



Request for Proposals

**To Develop a Five-Year Strategic Destination Marketing
and Destination Management Plan for 2022 to 2026**

Released on December 13, 2019

Closing Date and Time

January 17, 2020 at 2:00 pm PST

Destination Greater Victoria

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Destination Greater Victoria

Five-Year Strategic Destination Marketing and Destination Management Plan 2022-2026

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Destination Greater Victoria (DGV), previously known as Tourism Victoria, is the official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for the Greater Victoria region, with Municipal Regional District Tax (MRDT) relationships with the City of Victoria and District of Saanich.

As a member-based not-for-profit organization governed by a Board of Directors and with day-to-day leadership by a CEO, DGV is responsible for marketing tourism in the Greater Victoria Region within Canada and the United States as well as select international markets. DGV builds and promotes a strong visitor economy across many sectors of the industry, including leisure tourism and meetings marketing, meetings and conventions sales (business events), travel trade, sports events, festivals and events, and media / influencer relations.

DGV is also responsible for sales and marketing of the Victoria Conference Centre, operates several visitor information centres, conducts tourism-related research and plays a central role in destination management and tourism policy in the Greater Victoria region. By staying close to both industry and government partners, working collaboratively, being open and transparent and driving very significant results, Destination Greater Victoria currently enjoys strong stakeholder support in a complex and multi-dimensional environment.

Destination Greater Victoria represents 1,000 member businesses across all sectors of the tourism and hospitality services industry. In addition to dues from members, stable funding is received from MRDT, a voluntary Destination Marketing Fee (DMF) from 21 hotels to resource initiatives focusing on hotel stays, various partnership programs and some government grant funding. In addition, DGV uses a model popular in Australia whereby it is actively involved in ownership and operation of key conferences and events to help round-out seasonality and host programs that align with its brand. MRDT revenues from Online Accommodation Platforms (OAPs) such as Airbnb are earmarked for affordable housing initiatives through the City of Victoria's Affordable Housing Fund.

Destination Greater Victoria's Brand Family



Greater Victoria is an important destination. Ranked the “#2 Small City in the World” by *Condé Nast Traveler* in 2017, the visitor economy is central to the local economy. By leveraging the power of strategic alignment with the balanced scorecard performance management framework, DGV has improved its attributable business results remarkably over the last five years. There is now a strong foundation of alignment, strategy, high performance team and impressive destination to work from.

There are also risks to account for, such as residents’ and political concerns around links to climate change. Although Greater Victoria is a busy and vibrant destination, there are few concerns about overtourism; however, local residents as well as political leaders are aware of links between travel and carbon. While there is very broad support for the industry, the cruise segment is under scrutiny and concepts such as the destination’s realistic carrying capacity are being discussed more openly. Climate leadership is a central tenet of the political and business ethos of Victoria. Each day we are inspired by local businesses that are effective in all facets and do not sacrifice business success or profit in their quest for genuine and deep sustainability. This is largely achieved by being innovative, conscious and deliberate about their operations. The goal is to frame these tensions constructively as opportunities to be approached in a solutions-oriented manner.

Victoria is the capital of British Columbia. Greater Victoria has 370,000 residents, 13 municipalities, and vibrant indigenous communities. There are thriving technology, ocean marine, education, clean tech, advanced manufacturing, health and agricultural sectors in Greater Victoria. By population it is the second largest Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) in British Columbia and experiencing rapid growth due to a vibrant economy and favourable climate. Greater Victoria is widely regarded as a great place to live, work and visit.

Destination Greater Victoria’s current strategic plan (from 2017 to 2022) has been highly successful, including fostering recovery and amplifying growth, attracting investment, telling tourism’s story and tackling the difficult task of addressing seasonality effectively. The forward-looking plan for 2022 to 2026 will build upon this and continue to manage and stimulate responsible year-round growth, but also ensure benefits are maximized locally, sustainability is at the forefront, and broader economic and societal outcomes are realized.

