

**Showcasing Richmond's Olympic Legacies:  
Recommendations for Increasing Tourist Visitation  
to the Richmond Olympic Experience**

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The Richmond Olympic Experience (ROX) is a new sport-themed museum inside the Richmond Olympic Oval, a facility built for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games to host the long track speed skating events. One of the key drivers of the City of Richmond's and Richmond Olympic Oval Corporation's joint investment in developing the ROX was to add a tourism attraction to complement other tourism assets located in Richmond. The intention was for the ROX to enhance the destination appeal of Richmond by giving visitors a unique attraction to visit.

Although the ROX met its visitation projections in its first year of operation, there is concern that it will be challenged to maintain or grow these targets as it competes against Metro Vancouver's well established and popular tourist attractions.

Given this challenge, the primary research question this project sought to address is:

- What strategies can the Richmond Olympic Oval implement to enhance tourist visitation to the ROX for the period 2017-2019?

The development and implementation of strategic recommendations to improve tourist visitation, informed through consultation with stakeholders and experts in the tourism industry, is intended to help position the ROX as a must-see destination in the region. There is a high potential for the ROX to capitalize and expand on the opportunities posed by being a new and unique attraction with a globally recognized brand.

The client for this project is Shana Turner, Director of Finance and Corporate Services for the Richmond Olympic Oval. Ms. Turner oversees management of the ROX and is currently the direct supervisor of the researcher. Ms. Turner represents both the Richmond Olympic Oval Corporation, a municipal corporation which operates the facility, as well as the City of Richmond, which owns the facility as the single shareholder.

## Methodology and Methods

The methodology for this project involved three distinct phases. First, a literature review was conducted to provide a comprehensive overview on what has previously been studied and written related to the research topic. The second phase of the project involved primary research with tourists travelling independently, group tour operators, and destination marketing organizations (DMOs). The third and final phase of the research was a smart practices review of local tourist attractions.

The primary research was conducted using qualitative methods. Surveys were used to gather the preferences and intentions of travellers. Interviews were used as a method of inquiry with the DMO staff and group tour operators to obtain more detailed information from professionals in the industry.

## Key Findings

The research data is synthesized and presented using tables, graphs, and written narrative. The following eight salient themes emerged from the analysis of the literature review and the research findings:

- 1) Building brand reputation takes time and investment.
- 2) Location matters.
- 3) Technology has changed the travel experience for consumers. Attractions must be active and proactive in the online digital realm.
- 4) Attractions must form partnerships and collaborate to maximize resources and reach larger audiences.
- 5) Word of mouth plays a significant role in tourist decision-making. It is important for attractions to get local influencers onboard as ambassadors.
- 6) Tourists look for authentic experiences.
- 7) The potential for the ROX to capitalize on group tours to Metro Vancouver is low.
- 8) The potential for the ROX to capitalize on educational student travel is high.

## Recommendations

Twelve strategic recommendations are presented for implementation to the client. These recommendations have been developed from the information obtained through the literature review, smart practices review, and primary research conducted with tourists, destination marketing officials, and receptive tour operators. The recommendations are divided into immediate actions and future actions.

### Immediate Actions

- 1) Develop a rack card and distribute in high traffic tourist areas.
- 2) Partner with tourist visitor centres and hotel concierge staff to promote and sell tickets to the ROX on a commission basis.
- 3) Collaborate with Expedia, TripAdvisor, and Viator to sell ROX tickets online on their sites.
- 4) Use social media to share authentic, impactful stories for marketing and sales purposes and promote user-generated content among patrons.
- 5) Conduct visitor exit surveys to obtain a better understanding of what types of customers are currently visiting the ROX, how they found out about the attraction, and their overall customer experience.
- 6) Encourage satisfied customers to provide online reviews of the ROX on sites such as Google, TripAdvisor, Facebook, Expedia, and Yelp.
- 7) Aggressively outreach to educational student travel providers by providing familiarization tours and competitive rates.

### Future Actions

- 8) Promote the ROX to group tour operators by attending the Canada's West Marketplace and CITAP Winter Function as a tourism product seller.

- 9) Become a member of the Vancouver Attractions Group to leverage this collective's marketing influence and distribution.
- 10) Develop a Guided Tour Program to be delivered at various times during the day or available for booking.
- 11) Partner with other Richmond attractions and a local transportation provider to bring a hop-on hop-off sightseeing service to Richmond.
- 12) Develop new programs and exhibits as a way of continually engaging the attention of Metro Vancouver's tourism industry and encouraging repeat visitation.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Defining the Problem

The Richmond Olympic Experience (ROX) is a new sport-themed museum inside the Richmond Olympic Oval, a facility built for the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games to host the long track speed skating events. It opened in November 2015 as the first official member of the global Olympic Museums Network (OMN) located in North America (Richmond Olympic Oval Corporation, 2015, p. 3).

One of the key drivers of the City of Richmond's and Richmond Olympic Oval Corporation's joint investment in developing the ROX was to add a tourism attraction to complement other tourism assets located in Richmond (City of Richmond, 2013, p. 4). The intention was for the ROX to enhance the destination appeal of Richmond by giving visitors a unique attraction to visit.

The ROX exceeded its 2016 visitation projection with 15,292 paid admissions (Turner, 2017, p. 3). The initial projection of 11,590 visitations was intentionally set low to account for the time needed for the ROX to establish a positive reputation. Although the ROX met its visitation projections in its first year of operation, there is concern that it will be challenged to sufficiently grow these numbers towards its five-year target of 45,300 annual visitors (Richmond Olympic Oval Corporation, 2015, p. 38).

A passive or reactive approach will not be sufficient to compete against Metro Vancouver's Metro Vancouver's well established and popular tourist attractions. The development and implementation of strategic recommendations to improve tourist visitation, informed through consultation with stakeholders and experts in the tourism industry, can help position the ROX as a must-see destination in the region. There is a high potential for the ROX to capitalize on the opportunities posed by being a new and unique attraction with a globally recognized brand.

The primary issue being explored is how to attract tourists to visit the ROX as part of their travel itinerary to Metro Vancouver. Key questions related to this issue involve understanding what motivates tourists in how they allocate their travel dollars and travel time, identification of incentives for key stakeholders including tour operators, hotel operators, and destination marketers, and determining what marketing techniques are most effective in reaching the target audiences.

If this problem is not addressed by the client, the ROX will continue to lose potential patrons to competitors. Capitalizing on this integral revenue stream is crucial for the sustainable and viable operation of the ROX.

## 1.2 Project Client

The client for this project is Shana Turner, Director of Finance and Corporate Services for the Richmond Olympic Oval. Ms. Turner oversees management of the Richmond Olympic Experience and is currently the direct supervisor of the researcher. Ms. Turner represents both the Richmond Olympic Oval Corporation, a municipal corporation which operates the facility, as well as the City of Richmond, which owns the facility as the single shareholder. The client has full jurisdiction and mandate to address the problem.

## 1.3 Project Objectives and Research Questions

The primary research question this project sought to address is:

- What strategies can the Richmond Olympic Oval implement to enhance tourist visitation to the ROX for the period 2017-2019?

