



# Comox Valley Tourism Strategy

Vision & Opportunities Workshop | November 20, 2023



**Thank you - Gilakas'la - ʔimot**

Indigenous Welcome - **Ramona Johnson**

# Today's Agenda

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- Indigenous Welcome - Ramona Johnson
- Introduction and Session Overview
- Ice Breaker Activity - Current State: Show your love
- SWOT Analysis & Walk Around Activity
- Vision Activity
- Wrap-up



# 4VI Consulting Team



# Comox Valley

## Tourism Strategy

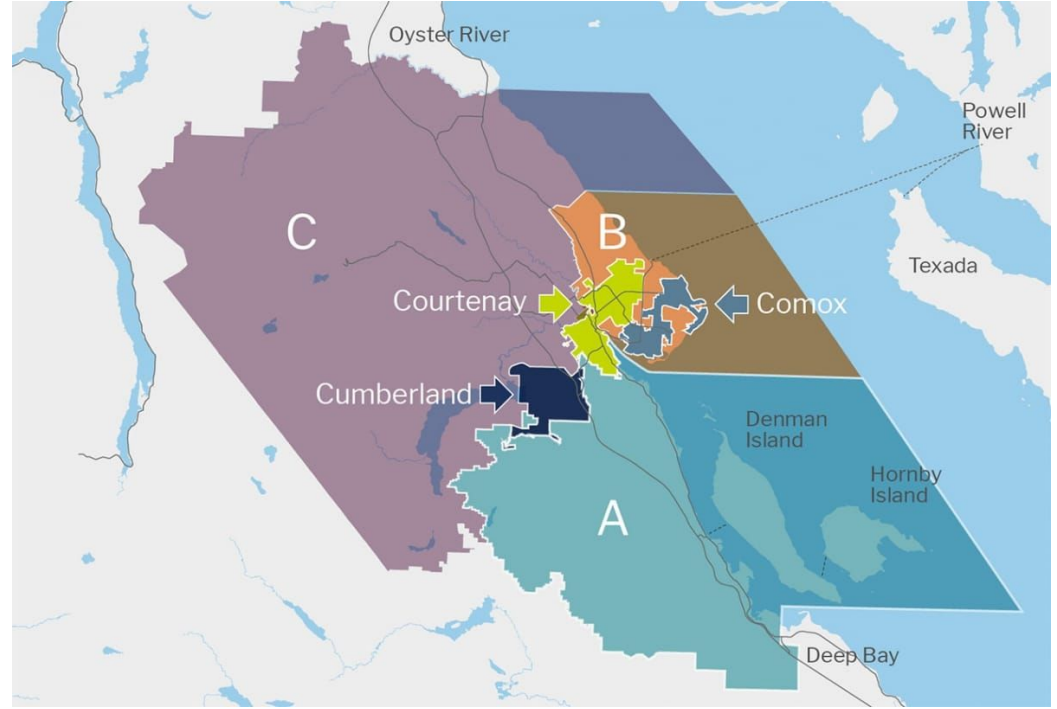
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- Project of the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) as a component of the regional tourism service
  - 10-Year Tourism Strategy Plan
  - Explore the expansion of MRDT collection in the Comox Valley region
- This tourism strategy plan aims to provide a roadmap for sustainable tourism development while ensuring economic growth along with environmental and social well-being for the region
  - The MRDT application will follow the completion of this strategy and is focused on funding the strategy's implementation



# Reference Area

- City of Courtenay
- Town of Comox
- Village of Cumberland
- Electoral Areas A, B and C
  - Not including Denman Island and Hornby Island



# Strategic Scope

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## Supply

- Sustainability
- Transportation
- Outdoor recreation
- Food and beverage
- Arts and culture
- Festivals and events
- Sports
- Infrastructure
- Industry collaboration, governance and reconciliation
- And more

## Demand

- Price
- Consumer preferences and wealth
- Branding, marketing and promotion
- Packaging
- And more





# **Comox Valley's Strengths & Opportunities**





# Recent Research & Engagement

- Perceptions research (Aug - Sept 2022)
  - Why travel to Comox Valley
- Tourism Industry Workshop (January 2023)
  - What makes the Comox Valley a unique place to visit
- Destination BC Action Plan (Feb - May 2023)
  - Key strengths, challenges & opportunities
- Visitor Intercept research (Aug - Nov 2023)
  - Visitor motivations/reasons for travel
  - What activities visitors did during trip
  - Visitor satisfaction