It is expected that the forward planning process will not only respect and build upon the significant business success achieved during previous years, but also seek and incorporate stakeholder input very widely by including industry, government, partner organizations and residents to craft a world leading plan. It is also expected that the successful proponent will fully understand and respect all authorities in the MRDT approval process, which include:

1. Commercial Accommodations.
2. Local Governments. Currently these are the City of Victoria and District of Saanich. While possible other municipalities in Greater Victoria may join as partners, it is not essential.
3. Regional District – Capital Regional District (CRD).
4. Destination British Columbia (DBC). Submission to DBC is required ahead of the June 30, 2021 deadline.
5. In 2019 the Province of British Columbia enacted legislation recognizing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP) and it is intended that UNDRIP will inform all provincial programs going forward. Although UNDRIP has not been formally included into the MRDT program, it seems logical to expect this. DGV views this possibility as constructive and exciting.

In 2019 Destination Greater Victoria's operating budget was CAD\$9.0 million, with 40 professionals working across the organization full-time, plus 6 to 8 employees focusing on visitor services. There are a variety of contractors as well as a significant volunteer program supporting these staff.

1.2 Municipal Regional District Tax

MRDT refers to the Municipal and Regional District Tax program. This is a provincial tax on sales of transient accommodation of less than 30 consecutive days. The purpose of the program is to assist designated recipients with funds for tourism marketing, programs and projects. Affordable housing was added as a permissible use of MRDT funds in *Budget 2018*. MRDT is linked to the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) and is a provincial taxation mechanism. MRDT requires approval by commercial accommodations in the community, together with approval by local governments and the regional district, before being submitted to Destination British Columbia to lead a review and approval of the application across British Columbia's government. Destination Greater Victoria has done significant work refreshing, modernizing and aligning resources in our 2017-2021 MRDT plan. In DGV's case our application for MRDT renewal must be submitted in full and with approvals by June 30, 2021 in order to receive renewal for January 1, 2022.

The strength of the MRDT system is that it forces healthy dialogue. In the best cases can lead to a widely-backed plan and strategy with stable resourcing to support it. A potential weakness of the MRDT system is that because of broad permitted uses (tourism marketing, programs, and projects and affordable housing) it can structurally encourage parochialism and different factions competing for the resources. In several cases MRDT programs have fallen apart when a consensus could not be achieved. MRDT supports a five-year plan. This RFP aims to source and engage a world-leading consultancy to work closely with Destination Greater Victoria through a process of crafting a widely supported five-year plan for 2022-2026.

1.3 Invitation

Destination Greater Victoria is inviting suitably qualified tourism consulting firms to submit proposals to develop "Destination Greater Victoria Five-Year Strategic Destination Marketing and Destination Management Plan 2022-2026".

Potential proponents should submit a complete proposal before 2:00 pm PST on January 17, 2020.

All interested firms planning to submit a proposal must inform Destination Greater Victoria by email to Paul Nursey, CEO as well as Graham Wallace, Manager, Governance, Research and Evaluation no later than January 7, 2020 confirming their intention with a bidder interest notice:

Paul Nursey, CEO
paul.nursey@tourismvictoria.com

Graham Wallace, Manager, Governance, Research and Evaluation
graham.wallace@tourismvictoria.com

We expect substantive work on this project to begin no later than early March 2020, with the project and final plan to be completed by October 15, 2020 and presented to Destination Greater Victoria's Board of Directors in November 2020.

1.4 Important RFP Dates

Issue of the RFP	December 13, 2019
Bidder interest notice	January 7, 2020
Submission of questions & clarifications	January 10, 2020 before 5:00 pm PST
Due date for final proposals	January 17, 2020 before 2:00 pm PST
Notice to preferred proponent	January 31, 2020
Project start date	February or March, 2020
Initial review of engagement findings	June 15, 2020
Review of first draft of plan	July 17, 2020
Final plan submitted to DGV	October 15, 2020
Presentation to DGV Board of Directors and Key Stakeholders	Early November 2020

1.5 Question and Answer Instructions

Questions and/or requests for further clarifications must be submitted by email to both Paul Nursey at paul.nursey@tourismvictoria.com and Graham Wallace at graham.wallace@tourismvictoria.com before 5:00pm PST on January 10, 2020.