Secondary questions that support the primary question include:

- What are existing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges?
- What are tourism trends at the local, regional, and provincial levels?
- What are smart practices of comparable tourism attractions in the region?
- What are tourists looking for in a tourism experience when they visit Metro Vancouver?
- What are group tour operators looking for when selecting sites for their travel itineraries?
- What are strategic goal areas and tactics within each goal area that can support the ROX being successful in the tourism marketplace?

## 1.4 Background

The City of Richmond was a Venue City for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, hosting the long track speed skating events at the Richmond Olympic Oval. Following the conclusion of the Games, the Richmond Olympic Oval was converted into a high performance centre of excellence for sport, health and wellness that continues to attract global visitors (Richmond Olympic Oval Corporation, 2015, p. 2). As an iconic Olympic facility in both size and design, the venue was a tourism draw immediately following the Games. The ROX was added to the legacy conversion of the building in large part to sustain tourist interest in the venue as the years pass.

The ROX is in essence a 15,000 square foot Olympic museum, combining traditional museum experiences such as artifacts housed in glass cases with innovative interactive and digital elements (Richmond Olympic Oval Corporation, 2015). It is a member location of the Olympic Museums Network, a global platform to promote the values of sport and Olympism (“Olympic Museums Network,” n.d.).

The ROX was designed and built to achieve the following objectives:

- To re-ignite the Olympic spirit by reconnecting residents and visitors to the excitement and emotion that surrounds the Olympic Games.
- To motivate residents and visitors to strive towards their own personal podiums.
- To celebrate the History of Sport in Richmond from grassroots sport to the Olympic Games.
- To ensure that a legacy remains to celebrate Richmond’s role in the 2010 Games and to maintain a connection with the worldwide Olympic Movement.
- To create an awe-inspiring experience that becomes a “must-see” venue and brings further international, national, and regional awareness to Richmond (City of Richmond, 2015, p. 3).

The last objective specifically speaks to the importance of the ROX in adding to Richmond’s tourism destination appeal by offering travellers another attraction while visiting. The ROX adds to Richmond’s destination assets which also include relatively affordable hotels, proximity to the Vancouver International Airport, historic Steveston fishing village, renowned Asian dining outlets, and the Asian night markets (City of Richmond, 2014, p. 18).

The vision was for the ROX to be positioned in the tourism marketplace alongside popular must-see attractions such as Capilano Suspension Bridge, Vancouver Aquarium, and FlyOver Canada.

Although the ROX exceeded its visitation targets for 2016, the projections were set at a low threshold to manage stakeholder expectations in its first year of operation. The actual visitation numbers of 5,060 General Admission tickets sold and 1,054 Group Tour tickets sold is perceived as an underperformance (Turner, 2017, p. 5). In order for the ROX to sustain itself financially and remain viable as an operation, it must dramatically increase these visitation numbers. The Richmond Olympic Oval's management team can benefit from having a better understanding of the preferences of regional tourists as well as the marketing and programming strategies best suited to attracting them to the facility.

To understand the scope and nature of the problem at hand, the researcher conducted a review of documents commissioned by the City of Richmond and the Richmond Olympic Oval Corporation, including official reports, business plan projections, marketing plans, and economic development strategies. While most of the documents take a highly optimistic view of the ROX as a tourism draw, the *Richmond Resilient Economy Strategy* takes a more cautious and pragmatic outlook. The strategy projects that the ROX will add to Richmond's appeal as a destination, but visitation will primarily be driven by its proximity to the Vancouver International Airport and affordable hotels as opposed to its strength as a stand-alone attraction (City of Richmond, 2013, p. 18).

The *Richmond Olympic Experience Marketing Communications Plan*, commissioned by the Richmond Olympic Oval Corporation and delivered by Strategex Consulting Group in 2013, captures localized tourism trends and provides marketing and advertising recommendations for the ROX in its initial opening phase. Another study that provides useful information was commissioned by Tourism Richmond, the destination marketing agency responsible for marketing Richmond as a travel destination. The *2015 Richmond Executive Summary: Visitor Volume and Expenditure Estimates and Visitor Survey* provides statistics related to tourist visitation and spending trends that help to inform the strategic recommendations that developed as part of the research. Furthermore, Tourism Richmond's *Five Year Strategic Plan 2017-2021* outlines destination development as a priority, a category in which the ROX plays a key role.

This report adds to this existing body of research in several ways. It has a narrow and specific focus on examining tourist preferences and motivations related to visiting attractions. Other studies examine the larger scope of activities that a visitor can undertake during their visit, such as shopping and dining. It also examines tourist interest in visiting Olympic venues post-Games, which has not been undertaken. Furthermore, this study's focus on individual tourists, group tour operators and destination marketing organizations provides a more comprehensive view of the tourism industry, including opportunities and challenges related to each.

## **1.5 Organization of the Report**

The research project begins with a comprehensive literature review, including topics related to tourist attractions, tourist consumer behaviour, tourist and cultural attraction marketing, and post-Olympic tourism. The literature review is followed by a description of methods used to answer the primary and secondary research questions. The results from the primary research are presented in the *Findings* chapter. The *Discussion* chapter analyses the research data, identifying salient themes. Actionable strategies arising from the research and analysis processes are presented in the *Recommendations* chapter for consideration and implementation.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Overview

This chapter of the report explores existing research and knowledge found in academic and scholarly sources on the topics of tourist attractions, tourist consumer behaviour, tourist and cultural attraction marketing, and post-Olympic tourism. This literature review helped to inform and develop the primary and secondary research questions. By examining four related topics, the review provides a foundational understanding of all dimensions of the research questions. The analysis confirms that the research questions are in fact areas of study that have not yet been undertaken.

This chapter begins with an overview of tourist attractions, including definitions, typologies, and the broader systems in which they operate. It then examines tourist consumer behaviour to explore what drives tourist decision-making while travelling. Following this, part three of the review looks at marketing considerations by tourist attractions and museums. Part four reviews the literature on Olympic Games related tourism, with a focus on post-Games tourism legacies and how they are planned for and leveraged. It will then consolidate this learning to inform an analytic conceptual framework which serves as the foundation for the primary research being undertaken as part of this study.

The University of Victoria's libraries and the Vancouver Public Library were used to access research databases. The primary research databases for collecting the literature review materials included JSTOR, Google Scholar, EBSCO, SAGE Journals, Emerald Journals, Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism, and Wiley Online Journals. The key search terms that were applied include "tourist attractions," "visitor attractions," "tourist consumer behaviour," "Olympic Games venues tourism," "tourist attraction marketing," "museum marketing," "cultural attractions," "Olympic Games tourism," and "post-Olympic Games tourism."

