

METRO VANCOUVER TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY RESPONSE AND RECOVERY TASK FORCE

MEDIA RELEASE

Tourism and Hospitality Response and Recovery Task Force Welcomes B.C.'s Phase Three Announcement and Invites Visitors Back to the Lower Mainland

New survey and research results illustrate the ability of the sector to adapt quickly to ensure visitors stay safe while exploring countless activities Metro Vancouver has to offer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VANCOUVER, B.C. – JUNE 24, 2020—The Metro Vancouver Tourism and Hospitality Industry Response and Recovery Task Force, an umbrella group representing almost 75 organizations in the travel and tourism sector, is applauding the provincial government's announcement regarding the move into Phase Three of *BC's Restart Plan*. Among several key elements outlined as allowed Phase Three, the Plan states that British Columbians “can take part in smart and safe travel within B.C.”

As Phase Three begins, survey data collected by the Task Force and its member organizations proves that a majority of Metro Vancouver restaurants, as well as retail outlets and attractions, are now ready and willing to welcome visitors back. “We couldn't be more pleased with the decision by provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry to authorize this step forward, and we appreciate the opportunity that expanded movement represents for so many businesses in the visitor economy,” said Chief Executive Officer for Tourism Richmond and Task Force Co-Chair, Nancy Small. “In anticipation of today's announcement, we've been working hard to assess the extent to which a range of food service, retail outlets and Metro Vancouver attractions have made the changes necessary to provide visitors with equally safe and enjoyable experiences,” Small said.

Working collaboratively with partners including Tourism Vancouver, the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association, Tourism Richmond, Tourism Burnaby, and the local chapter of the national Breaking Bread Initiative, data has been gathered through a **Status of Business Operations Survey*. The survey, which has polled businesses directly, as well as amalgamating results from multiple sources, shows that of 878 Metro Vancouver businesses reviewed, fully 77% (675 businesses) were open and ready to serve guests. While most respondents were in the food service category, almost 90 attractions and nearly 50 retail outlets were included in the analysis.

“Members of the tourism and hospitality sector have responded quickly to new provincial regulations required to ensure safe guest interactions and we applaud them for those efforts,” said Small. “What we hope to see now, as the province's Phase Three has been launched, is for Metro Vancouver residents to come out and take advantage of the incredible range of experiences that are on offer all around us.”

The *Business Operations Survey* confirmed that world class attractions such as Grouse Mountain are waiting to welcome guests, as are countless restaurants, some of which have expanded into outdoor spaces, to ensure full compliance with physical distancing. The ‘Fly Over Canada’ experience at Canada Place has reopened to visitors, and by early July there will be opportunities for real adventure – through such activities as whale watching tours, leaving from the seaside village of Steveston in Richmond. Though accommodations were not included as part of the survey, many hotels across the

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Lower Mainland have implemented a wide range of re-opening best practices, including additional cleaning and contactless payment systems, thus expanding room inventory for overnight guests.

Information on attractions within various areas of Metro Vancouver can be found through corresponding marketing organizations, such as Tourism Vancouver, Tourism Richmond, Tourism Burnaby and other tourism-focused websites. “The devastating effect that COVID-19 has had on every facet of the travel and hospitality sector is now well understood,” said Small, “so every incremental step that we can take, to welcome folks back, is vitally important.”

*Figures cited from the *Status of Business Operations Survey* include reviews of 878 businesses in the restaurant/food service, retail and attractions industries, with results current as of June 18, 2020. While a majority of businesses were located in Vancouver and Richmond, respondents came from a wide geographic area ranging from North and West Vancouver to Surrey, and from Delta to New Westminster. Data gathering and assessments took place from May 13 through June 18, and results will be updated as analyses are conducted on an ongoing basis.

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For more information on the ***Metro Vancouver Tourism and Hospitality Industry Response and Recovery Task Force***, and/or to speak with spokesperson Nancy Small, please contact:

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The Metro Vancouver Tourism and Hospitality Industry Response and Recovery Task Force meets weekly via conference calls, and many members are also contributing as active participants across four different working groups. Any organization representative or individuals active in the visitor economy are encouraged to join; more information is available by contacting Sabrina Tey at Tourism Vancouver stey@tourismvancouver.com

Who We Are

The ***Metro Vancouver Tourism and Hospitality Industry Response and Recovery Task Force***, including its many thousands of stakeholders, represents some of the largest industry-related employers and venues in B.C. Contributing approximately \$14.4 billion to the Metro Vancouver economy annually and supporting over 105,000 full time jobs, our members serve, host, transport, entertain, and accommodate millions of local, national and international guests annually.

The motivation behind convening the Task Force is to create a powerful, united, and action-oriented body to act as a coordinated voice for our sector. Our advocacy work – on behalf of our shareholders and members – is being advanced by four distinct working groups, focused on: Impact Assessment; Government Relations; Issues Management and Communications; and Sector Recovery Strategy. Our actions reflect the fact that few industries have been as dramatically affected by the onset and spread of COVID-19 as the tourism and hospitality sector.