# Why Travel to the Comox Valley?

(Perceptions research, 2022)

- For those with familiarity with the Comox Valley identified the following attributes:
  - Trees
  - Mountains
  - Skiing
  - Military
  - Airport
  - Food
- Other results/observations:
  - Second to beach towns, one of the most prominent destinations to visit on Vancouver Island is mountain towns/areas. With **Mount Washington and a rapidly growing mountain biking scene**, Comox has an opportunity to stand out to those travellers as they plan their holidays
  - Food stood out stronger as a differentiating factor in the Comox Valley meaning their **growing culinary scene is having an impact**





# What makes Comox Valley Unique?

(Tourism Industry Workshop, 2023)

- Abundance of activities & things to do
- Ocean to alpine / surf to ski
- Natural beauty; beaches, trails, lakes, etc.
- Dining & craft beverages
- Family friendly / multigenerational
- Museums & art galleries
- Downtowns & shopping
- Events & festivals
- Great access & Comox Valley Airport
- Indigenous community & businesses
- Wildlife & ecosystem diversity

# Strengths, Challenges & Opportunities

(DBC CV/CR Action Plan, 2023)

Key Strengths	Key Challenges	Key Opportunities
Regional service centers	Climate change	Commitment to tourism
Heritage Experiences (paleo, cultural, historic)	Watershed protection / regeneration	Cooperative planning
Arts and Culture	Human impacts and environmental degradation	Collaborate with local governments
Festival, Sport, and Event Experiences	Land management	Collaborate with non-profit organizations/NGO sector
PGA qualifying event	Housing	Build a hospitality culture
Culinary/local produce	Labour industry	Sustainability principles
Agri-tourism	Market issues	Experiences that are reflective of local communities
Alpine and Nordic ski opportunities	Carrying capacity	Authentic Indigenous Experiences
Transportation/Access	Awareness of tourism diversity and depth of offer	Indigenous owned and operated experiences
Comox Airport	Highway conditions	Higher-end, higher-yield products
All-seasons destination	Seasonality (current challenge and future opportunity)	Interpreting authenticity
Unique local specialty retailers and artisans	Interpretive signage	Marine services
Natural, wild landscapes	Transportation and transit services	Wildlife interpretation
Alpine areas	Marine and ferry infrastructure	Showcase small communities
Karst/caves	High business costs	Labour market partnerships
Islands and inlets	Export-ready product	Bundle existing top quality products to create unique experiences
Freshwater lakes and rivers	Current lift at Comox Airport	Rebuilding collaborative tourism destination planning for the region
Wildlife, marine/terrestrial	Capacity to rebuild tourism destination planning for region	Seasonality
Regional and Provincial Parks, including Strathcona Provincial Park	Lack of product and experiences gap	
Authentic Indigenous Experiences (Indigenous owned/operated)	Community buy-in (social license to operate)	
Multimodal active transportation trails	Sustainability (environmental, social, and economic)	
Mountain biking trails		
Remote, iconic lodges		
Sport fishing		
Golf Vancouver Island		





# Importance to your decision to visit CV:

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Rated as important to very important:

- |    |                                     |     |
|----|-------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. | Parks & public spaces               | 83% |
| 2. | Easily accessed destination         | 68% |
| 3. | Quality accommodations              | 67% |
| 4. | Outdoor adventure activities        | 62% |
| 5. | Diversity of attractions            | 51% |
| 6. | Marine activities                   | 48% |
| 7. | Camping opportunities               | 44% |
| 8. | Availability of accessible services | 37% |
| 9. | Alpine opportunities                | 22% |

(Preliminary results, Visitor Intercept Survey, 2023)





# Which activities did you do in Comox Valley?

1. Beach activities 70%
2. Shopping / retail 54%
3. Hiking 49%
4. Self-guided sightseeing 42%
5. Camping 37%
6. Stand up paddle boarding 23%
7. Marine activities 21%
8. Winery brewery distillery tour 17%
9. Festival / event 16%
10. Mountain biking 14%

Other: Sport fishing (10%), Theatre, concert, or live performance (9%), Golf (4%) (Preliminary results, Visitor Intercept Survey, 2023)