### 2.2 Tourist Attractions

As attractions play a significant role in tourism economies, a considerable amount of research has been conducted on them. There does not, however, appear to be a universally accepted definition of a tourist attraction. Lew defines an attraction as a "non-home place" that has the ability to lure travelers, such as observable landscapes, participatory activities, or memorable experiences (p. 554). with some element of observable landscapes, activities, or memorable experience that draws "discretionary travelers away from their homes" (Lew, 1987, p. 554). According to Hu and Wall (2005), a visitor attraction is defined as "a permanent resource, either natural or human-made, which is developed and managed for the primary purpose of attracting visitors" (p. 619). For Pearce (1998), any definition of attractions must include natural environment features, cultural features, and purpose-built commercial features (p. 1). Leiper (1990) observes how the word "attraction" itself metaphorically implies a draw, pull factor, magnetism, or gravitational influence (p. 367). In trying to define attractions, some researchers have focused on the primary uses of a site (Leask, 2010, p. 156); however, this poses a challenge where some sites have shared uses (such as a religious location like the Notre Dame Cathedral). Other definitions have focused on attractions being permanent resources managed for visitor enjoyment, but this does not take into account temporary tourists draws such as special events or temporary exhibitions (Leask, 2010, p. 156).

There is a debate within the literature as to whether special events can be considered tourist attractions. Many large-scale special events can certainly attract a large number of tourists. However, Benckendorf & Pearce (2003, as cited in Leask, 2010, p. 156) and McKercher, Mei & Tse (2003; as cited in Leask, 2010, p. 156) conclude that despite their appealing aspects, events do not attract significant enough numbers of international visitors relative to the resident populations (Leask, 2010, p. 156). Lew (1987) notes that it can sometimes be difficult to differentiate between attractions and non-attractions, for other aspects of the visitor experience such as cruise ships, accommodations, and restaurants can themselves take on attraction-like characteristics (p. 554).

In addition to the varying definitions, tourist attractions can have many different classifications. Classifications can include natural, human-modified, and human-made; natural and built, resource-oriented, intermediate, and user-oriented; international, national, regional, and local; public or private; and permanent, seasonal, or occasional (Wall, 1997, pp. 240-241). Lew (1987) examines research related to attractions and identifies three overarching typologies that are prevalent in the literature: ideographic, organizational, and cognitive. The ideographic approach, the most common form of attraction classification, focuses on the unique and concrete features of sites, such as listing attractions by name or type (Lew, 1987, p. 555). Alternatively, organizational perspectives do not examine the attractions themselves but instead look at space and capacity factors. Scale and capacity considerations can provide insight into the organization of a tourist attraction, although they are not directly related as the spatial size of an attraction may not directly correlate to its capacity to accommodate large numbers of tourists (Lew, 1987, p. 559). Lew's third typology is a cognitive framework, which focuses on tourist perceptions and the visitor experience (1987, p. 560). Wall (1997) adds that tourist attractions can be classified by three dimensions of space: points, lines, and areas (p. 242). Points are one-dimensional locations (e.g., waterfalls, historic sites), lines as two-dimensional (e.g., coastlines, rivers), and areas are multi-dimensional (e.g., parks, scenic landscapes).

An important distinction in most typologies is distinguishing between human-made attractions versus those that are natural or cultural in nature. Human-made developments include those built for commercial tourism and consumption, such as theme parks. Coastlines, mountains, rivers, lakes, forests represent natural tourist attractions. Cultural attractions are historic sites and buildings or cultural events that are "recycled" for tourism (Gunn, 1985, p. 139). In Gunn's discussion (1985, p. 139), these are identified as being in a sense human-made, but not to the degree of commercial theme parks.

According to Swarbrooke's typology (2002), attractions can be categorized into four main types: 1) natural features, 2) human-made structures, buildings, and sites that were not originally designed and built for attracting visitors but now do, 3) human-made buildings, structures, and sites that are purpose-built to attract visitors; and 4) special events. Swarbrooke uses the term "visitor attraction" over "tourist attraction" to include visitation by local and regional residents as well as international travellers (p. 5). The term "tourist attraction" is considered to be a misnomer as the majority of visitations to most attractions are from local and surrounding areas (p. 6). Leask (2010) also prefers the term "visitor attraction" to emphasize the role that day visitors play in an attraction's successful and sustainable operation (p. 5). While it is understandable why "visitor attraction" is sometimes preferred, for the purposes of this research study the term "tourist attraction" is used to reflect the research focus on targeting tourist visitation to the ROX.

Beyond definitions and typologies, the literature reveals evolving conceptualizations of the systems in which tourist attractions exist. MacCannell (1976, as cited in Wall, 1997, p. 240) presented one of

the original models of tourist attractions as being complex systems that went beyond conventional thinking on the topic at the time. He conceived of tourist attractions as being made up of three components: a tourist, a site, and a marker (or image) that makes the site of importance (MacCannell, 1976, p. 109, as cited in Wall, 1997, p. 240). Only when a site is organized for tourism purposes does it become an attraction (Lynges, 1994, as cited in Moutinho, 1987, p. 272). MacCannell's ideas were added to by Leiper (1990), who agreed that tourist attractions are important subsystems of larger tourism systems. In this system, the three components are the tourist, a nucleus (akin to MacCannell's site), and a marker (Leiper, 1990, p. 370). Without all of these elements in place, the system would be incomplete, and a tourist attraction would not exist. For example, if no tourist visited the Eiffel Tower, it could not be thought of as a tourist attraction. Most studies on tourism attractions reference or respond, either indirectly or directly, to MacCannell and Leiper's systemic theories of attraction systems

Richards (2002) tests all three elements of Leiper's theory by conducting surveys at 43 cultural attractions in Europe and 3 in Australia. Respondents were asked at what point they decided on visiting the attraction (i.e., "before leaving home," "during the trip here," or "when I arrived in the area"). They were asked the extent to which the trip was influenced by the opportunity to visit the attraction, as well as other questions about their travel motivations, trip characteristics, use of information, and socioeconomic background (Richards, 2002, p. 1054). Richards' study provides strong empirical support for Leiper's attraction system model, finding evidence of links between tourist motivation to visit an attraction and the existence of specific markers. These findings suggest that attractions would benefit from paying attention to the use of markers by tourists (Richards, 2002, p. 1060).

For Gunn (1985), attractions are at the centre of the tourism system. He states that "without interesting and worthwhile attractions, there would be no reason to travel" (Gunn, 1985, p. 138). Attractions have a pulling or magnetic effect on travellers. By their very definition, attractions must attract (Gunn, 1985, p. 140). But they serve an additional function, which is to provide satisfaction and an experience that is rewarding (Gunn, 1985, p. 140). Success is not just about visitor counts. Swarbrooke (2002, p. 3) supports Gunn's view of the central role played by attractions, going so far as to claim that "without attractions there would be no need for other tourism services."

Hu & Wall (2005, p. 617) believe that tourist attractions are at the focal point of destinations, being the "essential ingredient" and "the basis for tourism." They are at the centre of destination development in three ways. Firstly, they pull or draw visitors to a specific place. Secondly, the images that are used to conceptualize and promote a destination are those of attractions. Thirdly, the industry that arises to support tourism such as transportation, accommodations, and food distribution is to support tourist attractions (Hu & Wall, 2005, p. 617). Individual attractions add to the cumulative appeal of the entire destination area, and the competitiveness of a destination rests significantly on each attraction's performance (Hu & Wall, 2005, p. 620). In this broader discussion of the relationship between attractions and destinations, Swarbrooke (2002, p. 6) proposes that attractions are subsystems within destinations. Swarbrooke distinguishes attractions as individual sites, with destinations being broader areas encompassing a number of attractions along with the support services required by tourists such as accommodations, restaurants, and transportation (2002, p. 6).