Submitted questions will be answered to the best of Destination Greater Victoria's ability at that time.

1.6 Related Documents Available and Key Considerations and Priorities

There are myriad documents available to support proponents' submissions. These include:

- Destination Greater Victoria's business plans, strategies and annual reports which are posted transparently on the corporate section of Destination Greater Victoria's website.
- Proponents should reference the Greater Victoria Destination Development Plan produced by Destination Greater Victoria, Tourism Vancouver Island and Destination British Columbia.
- Chemistry Consulting is the primary resource locally for tourism performance indicators and monthly tourism bulletins are posted on Chemistry Consulting's website.
- Destination Greater Victoria will provide the successful proponent with access to all of its available market research, advertising tracking results, and other related publicly-available studies which will help inform a world-leading plan. Importantly Destination Greater Victoria recently completed a robust visitor intercept study with year-round data and a report will be released prior to Christmas 2019.
- Although original research can be proposed as part of this project, our preference is for the proponent to focus their time and energy on synthesizing existing research, undertaking stakeholder engagement, and developing a visionary forward-looking strategy.
- Destination Greater Victoria and partners the City of Victoria and the Fairmont Empress, are currently undertaking a "Study to Determine the Growth Potential of Convention Business in Support of an Expanded Convention Centre". Rapid success and growth in conference and meetings business since DGV deepened its partnership with the City of Victoria regarding sales and marketing of the VCC has required exploring this opportunity. Demand is simply outstripping space and this business is highly desirable because of its high yield year-round.

Other Considerations and Priorities:

- Other key priorities in the region include completion of the Belleville International Ferry Terminal, examining and executing Cruise Homeporting for smaller boutique cruise ships, maintaining US Customs and Border Patrol capacity by moving to pre-clearance, as well as other files.
- It is likely the Royal British Columbia Museum, a key pillar of the visitor experience, will undergo renewal during the plan period, which will present an interesting opportunity – particularly when considering a potential Convention Centre expansion in close proximity and the possibility for integrated resident and conference-focused districts.
- As part of its 2020 Business Plan, Destination Greater Victoria has introduced a Sustainability Committee as a forum for industry, governments and the Destination Organization to roll up sleeves and work collaboratively on solutions that will increase our competitiveness through sustainability. Details can be found in the publicly available DGV 2020 Business Plan.
- Also as part of its 2020 Business Plan, Destination Greater Victoria is embarking on building an Experiences Strategy which will help differentiate Greater Victoria from other destinations and provide maximum benefits to visitors, industry and residents. Details can be found in the publicly available DGV 2020 Business Plan.

Desk Research:

- Proponents should also conduct some degree of desk research in order to understand local issues. Newspaper articles related to the tourism industry between 2015 and now will provide guidance and familiarity with issues such as strong growth, investment in transportation and hotels, ongoing infrastructure priorities, regulation of short-term vacation rentals, and cruise industry debates. The main local newspaper is the *Victoria Times Colonist*, both the *Victoria News* and *Business Insider* also provide some relevant articles, along with the primary local business magazine *Douglas*. It is expected that some degree of fluency on local issues and opportunities be evident and reflected in proposals.

2 Proposal Submission Instructions

2.1 Submission

Interested firms are required to submit their complete proposals to Destination Greater Victoria by email before 2:00 pm PST on Friday January 17, 2020 to the attention of:

Paul Nursey, CEO, Destination Greater Victoria

Email: paul.nursey@tourismvictoria.com

and

Graham Wallace, Manager, Governance, Research and Evaluation, Destination Greater Victoria

Email: graham.wallace@tourismvictoria.com

It is the responsibility of the proponent to seek any clarifications about the RFP before submitting a proposal. DGV will not be responsible for any misunderstanding or misinterpretation regarding any aspects of the RFP's requirements.

Proposed budgets must be quoted in Canadian Dollars (\$CAD).