# Visitor Satisfaction

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Beautiful  
Good value  
Clean city  
Plenty to do  
Good restaurants  
Friendly people



Ferries could be more efficient  
Traffic congestion  
Additional kayak rentals/locations  
No Uber service, limited taxi availability  
Limited restaurant/retail hours of operation  
Homelessness and public drug use issues

23

InterVISTAS



(Outbound passenger survey, Comox Valley Airport, 2023)

# SWOT Analysis

## 15 Minute Breakout

1. Find a table to join with a group of 4 - 8 people
2. Summarize the focus area of your table
  - Strengths
  - Weaknesses
  - Opportunities
  - Threats
3. After 15 minutes we will share back to the group with 2 minute summaries







Key Strengths	Key Challenges	Key Opportunities
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Sport fishing		
Golf Vancouver Island		

# SWOT Analysis

## Prioritization

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- Everyone should have 10 coloured stickers
- Walk around the room and place a sticker on the most important/significant strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
  - **TIP** - Try to pick your top two strengths, top two weaknesses, top two threats and top two opportunities





**A vision for Comox Valley**

# 10-Year Vision

## Breakout Activity

- Imagine it's 2035 and the Comox Valley is featured on the cover page of the travel industry magazine, Skift
- The Comox Valley is featured because it has become a globally recognized example of a perfectly managed destination



COVER STORY VISION

● COVER

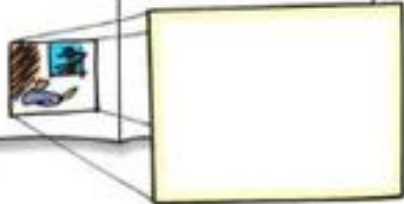
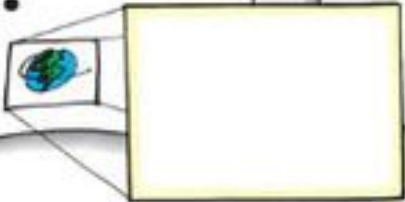
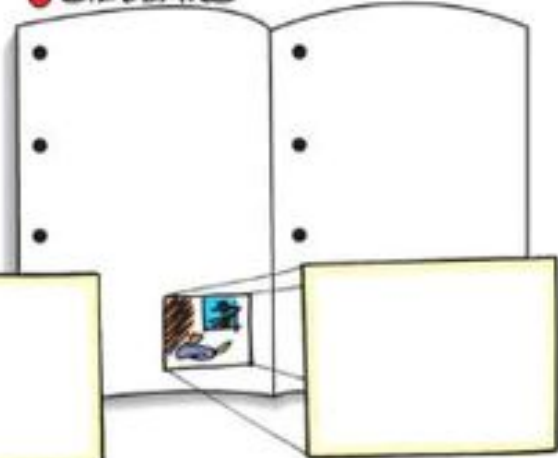
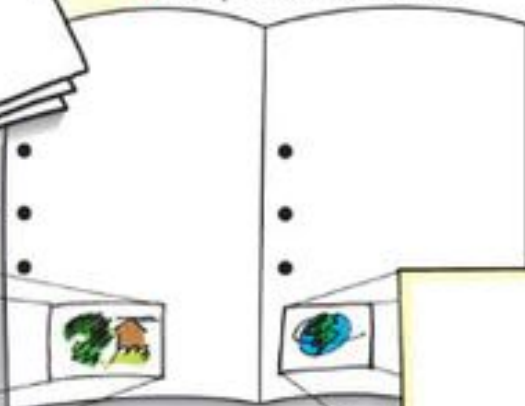
● BRAINSTORMS