In summary, the literature reveals that there is no commonly accepted definition, typology, or conceptual model for tourist attractions. It has been suggested that any such common definition

would quickly become irrelevant given the changing interests of visitors and the evolving nature of attractions to satisfy those interests (Hu & Wall, 2005, p. 618).

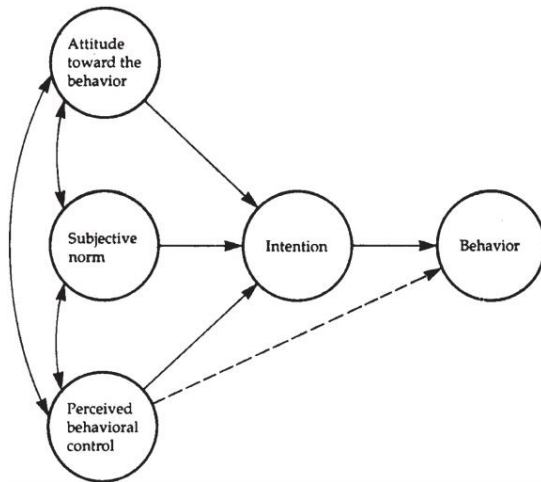
## 2.3 Tourist Consumer Behaviour

Inherent to the discussion of tourist attractions, is the question of what is a tourist? As found in the literature, tourists are highly differentiated and difficult to classify in a simple, general way. Gunn observes that “in tourism, there is no such thing as the average tourist” (Gunn, 1985, p. 140). Leiper sees them as a subset of travellers, specifically those people who are away from their homes to pursue, to some extent, leisure-related activities (Leiper, 1990, p. 371). Reviewing the research on how tourists make decisions while they travel constitutes part two of this literature review.

Understanding consumer behaviour is an important topic as it relates to tourism. Consumer behaviour is concerned with all decision processes and activities involved in obtaining, consuming, disposing, and evaluating products and services (Moutinho, 1987, p. 5). In that vein, tourist consumer behaviour can be seen as the acts, attitudes, decisions, and reactions that accompany the consumption of tourism products and services (Fratu, 2011, p. 119). Travel behaviour is considered a continuous process, but with different yet inter-related stages (Mill & Morrison, 2002, as cited in Cohen, Prayag & Mital, 2014, p. 873). Understanding the consumer’s needs and decision-making processes through these stages is important as products, services and marketing strategies can be developed to better meet the consumer’s demands.

Understanding decision-making is central to tourist consumer behaviour. A decision is an outcome of a mental process where a course of action is selected from a selection of available options (Moutinho, 1987, p. 27). When an alternative or choice is not available, a person does not make a decision. The tourist decision-making process involves the individual’s motives and intentions, as well as the stimuli that turn intention into selection of product or destination (Moutinho, 1987, p. 27). The processes involved in consumer behaviour are sophisticated and are better understood through models rather than just definitions to understand their complexity (Cohen et al., 2014, p. 875).

Consumer behaviour research in tourism has been marked by rational decision-making approaches, whereby decisions are believed to follow a sequence from attitude to intention to behaviour (Decrop, 2010; Decrop & Snelders, 2004, as cited in Cohen et al., 2014, p. 875). Of these rational models, Ajzen’s (1991) theory of planned behaviour (TPB) is widely referenced for identifying the behavioural intentions of consumers. According to TPB, a person’s attitude toward a behaviour, combined with prevalent subjective norms, and with perceptions of behavioural control factors, influence an individual’s intention to perform a given behaviour (Ajzen, 1991, pp. 181-2). In this theory, intentions are the motivational factors that influence a behaviour (Ajzen, 1991, p. 181). The stronger the intention, the more likely it is for the behaviour to occur. Figure 1 illustrates this theory in a diagram. Cohen et al. (2014) challenge the assumptions of rational decision-making models such as TPB as they do not capture the complexity of decision-making. Some travel decisions are made prior to the trip, while others are made at the destination. Some decisions are made individually, while others are made as a group (Cohen et al., 2014, p. 882).



**Figure 1 - Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991, p. 182).**

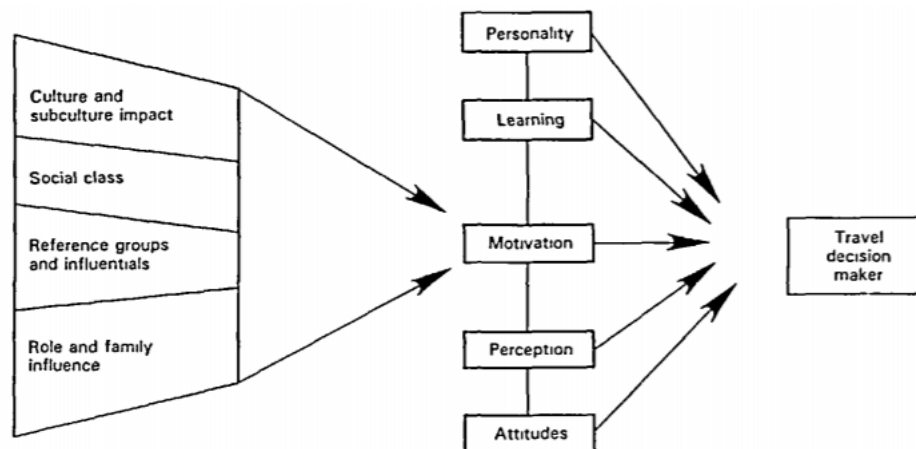
Early research on consumer behaviour focused on general dispositions, attitudes or personality traits (Ajzen, 1991, p. 180). Traditional perspectives theorized that attitudes predict behaviour, but contemporary studies challenge this thinking as attitudes can change over time or with contextual factors such as how an issue is framed (Cohen et al., 2014, p. 885). Furthermore, these approaches failed to capture the complexities of human social behaviour and consistently predict specific behaviours. This lack of predictive validity resulted in these models largely being abandoned or aggregated into other frameworks (Ajzen, 1991, p. 180).

Understanding motivation is an important dimension of tourist consumer behaviour research. Motivation refers to the psychological or biological needs and wants that arouse, direct, and integrate a person's behaviour and activity (Yoon & Uysal, 2005, p. 46, as cited in Cohen et al., 2014, p. 881). Tourist motivation can be explained using the push-pull approach. In this model, tourists are pushed by their desires to travel and pulled by destination attributes (Yoon & Uysal, 2005, p. 46, as cited in Cohen et al., 2014, p. 882). Fratu (2011) identifies four types of tourist motivations (p. 120). First, there is physical motivation, which relates to the desire to engage in sport or physical activity. Second, there is cultural motivation, which relates to the desire to visit cultural and heritage sites such as museums and churches. Interpersonal motivations include the desire to socialize and meet people. Lastly, there are prestige motivations, associated with the desire to be appreciated.

