and Events destination.	Y1 Q4	TN	TNT, M&E
Organize joint meetings with VICC, hotels, and other stakeholders to discuss collaborative marketing strategies.	Y1 Q4	TNT	TN
Implement regular communication channels and forums for industry engagement.	Y1 Q4	TN	
Continue working with Meetings and Events partners to align messaging and develop collaborative strategies.	Y2 Q1	TN	TNT, M&E, A&C
Catalogue available facilities for promotion in meetings and events campaigns.	Y2 Q3	TNT	
Launch an events calendar to log and track all events in Nanaimo.	Y2 Q4	TN	TNT
Select and develop the flagship event aligning with Nanaimo's unique selling points.	Y3	TNT	A&C
Plan the launch of the flagship annual event with a comprehensive marketing campaign.	Y4	TNT	City
Solicit feedback from stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and successes.	Y5	TN	
Build upon existing partnerships and collaborative marketing efforts. Explore innovative marketing strategies and emerging tourism trends.	Y5	TNT	



# ELEVATE THE DESTINATION

## 4. Grow the capacity for sports tourism

### Strategies:

- Continue supporting and partnering with the Snuneymuxw First Nation on Indigenous Sports as a key market.
- Advocate for a sports tourism coordinator/manager. A dedicated position is required to connect with city, partners, and community organizations and spaces.
- Conduct a capacity and infrastructure audit and identify infrastructure gaps.
- Solicit sporting events that fit with what we have and within our capacity. Work with partners to focus efforts and enhance incentives.
- Engage local sport organizations as key partners in event hosting, grants and bidding – communicate the benefit, role, and impact of this partnership.
- Support the initiation of the next Sports Tourism Strategy development.
- Work with partners to conduct an economic impact assessment for sports tourism in Nanaimo.

Tactics	Timeline	Lead	Key partners
Continuously strengthen partnerships with SFN, local sport organizations, and stakeholders.	Ongoing	TN	SFN, community
Solidify partnership with SFN to enhance Indigenous sports visibility and appeal.	Y1 Q1	TN	SFN
Facilitate the initiation of the next Sports Tourism Strategy involving key stakeholders. Participate as a Sports Tourism lead partner in strategy development and marketing alignment with Nanaimo's brand.	Y1 Q2	TN	City, TNT, NHA, SFN, NPC
Advocate for the creation of a sports tourism coordinator role to streamline efforts and enhance collaboration with stakeholders.	Y1 Q2	TN	TNT
Partner to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of Nanaimo's sports infrastructure to identify gaps and deficiencies.	Y1 Q4	City	TN, RDN
Develop strategies to attract sporting events aligned with Nanaimo's infrastructure and resources.	Y2 Q2	TN	TNT, NPC
Collaborate with partners to provide incentives for sports groups.	Y2 Q3	TN	Industry/ operators
Engage local sports organizations and share the Destination Development strategy.	Y2 Q4	TN	City
Establish strong partnerships with local sport organizations, emphasizing the mutual benefits of collaboration in bidding and access grants.	Y2 Q4	TN	City
Communicate the positive impact of sports tourism on the community and economy to foster buy-in and awareness of it as part of tourism.	Y3	TN	
Assess the effectiveness of sports tourism capacity initiatives implemented over the past years.	Y4	TN	SFN, TNT, NPC
Collaborate to conduct a thorough economic impact assessment of sports tourism in Nanaimo.	Y4	City	TN
Adapt engagement strategies to address evolving needs and priorities within the sports tourism sector.	Y5	TN	Community

# ELEVATE THE DESTINATION

## 5. Improve destination wayfinding

### Strategies:

- Improve wayfinding in the Downtown and Old City Quarter districts.
- Enhance digital wayfinding for the greater Nanaimo region including trail heads, recreation opportunities, attractions, and neighborhoods.
- Work with the City to inform and align with current wayfinding initiatives.

Tactics	Timeline	Lead	Key partners
Assess current wayfinding infrastructure and digital resources, starting with Downtown and Old City Quarter districts.	Y2 Q2	TN	City
Engage with the City and the Nanaimo Prosperity Corp to review ongoing wayfinding and placemaking plans and identify areas for tourism support.	Y2 Q2	TN	City, NPC
Explore options to develop digital wayfinding options for visitors (apps, maps). Identify funding sources.	Y2 Q3	TN	
Collaborate with industry partners to further inform the development wayfinding tools.	Y2 Q4	TN	City, industry, operators
Support the roll out improved physical wayfinding signage.	Y3	TN	City
Launch digital wayfinding platform for the greater Nanaimo region, integrating trail heads, recreational opportunities, attractions, and neighborhoods.	Y3	TN	
Launch a public awareness campaign to celebrate and promote improved wayfinding, both physical and digital.	Y3	TN	City
Solicit ongoing feedback from the community to identify any areas for further enhancement or refinement.	Y4	TN	City, YCD, VIFC, BCF, TNT
Expand the coverage of digital wayfinding. Work with local tourism industry members for input.	Y4	TN	Industry, City
Continue to engage with the City to ensure ongoing coordination and alignment with their wayfinding planning efforts.	Y4	TN	
Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of wayfinding initiatives.	Y5	TN	City
Solicit feedback from stakeholders and the community to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in the next 5 year Destination Development plan.	Y5	TN	TNT

