

July 11, 2016



Historic agreement finalized between City of Victoria and Tourism Victoria

VICTORIA, B.C. – Sustainable tourism practices that provide strong economic benefits and support remarkable experiences for Greater Victoria will be the result of Tourism Victoria’s renewed relationship with the City of Victoria.

On July 7, the City of Victoria formally recommended that Tourism Victoria be granted Eligible Entity status. Once approved by the Provincial Government, eligible entity status will enable Tourism Victoria to improve its long-range planning and modernize its funding schedule.

A formal application will be made to the Province of B.C. this week. Once the agreement receives final ratification from the Province, it will achieve four key outcomes:

- Tourism Victoria will become an Eligible Entity under the terms of the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) program. Tourism Victoria currently operates under rules that were “grandfathered” from a system that dates back to the late 1980s. As an eligible entity, Tourism Victoria’s funding model will move to a five-year renewal cycle from the annual renewal previously required. This will align Tourism Victoria with every Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) created after 1997. A five-year cycle will allow for better planning and improve Tourism Victoria’s ability to build business.
- Tourism Victoria will take on the leadership of sales and marketing for the Victoria Conference Centre. This will strengthen the Victoria Conference Optimization Network partnership, help reduce duplication of effort and costs, and improve the consistency of branding and the ability to implement innovative marketing.
- Victoria’s tourism sector, through Tourism Victoria, will contribute \$1 million over a 10-year period towards construction of the David Foster Harbour Pathway. This is an important element of moving forward on plans for the Belleville Street Terminal.
- Victoria’s accommodation industry has voluntarily agreed to raise the MRDT from two per cent to three per cent. This will allow Tourism Victoria to keep pace with other communities in British Columbia and enables the marketing of accommodations in the city to remain competitive.

The July 7 approval with the City of Victoria is the culmination of an agreement in principle reached in November 2015. The new framework will replace one that has been in place since 1988.

Endorsement of the City of Victoria and the Capital Regional District, granted on June 29, was required before the application could proceed for final approval from the provincial government.

TOURISM VICTORIA

Marketing our favourite destination

QUOTES:

"This deal is the result of unprecedented collaboration and partnership between the City of Victoria and Tourism Victoria. Sales and marketing for the Victoria Conference Centre will now be done by the private-sector-led industry association, while the City works hard to build a great local place that people from around the world want to visit."

- **Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps**

"This truly is a monumental achievement for everyone who has a stake in Victoria's tourism sector. It's important on so many levels, from acting as a catalyst for the Belleville Terminal improvement project, to enabling Tourism Victoria to deepen its approach to marketing our destination in key markets and allowing the Victoria Conference Centre to reach its potential. We've worked extremely hard to get here and eagerly anticipate formal approval from the Province."

- **Paul Nursey, President and CEO, Tourism Victoria**

"The David Foster Way expansion is a great enhancement to the vitality of downtown Victoria. We are confident that these improvements along Belleville Street, in combination with other aspects of Phase 2 of the Belleville Terminal redevelopment project, will improve the experience for visitors and locals alike. We extend our appreciation and thanks to the City of Victoria, Tourism Victoria and the Province for their contributions to the project."

- **Ryan Burles, President and COO, Black Ball Ferry Line**

"This announcement is an affirmation of the strength and importance of the tourism sector in Victoria and the northwest Pacific region. Given our long commitment to Victoria, we are very pleased to see this further investment in transportation infrastructure with an eye toward long-term sustainability."

- **Kostas Mallios, Clipper Vacations CEO**

"This agreement is the foundation that will enable tourism to flourish in Victoria for generations to come. The former system was put in place almost 30 years ago in 1988, so we're happy the City of Victoria has the vision to move forward on this renewal and modernization."

- **Bill Lewis, Chair of Tourism Victoria's Board of Directors.**

About Tourism Victoria

Tourism Victoria (Greater Victoria Visitors and Convention Bureau) is the official not-for-profit destination marketing organization working in partnership with more than 900 business members and municipalities in Greater Victoria. TourismVictoria.com

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Media are invited to a news conference on Monday, July 11, to hear more about a historic agreement between Tourism Victoria and the City of Victoria.