Generational theory is sometimes used to understand tourist consumer behaviour. According to generational theory, members of each generation share distinct traits, values and beliefs, interests, and expectations as a result of living through shared social events and influences (Strauss & Howe, 1997, as cited in Li, Li & Hudson, 2013, pp. 147-9). Li, Li & Hudson (2013) use generational theory to examine the U.S. travel market, which is characterized by four generations: the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. They highlight that Baby Boomers have the most money to spend on travel, the Silent Generation takes the longest trips, Generation X is most likely to travel with children, and Generation Y has the least amount of income to spend on travel and as such travel the least (Li et al., 2013, p. 146).

Woodside and Dubelaar's (2002) theory of tourism consumptive systems (TCS) looks at the travel thoughts, decisions, and behaviours made by a traveller before, during, and after a trip. The premise of the theory is that the thoughts, decisions, and behaviours regarding one activity influence the thoughts, decisions, and behaviours for other activities, suggesting a behavioural pattern (Woodside & Dubelaar, 2002, p. 120). The TCS model proposes an interdependency and direct and indirect relationships between the various travel-related variables, including demographic, psychographic, and social variables, destination marketing influences, prior trip behaviour, and choices related to accommodations, transportation, dining and visiting attractions (Woodside & Dubelaar, 2002, p. 120).

Moutinho (1987) sees consumer behaviour as being influenced by internal and external factors. Travel decisions are affected by internal factors such as personality, level of education, motivation, perception, and attitudes. They are also impacted by external factors such as role and family influences, reference groups, social classes, and culture and subculture. Figure 2 illustrates the interaction of influences in Moutinho's model.



**Figure 2 - Moutinho's model of external and internal influence on individual travel behaviour (1987, p. 6).**

For Fratu (2011), the factors that influence consumer behaviour fall into three overarching categories (p. 120). The first category is made up of personal factors such as tourists' personality, self-image, attitudes, motivations, perceptions, lifestyle, age, family lifestyle, and profession. The second category is made up of social factors such as culture, family, and social class. The third category is made up of situational factors such as time, physical ambience, social ambience, and state of mind.

Information technology (IT) has had a profound impact on how consumers make tourism-related decisions and purchases. Xiang et al. (2015) examine the pre-trip travel planning phase, where a substantial amount of destination information is researched, as a window providing insight into how IT has changed travel and tourism (p. 244). Tourism organization websites have become the primary source of information and contact for potential visitors (Xiang et al., 2015, p. 245). These have evolved from being simply informational (like "electronic brochures") to highly interactive systems that support reservations, search, and virtual tours (Xiang et al., 2015, p. 245). The rise of online travel agencies (OTAs) in recent years has made the ability to travel even more accessible (Xiang et al., 2015, p. 245).

The development of social media and the creation of virtual communities and consumer review sites such as TripAdvisor.com have had a significant impact on travel planning by facilitating interaction, information sharing, and engagement. The introduction of smartphones further enriched the travel experience by integrating communications, photography, GPS, and the internet in a single platform, allowing travellers to be able to manage their plans from anywhere and at any time (Xiang et al., 2015 p. 245). While the younger generations are the most active with digital technology, the use of the Internet for travel planning has crossed all generations (Xiang et al., 2015, p. 246). For an attraction to be effective in its marketing efforts, it is important to identify the right mediums, tactics, and language to attract and engage each generation of traveller.

Word of mouth (WOM) is an important influencer of tourist consumer behaviour. WOM can be defined as “communication about products and services between people who are perceived to be independent of the company providing the product or service, in a medium perceived to be independent of the company” (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012, p. 592). It is an informal referral or review by people who are perceived to have no vested commercial interest in the product or company in question, thereby adding a level of trust and authenticity (Silverman, 2001, p. 25, as cited in Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012, p. 592). With the rise of the internet, WOM has evolved from person-to-person communication to a less personal but wider-reaching form termed electronic word of mouth (eWOM). Electronic word of mouth is an online comment (positive or negative) about a product, service or company (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004, as cited in Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012, p. 592). With its broad reach and longevity, eWOM plays an important role in influencing the decisions people make about where to stay, what to visit, and where to eat (Xiang et al., 2015, p. 246). Tourism services are intangible, and as such carry a higher risk in that they cannot be assessed prior to the consumptive experience (Jalilvan & Samiei, 2012, p. 593). This results in high levels of utility, impact, and influence of eWOM in the travel planning process.

In summary, tourist decision-making is affected by a complex mix of personal and external factors. No tourist is the same, and while they can be placed in broad categories or groups, they individually have a unique combination of values, interests, and motivations that affect what type of attraction they will visit while travelling and why. It is important for tourism product and service providers to understand their target audiences and what factors influence their decision-making.

## **2.4 Marketing of Tourist Attractions and Museums**

Part three of the literature review is an examination of studies related to marketing strategies and tactics employed by tourist attractions and, more specifically, museums. Visiting museums is a leisure activity which faces stiff competition from other cultural attractions found in cities, such as restaurants, shopping centres, and sports arenas (Nechita, 2014, p. 270). As a result of this competition, museums, which are typically public entities, have had to adopt marketing strategies used by the private sector to promote their products. Some critics fear that this puts museums at risk of commodification as it neglects the human or cultural aspects of the experience (Nechita, 2014, p. 270).

The question of authenticity in the cultural attraction experience is explored by Prentice (2001). Prentice defines cultural tourism as “tourism constructed, proffered and consumed explicitly or implicitly as cultural appreciation, either as experiences or schematic knowledge gaining” (Prentice, 2001, p. 8). It is the search for authentic experiences. The primary role of museums is not one of conserving artifacts and stories, but to provide as authentic an experience as possible for the visitor by “utilizing objects as media, supplemented by curatorial interpretation designed to inform, delight and provoke (Prentice, 2001, p. 6). Conferring value onto artifacts and relics and elevating them as worthy of attention is a form of commodification of culture (Prentice, 2001, p. 8). Museums are in stiff competition with non-institutional facilitators of authentic cultural experiences, such as streets and markets (Prentice, 2001, p. 22).

Kirezu (2011) explores a different angle of authenticity by examining the shift from the traditional marketing of museums to experiential marketing. Experiential marketing reframes the focus of marketing efforts to a holistic experience using feelings and emotions to draw in the customer, and using highly emotive and visual strategies (Kirezu, 2011, p. 179). Lachel and Procter (2013) build on this theme by articulating the importance of tourist experiences that have impact, meaning, and resonate with the customer (p. 105). Museums today are challenged to adapt to the generation of visitors accustomed to digital media and visual technologies. In order to remain relevant, competitive, and sustainable, cultural attractions must find ways to move away from static images to be more interactive (Kessner, L, 2006; as cited in Nechita, 2014, p. 271).

Gofman, Moskowitz and Mets (2011) look at ways in which to attract young people to cultural attractions such as museums. Using modern technology that young people can relate to is one method, as is involving them in the actual design and marketing of exhibits (Gofman, Moskowitz & Mets, 2011, p. 602). Young people value social interaction, so providing the ability and options to interact with other visitors is important (Leinhardt, Crowley & Knutson, 2002, as cited in Gofman, Moskowitz & Mets, 2011, p. 602). Income plays a role in whether or not a young person will attend a museum (Gofman, Moskowitz & Mets, 2011, p. 610).