2.2 Required Proposal Format

Proposals must be submitted in electronic format (PDF) in English and include the following:

- 2.2.1 Letter of introduction signed by an officer of the company
- 2.2.2 Description of the firm and its expertise including a minimum of five similar projects completed within the past three years.
- 2.2.3 Identification of individual team members to be assigned to the project, including their expertise and experience. CVs or resumes are to be included in an annex.
- 2.2.4 Three project references within the past five years and a description of each project.
- 2.2.5 Understanding of the project.
- 2.2.6 Detailed proposed work plan, methods, stakeholder engagement plan, budget and timelines.

3 **Project Scope and Deliverables**

3.1 Project Mandate

As described in the introduction, this project is centred on the requirement that Destination Greater Victoria's MRDT application be underpinned by a broadly-supported five-year strategy. The strategy will guide the high-level going-forward vision of the organization to be responsive to its stakeholder environment and be supported by annual business plans prepared by management.

Anticipating responsible future growth, Destination Greater Victoria is seeking an expert consulting firm to work with DGV management on preparing a new 2022-2026 strategy. The process will have key considerations including ability to demonstrate:

- Best practices regarding community engagement, including the proposed number and types of focus groups or related research methods for destination marketing and management.
- A track record understanding that business success leads to innovation and better societal outcomes.
- A track record and successful case studies with outcomes relevant to Victoria.
- Best practices regarding responsible growth as well as sustainable tourism and destination development
- Skills to build consensus among diverse stakeholders and community groups, often with differing or conflicting agendas.

3.2 Deliverables

- The outcome should be robust and comprehensive, as DGV is a substantive organization that prides itself on developing strong strategies and then translating them into powerful execution. The current 2017-2021 strategy is a guideline.
- The strategy must be drafted in a manner that responds to the requirements outlined in the *Municipal Regional District Tax Program Requirements*. Clear instructions are provided in the document, available online. The most recent update is Summer 2018, although it is possible that fresh updates could occur during this process.

- The most important aspect is process and deep engagement is required. As a community of stakeholders, we must have a plan backed by all key players in order to be successful, not only for MRDT renewal, but to have a genuinely locally-driven Destination Organization going forward with a strong mandate from industry, government and the public.

While we will not leverage all the opportunities world-wide, nor solve all the issues world-wide, that involve the visitor economy, our genuine goal is to emerge from this process with the best plan for our community because that is the essence of the value proposition for a community DMO – as an innately local entity utilizing locally-raised resources to achieve the best possible outcomes for local stakeholders.

4 Qualifications of Proponent

4.1 Mandatory

Proponents submitting a proposal for this RFP should possess the following required qualifications and provide details of each (preferably with examples) within the proposal:

- Minimum of five years as a tourism industry consultancy.
- Extensive broad-based experience working with tourism businesses, various levels of government, indigenous communities, citizens and residents' groups.
- Significant experience with strategic planning and working with Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO's), including working with DMOs on strategic planning.
- Experience with destination competitive analysis.
- Experience with stakeholder and client relations and consultation.
- Experience using robust research methods in community engagement contexts.
- Experience with understanding and leveraging other sectors of the local economy to the benefit of the visitor economy.
- Three references (company, contact, title, contact information and related projects).

4.2 Desirable

Although not mandatory, knowledge and/or direct experience in the following areas will be regarded favourably and taken into consideration when evaluating proposals:

- Understanding of the tourism marketplace and main drivers within western Canada and western North America.
- Experience understanding diverse perspectives, bringing together divergent views and working towards effective consensus.
- Experience developing strategies that can realize the potential of how a vibrant visitor economy leads to and supports community benefits including foreign direct investment, amenity migration and quality of life.