# APPENDIX





## How we're aligning: Reimagined Nanaimo

In July 2022, the City of Nanaimo launched their official community plan, the [Reimagined Nanaimo Plan](#) integrating prior plans and policies to foster a higher quality of life, stronger economy, and greater social inclusion. It emphasizes celebrating diversity, enhancing local cultural resources, and building community pride through public events and festivals. Here's where we're aligning:

### **Nanaimo Destination Development Plan**

- Reimagined Nanaimo action

### **Be a strong ally**

- 189 Work with Snuneymuxw First Nation and BC Parks to promote and further develop Satsutshun as a tourism destination.
- C4.5.8 Meet annually with Vancouver Island University to discuss cultural opportunities in partnership with the city for the benefit of students and the community.
- C4.3.26 Where possible, exceed minimum requirements for universal accessibility for parking access and design standards.

- 8.4.14 Facilitate, support, and encourage off-site parking / shuttle opportunities, as well as transit, for large events and festivals in public spaces.
- C2.2.3 Update and maintain a comprehensive wayfinding plan for pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and visitors, incorporating signage, maps, mobile apps, and other information.
- 38 Develop Bike Parking / End of Trip facilities for short and long- term bicycle parking around key trip generators such as urban centres, transit exchanges, and destination parks.

### **Better together**

- 131 Work with local cultural organizations such as the Nanaimo Art Gallery, Nanaimo Museum, Port Theatre, and Vancouver Island Regional Library to increase opportunities for working together to share resources and build capacity within organizations.

## How we're aligning: Reimagined Nanaimo cont.

### Build out the real Nanaimo

- C5.5.5 Support businesses involved in the production, marketing, and/ or delivery of artistic or cultural products such as art, music, theatre, festivals, and special events.
- 180 Work with the Nanaimo Port Authority in redeveloping the properties along Stewart Avenue (Newcastle Channel) to encourage the development of the Waterfront Walkway and investment in new marina, office, and tourism development.
- C4.15.12 Prepare a strategy to support and expand street entertainment as part of vibrant streets and waterfront areas, and supporting lively visitor experiences.

### Elevate the destination

- 187 Create a coordinating visual brand and general narrative + comms strategy for Nanaimo in partnership with Tourism Nanaimo and the Nanaimo Prosperity Corporation
- 152 Work with TN and NHA to attract shoulder-season and off-season events and gatherings such as the BC 55+ Games.
- 190 Focus on creating signature tourism events across the City in the off season as a call to action to visit the city, drawing on the regional markets in southern BC, Puget Sound, and Alberta cities with regional air connections such as mountain biking, swimming tournaments, Provincial Field Lacrosse and other niche events aligned with the Sport Tourism Strategy.
- 188 Continue to market Nanaimo as a destination for Meetings and Events using a 'Team Nanaimo' approach, following the Memorandum of Understanding between the Nanaimo Hospitality Association, Tourism Nanaimo, and the Vancouver Island Conference Centre.

## How we're aligning: Nanaimo 5-Year Strategic Business Plan for Tourism

The City of Nanaimo has developed a 5-Year Strategic Business Plan to support and guide Nanaimo in our tourism development planning and in the rollout of this Destination Development Plan. Here's how we align.

### **Business Plan goal**

Nanaimo Destination Development Plan alignment

### **Goal 1: Enhance and diversify Nanaimo's tourism offerings to create a comprehensive, unique visitor experience that captures the essence of the city and its surroundings.**

- Itinerary development
- Tell resident stories
- Increase resident sentiment and public perceptions
- Focus on data collection and resident input

### **Goal 2: Transform Nanaimo into a leading accessible tourism destination and a premier hub for sport tourism by 2030.**

- Collaborate to maximize destination inclusivity, accessibility and connectivity
- Elevate Nanaimo as a sports tourism destination
- Advocate for a dedicated Sport Tourism Coordinator
- Partner with the Snuneymuxw First Nation on sports tourism
- Identify infrastructure gaps
- Conduct an economic impact of sports tourism

### **Goal 3: Strengthen industry collaboration and align tourism development initiatives across all sectors in Nanaimo to enhance the community's competitive edge as a tourism destination by 2030.**

- Foster relationships across the industry and with the Snuneymuxw First Nation
- Support industry training, education, and communication
- Engage with arts and culture in experience development

- Support and encourage businesses to become rainbow registered
- Elevate Nanaimo as a Meetings and Events destination and establish a flagship event

### **Goal 4: Elevate the brand visibility and recognition of Nanaimo as a vibrant cultural hub and premier destination for meetings and events by 2030.**

- Share Nanaimo stories
- Work with influencers and local ambassadors
- Measure and leverage resident NPS
- Address destination wayfinding

### **Goal 5: Establish Nanaimo as a model city for inclusivity and support in tourism, fostering strong partnerships and community cohesion by 2030.**

- Support the development of an Indigenous tourism strategy
- Continue support for tourism Team Nanaimo
- Engage retailers and service providers
- Engage industry and share best practices