It is important to conduct visitor studies to understand the preferences, interests, and motivations of customers (Nechita, 2014, p. 270). This data helps to inform decision-making and planning. For example, consumers have become increasingly attuned to environmental sustainability and demand products that are environmentally friendly and ethically produced (Hu & Wall, 2005, p. 621). This is particularly the case in destinations such as British Columbia that are known for eco-tourism. By understanding this trend and demonstrating a commitment to environmental sustainability, attractions can align themselves to their customers and stay competitive.

Litvin's (2007) segmentation study of visitor attractions looks at repeat visitors to attractions in Charleston, South Carolina. His study finds that repeat visitors are only one-third as likely to visit an attraction as would a first-time visitor (Litvin, 2007, p. 14). Repeat visitors are important for helping to spread the word about the attraction to others. Litvin provides recommendations for marketing and managing attractions that can be applicable regardless of type, size, or location. First, Litvin recommends for attractions to form alliances with others and bundle up their offerings (Litvin, 2007, p. 16). Bundling promotes a perception of value for money and encourages visitation of more attractions than the typical person might otherwise visit. Secondly,

discounts create a sense of urgency to take advantage of the discounted admission pricing and not to delay the decision (Litvin, 2007, p. 16). Thirdly, annual passes that cost more than a single admission, but that represent considerable savings when visiting multiple times, can encourage repeat visitation. If the pass holder does not return to use the annual pass, the attraction benefits from the higher priced purchase (Litvin, 2007, p. 16). Fourthly, attractions should continually look to renew their exhibits, activities, and programs to keep the experience fresh for repeat visitors and also regional residents (Litvin, 2007, p. 16).

Pricing plays a role in tourist attraction marketing. Pearce (1998) identifies three different pricing models (pp. 4-5). First, attractions can opt to charge for individual activities or experiences. Challenges with this approach include visitor dissatisfaction at continuously having to pay small amounts of money, and increased operating costs incurred by having employees stationed at various places to process transactions. Second, attractions can charge a larger single entry fee and a few additional charges for special exhibits, rides, or facilities. This keeps the overall price lower for those not interested in the special or added features and facilitates less congestion in those areas. Third, attractions can charge an all-inclusive fee giving visitors access to all parts of the attraction. Pearce finds that the trend is towards all-inclusive pricing (p. 5).

Kay, Wong, and Polonsky (2009) study the reasons why people do not attend cultural institutions such as museums and heritage sites. Their study differs from others by looking at barriers, constraints, and inhibitors to visitation through discussion with non-visitors. They look at both academic and industry research on non-attendance to identify common barriers, constraints, and inhibitors and then test the findings with non-visitors of cultural institutions in Australia. Their study found eight broad real or perceived barriers: 1) physical access, 2) personal access, 3) cost, 4) time and timing, 5) product, 6) personal interest, 7) understanding and socialization, and 8) information (Kay, Wong, & Polonsky, 2009, p. 838). These barriers are not mutually exclusive, as non-attendance can be a result of any combination of these factors, and the study groups them into the overarching categories of external/situational, product specific, or personal (Kay, Wong, & Polonsky, 2009, pp. 846-7). Marketing strategies to overcome these barriers include television marketing to increase awareness, use of celebrities or endorsers to create relevance, improving the content on institution websites (Kay, Wong & Polonsky, 2009, pp. 846-7).

In summary, attractions of a cultural nature such as museums have had to shift their marketing approaches to remain competitive in drawing visitors. The shift has been towards experiential marketing to promote impactful experiences that truly resonate with the visitor. Marketing efforts have also increasingly incorporated digital technology such as social media and emotive videos to connect to target audiences.

## **2.5 Post-Olympic Tourism**

Studies on post-Olympic tourism are a subset of another field, that of Olympic legacies. Olympic Games are expensive to host, as host cities have to invest in new infrastructure to accommodate the events and in temporary infrastructure to host events and celebrations. There is an opportunity cost to scarce public resources being allocated to this infrastructure. As such, it is imperative that long-term benefits be achieved to outweigh the hard costs of hosting a Games (Gratton & Preuss, 2008, p. 1922). These long-term benefits are considered Olympic legacies.

Increasing international tourism as a long-term legacy is a driving economic motivation for cities and countries undertaking the huge costs to host an Olympic Games.

It is challenging to find a consistent definition of “Olympic legacy” in the literature; however, it is possible to identify commonly accepted characteristics. Commonly identified dimensions of Olympic legacies include new infrastructure, urban revival, enhanced international reputation, additional employment, business investment, renewed community spirit, better inter-regional and inter-governmental cooperation, education opportunities, and increased tourism (Gratton & Preuss, 2008, p. 1923). These are considered positive legacies. Negative legacies include debt, high opportunity costs, under-used infrastructure, temporary crowding out, and property rental increases (Gratton & Preuss, 2008, p. 1923). It is important to note this duality of there being positive and negative legacies, as proponents of the Games typically focus on just the positive.

After the question of definition, the next logical inquiry in any discussion of Olympic legacies is how they are to be measured. Simply stated, “the measurement of a legacy should start with the changes events create” (Gratton & Preuss, 2008, p. 1925). A common approach is to commission economic impact studies to report on economic growth associated with hosting the event. This can include tourism, employment, business investment, and infrastructure development. Environmental and social impacts are sometimes included in these type of studies (Gratton & Preuss, 2008, p. 1925). The challenge with this is identifying when to conduct them as it is difficult to identify just when a particular legacy has matured or peaked. It has been suggested that it takes 15-20 years to measure the true legacy of hosting an Olympic Games, and that there may not be a political appetite from host governments to sanction these type of studies (Gratton & Preuss, 2008, p. 1933). Furthermore, part of the measurement challenge is determining exactly how much attribution or credit to give the event for a legacy, and how much to attribute increases or decreases in the area to other non-event factors. A study by Moss, Gruben & Moss of six host cities illustrates how difficult it is to measure tourism impacts, as different agencies use different formulas and metrics (Moss, Gruben & Moss, 2014, p. 73).