5 Evaluation and Scoring

Criterion	Weight
Demonstration of knowledge of trends in the visitor economy, destination marketing organization best practices, development of strategic plans in complex stakeholder environments and next generation understanding of the role and responsibilities of destination marketing organizations (Knowledge).	25%
Demonstration of strategic planning qualifications and direct experience, stakeholder experience, expertise with new marketing models, and success reconciling divergent views, supported by evidence from client references as well as key staff qualifications related to similar projects (Experience).	30%
Quality of proposal and understanding of project and desired results (Methodology).	30%
Competitiveness of project fees and proposed timeline and work plan (Pricing).	15%

6 Budget

Proponents should strive for a proposal that will work within Destination Greater Victoria's assigned budget of \$100,000 to \$125,000. Due to the high importance of this project a contingency could be assigned should unexpected events be encountered during the process.

7 Terms of Reference

7.1 Confidentiality

Confidential information gathered by the proponent and/or acquired from DGV shall not be disclosed by the proponent or their affiliates at any time during or following completion of this project.

7.2 Submissions and Rejections

DGV holds the right, by its own merit, to accept or reject in whole or in part any proposal submitted for any reason. By issuing this RFP, DGV does not imply or agree to any contractual obligation to any or all proponents submitting a proposal, and further does not give any assurance that any proposal will be accepted. DGV has no legal obligation to any proponent submitting a proposal until a formal written agreement has been signed by the parties.

DGV may or may not award this RFP at its sole discretion. DGV reserves the right to negotiate with proponents, ask for clarification and invite modifications to a proposal and/or alter parts of the RFP.

Proponents submitting a proposal do so at their own risk. If a proposal is submitted and selected and an error is detected by the proponent, the original submission will stand as submitted. Proposals may be withdrawn any time prior to the proposal due date and time. A proposal may not be amended or withdrawn after the proposal due date and time, except as otherwise provided by applicable law. If a proponent withdraws their bid for any reason, the proponent will not be entitled to any compensation of any kind.

The proponent's proposal and associated fees will be considered as a binding offer that is capable of acceptance and shall remain so until the conclusion and a final binding offer is signed and contracted. Any and all negotiations will occur in a timely and professional manner under the terms of the RFP. DGV holds the right to alter all or parts of the timeline of this RFP.

All proposals shall remain open for 90 days after the day of opening of proposals but DGV may, at its sole discretion, release any proposal which it deems as not being within the RFP's parameters. No proponent may withdraw their proposal during this period without written permission from DGV.

7.3 Incurred Costs

Proponents submitting a proposal do so at their own cost and do not hold DGV liable in any way for these costs. No compensation of any kind will be available for any reason if a proposal is not selected.

7.4 Sub-Contracting

Proponents may choose to submit a proposal with a sub-contractor(s) or in a joint association with another partner firm. If so, full disclosure of each sub-contractor and/or partner firm must be clearly identified within the proposal and comply with the same criteria listed.

7.5 Indemnification

The successful proponent shall indemnify and hold harmless Destination Greater Victoria, its Board of Directors, its officers and its partners from and against all actions, claims, demands, losses, costs, damages, suits or proceedings whatsoever which may be brought against or made against all losses, liabilities, judgments, claims, suits, demands or expenses which may sustain, suffer or be put to resulting from or arising out of the successful proponent's failure to exercise reasonable care, skill, or diligence or omissions in the performance or rendering of any work or service required hereunder to be performed or rendered by the successful proponent, its agents, officials and employees.

7.6 Legal Jurisdiction

Any legal claims arising from this RFP and any work hereafter accomplished will be constituted under the governing laws of the province of British Columbia.

7.7 Non-Collusion and Non-Discrimination

By signing and submitting a proposal, the proponent warrants and certifies that the proponent did not engage in collusion or any other anti-competitive practices in connection with the preparation and/or submission of its proposal and must attest that there is no actual or potential conflict of interest with DGV or its affiliates.

7.8 Acceptance of Terms

By submitting a proposal, the proponent represents that they have read, completely understand and fully accept all terms and conditions of the RFP in entirety.

7.9 Insurance Requirements

The successful proponent will be required to maintain in good standing a liability insurance policy of minimum CAD\$1 million. As part of the final contract with DGV the proponent will supply proof of this insurance to DGV by way of an official insurance certificate.