● QUOTES

● BIG HEADLINES

● SIDEBARS

● IMAGES



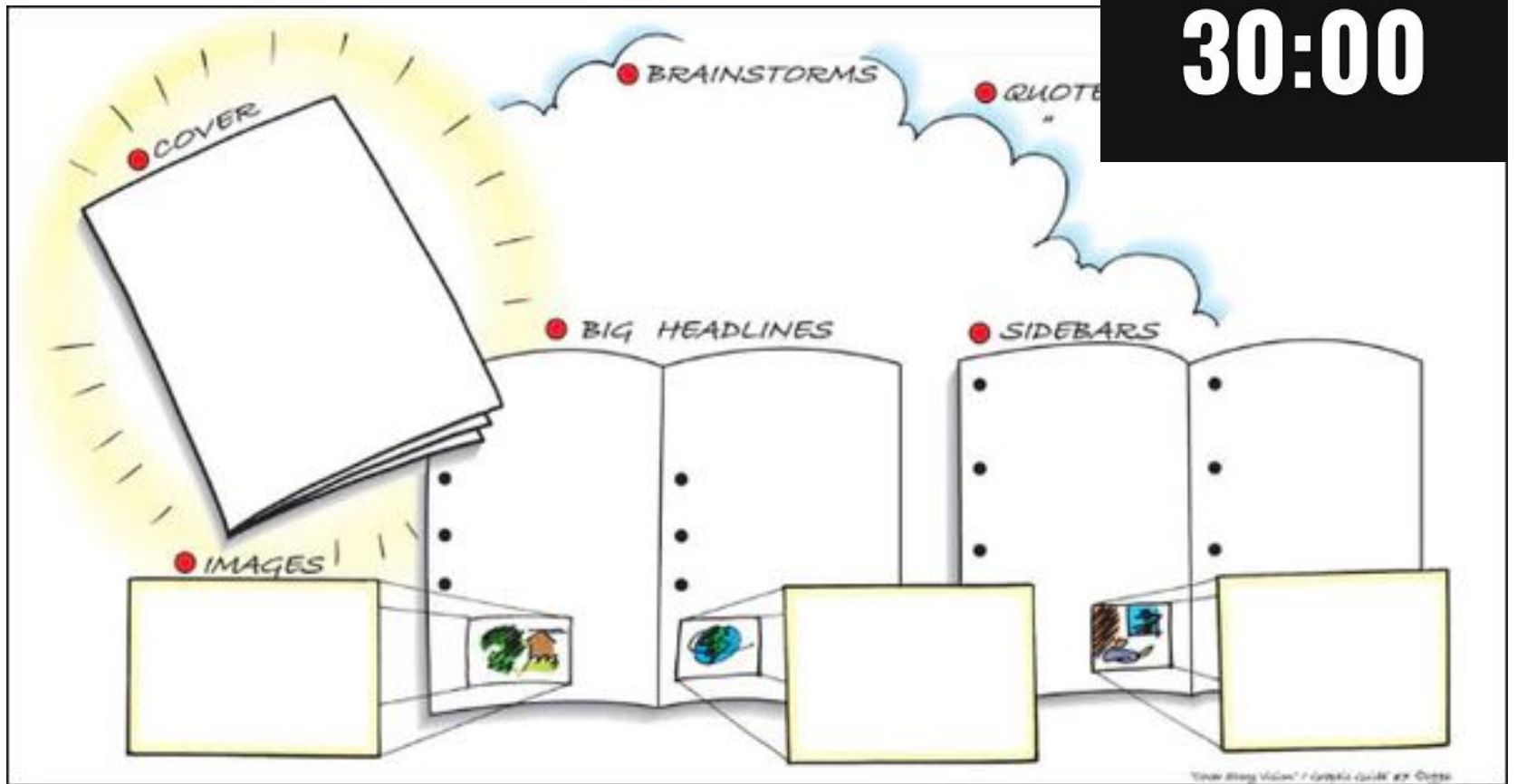
# Breakout Activity

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- Cover
  - How would the cover grab the reader's attention?
- Headlines
  - What is the *eye popping* headline?
- Quote
  - Who would they want to interview? What perspective do they represent?
- Images
  - What type of image would be used?
- Sidebars
  - What content or stories would showcase our successes?
- Brainstorm
  - Other ideas and considerations



30:00





# 10-Year Vision

## Loop Back

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- Summary of team discussion and results



# What We Accomplished

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- Current state SWOT
- Future state vision





# Other Engagement Opportunities

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- EngageComoxValley.ca
  - Follow the Tourism Strategy Plan page for project info & updates, and to share your ideas and register for engagement sessions
- Upcoming Public Engagement Sessions:
  - Session 2; Strategic Framework
    - Jan 17, 2024 from 12-2:30pm at Crown Isle Resort
  - Community Open House
    - February 2024 details TBA



# Connect With Us

## Contact Info

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