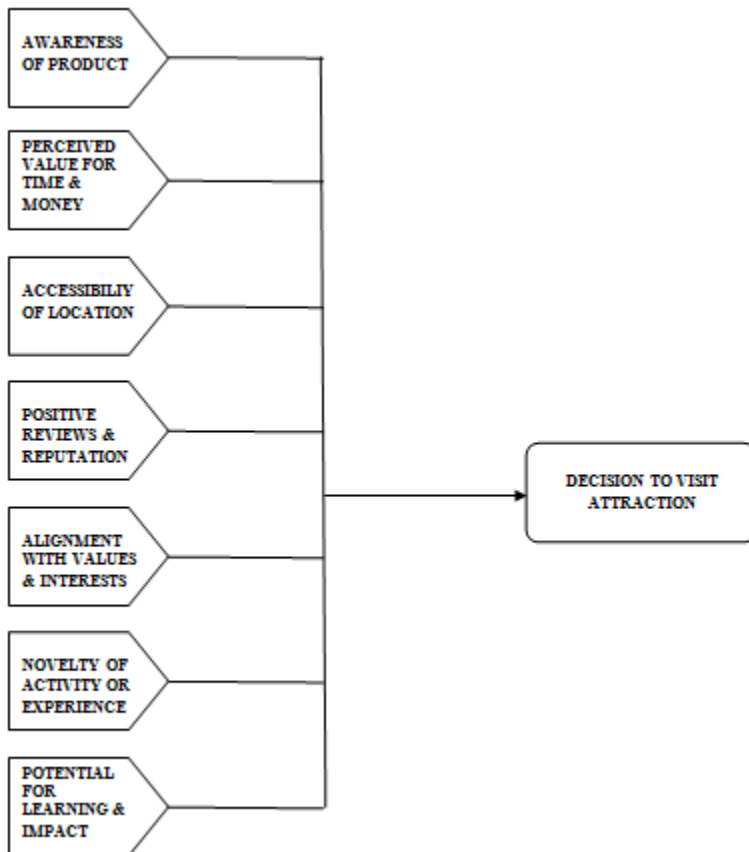
In addition to being a legacy, Olympic tourism can also be considered a subset of the fields of sport tourism and mega-events, and thus much of the research is inter-related. Much of the literature on Olympic tourism focuses on the international draw of the Olympic Games as a large-scale sporting event. It is thus the child of two disciplines: sport studies and tourism studies (Weed, 2005, p. 234). Only in the last two decades has it been identified as an independent field of study that is “related to but more than the sum of sport and tourism” (Weed, 2005, p. 234). It is now commonly seen as a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon that is created through a unique “interaction of activity, people and place” (Weed, 2005, p. 234).

Mike Weed’s *Olympic Tourism* is one of the few books dedicated to the topic of Olympic tourism. Weed defines Olympic tourism as “tourism behaviour motivated by Olympic related activities” (Weed, 2008, p. 22). Published in 2008 in the months leading up to the Beijing Olympic Summer Games, Weed’s book is an examination of the intersecting fields of tourism, sport, and the Olympic Games. The book has a focus on planning for Olympic tourism in the pre-Games period and identifies ways to leverage it for Games-time and, most importantly for this study, post-Games.

Increasing international tourism is a driving economic factor behind a city’s bid to host the Games (Moss, Gruben & Moss, 2014, p. 73). However, measuring the exact impacts on tourism is one of the most challenging areas of conducting research related to the Olympics (Moss et al., 2014, p. 73). Moss, Gruben & Moss (2014) look at the impact that media coverage has on international tourism to the host city of a sporting event. This impact is measured by examining air passenger traffic for six different Olympic Games. They conclude that the positive legacy is believed to be a result of positive media coverage of the host city during the Olympics (Moss et al. 2014, p. 74).

## 2.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this project is informed by the literature review, the problem definition and background, and the research questions. The conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 3 and demonstrates the researcher’s assumptions, understandings, expectations and beliefs about the key factors and variables and the relationships among them.



**Figure 3 – Conceptual framework of factors influencing a tourist’s intention to visit a tourist attraction.**

This framework theorizes that many factors influence a tourist’s intention to visit a particular attraction. These factors include awareness of the product, perceived value for time and money, accessibility of the location, positive reviews and reputation, alignment with values and interests, the novelty of the activity of experience, and the potential for learning and impact. No single

factor can be attributed to the tourist's intention to visit or not visit an attraction; instead, it is the cumulative interplay of all these factors, some of which are personal and internal, and some of which are situational and external.

This conceptual framework provided the foundation for the questions asked in the field research. The survey questions were designed to obtain information about tourist consumer preferences and motivations when making decisions about their travel itineraries. The interviews with group tour operators were similarly designed to obtain information about the travel preferences of their respective clients. The interviews with the destination marketing organizations and the smart practices review of local attractions were designed to gather information on marketing and programming tactics targeting tourists.

## **3. Methodology and Methods**

### **3.1 Methodology**

The primary approach of this project is a smart practices analysis. The term “smart practice” refers to “the existence of a smart or interesting idea in a given practice, one that deserves attention” and that can be “extrapolated” or transferred to another organization (Vesely, 2011, p. 106). The smart practices review looked at what other attractions were doing to successfully attract tourists. The objective was to identify strategies that could be implemented in some form by the ROX, or be used as a learning tool to inform other initiatives. A smart practices review of five local attractions took place that included the Vancouver Aquarium, Capilano Suspension Bridge, Sea to Sky Gondola, FlyOver Canada, and Museum of Anthropology. The smart practices approach was also imbedded in the surveys and interviews that were conducted. The survey and interview questions were designed to identify effective strategies being employed by other attractions to draw in tourists.

A second approach undertaken in this study is a situational analysis. A situational analysis is an examination of an organization’s internal and external environments. Specifically, it identifies the internal strengths and weaknesses of the organization in relation to the external opportunities and challenges it faces (Bryson, 2011, p. 151). This is often referred to as a SWOC analysis. The data from the surveys and interviews was used to formulate the SWOC analysis presented in the *Discussion* chapter of this report.

### **3.2 Methods**

This project involved two distinct phases. First, a literature review was conducted to provide a comprehensive overview on what has previously been studied and written related to the research topic. The second phase of the project involved primary research with tourists travelling independently, group tour operators, destination marketing organizations (DMOs), and local tourist attractions.

#### **3.2.1 Surveys**

A survey instrument was used to gather the preferences and intentions of travellers. The surveys were conducted using a face-to-face interview format and were conducted by the researcher. The survey incorporated both close-ended and open-ended questions (see Appendix 1). The respondents were asked to respond on a Likert scale for the majority of the close-ended questions. While this method was time-intensive, it facilitated a high response rate and ensured that the respondents were clear on the questions being asked (Majumdar, 2008, p. 249). It also provided the researcher an opportunity to gather detailed information by way of asking probing and follow-up questions as needed. The responses were recorded by the researcher.

The purpose of the surveys was to obtain a deeper understanding of tourist interests and preferences related to which attractions they planned to visit, and also to better understand what resources and factors played a role in their trip planning. A total of thirty tourists were surveyed in-person at two different locations. Fifteen tourists were surveyed at Jack Poole Plaza in downtown Vancouver. Fifteen tourists were surveyed in Richmond’s historic Steveston Village.

These two locations were selected because they are major tourist destinations in their respective cities, and they are both in the public domain making it relatively easy to access potential participants.

The international arrivals terminal of the Vancouver International Airport (YVR) was originally identified as the location to conduct surveys in Richmond. The researcher quickly discovered that this location was not suitable for the purposes of this particular study as most travellers approached had not given detailed thought to which attractions they were planning on visiting. Their immediate priority was on getting transportation to their accommodations and getting settled into their destination. Although the surveys conducted at this location were not useful for the purposes of this study, the interactions with these travellers were seen as valuable. The experience supports the notion that travellers tend to book their attractions and activities once they have arrived at the destination. Steveston replaced YVR as the location for the Richmond surveys.

