

June 16, 2016

Next tourism open house June 30 – Can't make it? Take the survey!

More than 40 people attended a May workshop to have their say on developing tourism services in Campbell River – and the next workshop will run 9 a.m. to noon on June 30 at the Maritime Heritage Centre.

If you were unable to attend in May, join us in June to share your thoughts. Whether you are in the tourism business or have ideas to attract more visitors to Campbell River, we want to hear from you. And, if you can't attend the workshop, take the online survey by July 4 (link posted under What's New on the City's website) or request a paper copy from City Hall.

"All the feedback we're gathering will help ensure the plan we develop the best model for tourism services delivery in our community, a plan that is customized to the unique needs and circumstances of Campbell River," says Mayor Andy Adams.

"We really appreciate how enthused people have been about participating and sharing great input, through interviews, informal drop-in sessions and a formal community workshop," says consultant Suzanne Denbak, principal of Cadence Strategies and project lead. *"What we're hearing is helping identify Campbell River's target markets and the local competitive advantage. We were really impressed by the effort people put into the May 6 workshop, where we focused on possible structures for an organization to lead local tourism promotion, as well as an assessment of the highest return markets and strategies to reach potential visitors and attract them to Campbell River."*

Participants agreed that the vision for tourism in Campbell River would promote year-round tourism opportunities and build on partnerships to enhance the visitor experience.

"Repeatedly, people emphasized how much we can do by working more closely together, and that we can build a culture throughout Campbell River where everyone is knowledgeable and eager to tell visitors about our community," Denbak adds. *"We know that people-to-people connections are very powerful, and tourism operators see potential in this community-pride type of promotion to connect visitors with the many local attractions and experiences that will make their time here remarkable."*

Community feedback will be incorporated into a recommended five-year tourism marketing plan. The plan and an application for a local hotel tax (a municipal and regional district tax that adds an amount to accommodation bills) to fund expanded tourism marketing, will be submitted to the Province later this year.

"Campbell River is one of only two remaining regions on Vancouver Island without this source of revenue, and we are eager to make the most of this new funding to enhance tourism promotion, which would come from visitors rather than from local property taxes," the Mayor adds.

"This work to review and refine our tourism model complements the ongoing efforts by Tourism Campbell River & Region staff, whose work is carrying us through the peak 2016 season," says city manager Deborah Sargent. *"We know the coming year will also be busy, and planning is currently in the works to host the 2017 Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities and the Vancouver Island Sustainable Technology."*

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