Participants were identified and approached by the researcher on the basis of demonstrating touristic behaviour. This includes taking photographs, asking for directions, looking at maps, and shopping in souvenir and gift shops. Accents were also taken into consideration, although this was not a primary identifier given Metro Vancouver's international and cosmopolitan demographics.

Each face-to-face interview lasted approximately 8-10 minutes. A total of 36 individuals were approached to participate in the survey at Jack Poole Plaza. 21 people refused to participate, while 15 accepted. This represents a response rate of 42%. A total of 46 individuals were approached to participate in the survey at Steveston Village. 31 people refused to participate, while 15 accepted. This represents a response rate of 33%.

### **3.2.2 Ethnographic Interviews**

Ethnographic interviews were used as a method of inquiry with the DMO and group tour operator staff to obtain more detailed information from professionals in the industry (see Appendices 2 and 3). The ethnographic interviews were conducted one-on-one, face-to-face, and using a semi-structured format (Gabrielian, V., Yang, K., & Spice, S., 2007, p. 157). The interviews began in a structured, neutral manner with the researcher asking pre-established questions related to the interviewee's background and experience. It then proceeded in an unstructured format that was more involved, probing, and conversational. The exact order and phrasing of the questions varied slightly from interview to interview. The goal was to establish a looser conversational style so that respondents addressed the questions within their understanding and conceptual frameworks, thereby increasing response validity (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002, p. 674). Each interview concluded with a quick debriefing, allowing an opportunity for the participant to ask questions to the interviewer or to add any additional comments.

Interviews were conducted over an eight-week period in the summer of 2017. Ten interviews were conducted with group tour operators, representing a range of countries of origin. Four interviews were conducted with destination marketing organizations, involving participants representing Tourism Richmond, Tourism Vancouver, and Destination BC.

### **3.3 Ethics Approval and Participant Consent**

This project received ethics approval from the Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) to conduct human participant research.

Survey participants at the two tourist locations were verbally informed of the details of the study (see Appendix 4). Implied consent was deemed sufficient to proceed with the administration of the survey. The DMO participants and group tour operators were asked to review and sign a detailed consent form before proceeding with the study (see Appendices 5 and 6).

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

Thematic content analysis was used to identify themes and patterns within the data. Thematic content analysis is “a descriptive presentation of qualitative data” (Anderson, 2007, p. 1). This type of analysis takes an inductive approach as the themes are not imposed by the researcher, but instead emerge from the data.

The researcher went through each of the interview transcripts and underlined and highlighted “units of meaning” that were relevant to the research topic (Anderson, 2007, p. 3). Units of a similar nature were then grouped under a common category, label or theme. This process was applied to the transcripts of the tourist surveys, destination marketing organization interviews, and group tour operator interviews. This was an iterative process that involved two cycles of review and reframing to ensure that the themes were consistent and reliable. These themes were then analyzed and are presented in the *Findings* and *Discussion* chapters of this report.

### **3.5 Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

The exploratory research design and data collection methods used in this study were effective for drawing out key concepts and issues for critical analysis. Yet this approach has both strengths and limitations that should be considered related to the findings and recommendations presented.

A strength of this project is that the researcher has considerable pre-existing knowledge and history of the Richmond Olympic Oval and the ROX. The researcher has been employed with the City of Richmond since 2005 and was involved in the opening of the Richmond Olympic Oval in 2008 and the opening of the ROX in 2015.

Conversely, the project may be affected by the researcher’s dual role as both the facilitator of this study and an employee with the City of Richmond. There inherently exists the potential for researcher bias. Furthermore, while it is felt that the interviewees and survey respondents provided sincere, authentic feedback, there is a possibility that participants would have responded differently to a neutral third party. To help mitigate this limitation, as part of the consent process participants were informed that their responses would remain anonymous and the data attained would be presented in aggregate with the responses of other participants of the research study.

The research design used for this research may have impacted the validity of findings drawn from key informant interviews. Surveys and interviews were conducted with small samples. It cannot be guaranteed that the views presented by those surveyed or interviewed are a reflection

of their aggregate groups and some perspectives may not have been represented. Unfortunately, time and resources limited the number of surveys and interviews possible.

The results of the tourist surveys are potentially skewed towards international travellers who are comfortable conversing in English. The researcher found that a significant number of tourists approached, particularly at the Steveston location, declined the opportunity to participate in the research study because of their lack of comfort or knowledge in speaking English. Future research should consider working with a translator to access this particular tourist demographic.

## 4. Findings

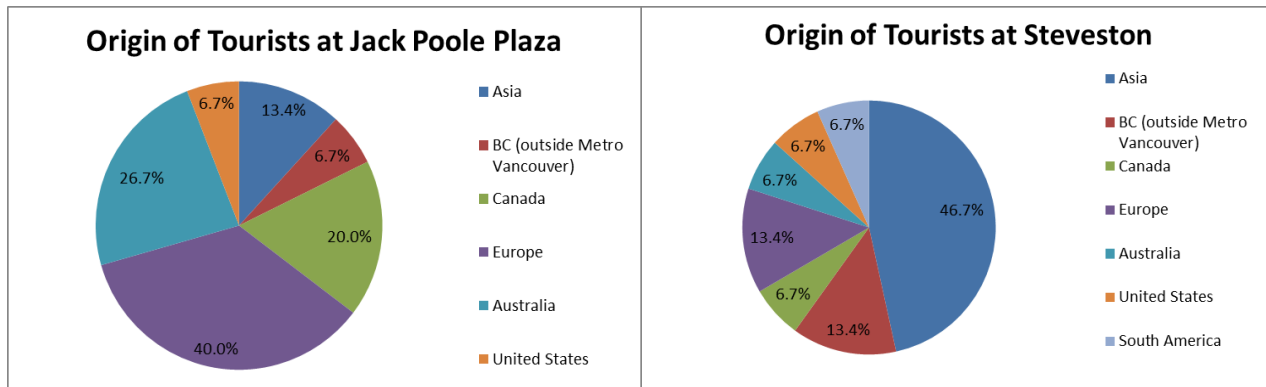
This section of the report presents the findings from the primary research. This research was conducted in the following four phases:

- in-person surveys with independent tourists,
- interviews with destination marketing organizations (DMOs)
- interviews with group tour operators, and
- smart practices review of local attractions.

### 4.1 Surveys

The graphs in Figure 3 illustrate the home regions of the tourists surveyed at both locations. The sample was limited to fifteen surveys at each location. European travellers made up a significant percentage of the tourist population surveyed at Jack Poole Plaza at 40% compared to 13% in Steveston. Conversely, Asian travellers make up 47% of tourists surveyed in Steveston, compared to 27% at Jack Poole Plaza. Additionally, tourists from other parts of Canada make up 20% of the respondents at the downtown Vancouver location, while only accounting for 7% of the respondents in Richmond.

Figure 4 – Origin of tourists interviewed at Jack Poole Plaza and Steveston



Of the respondents surveyed in downtown Vancouver, seven out of the fifteen respondents indicated that it was their first time visiting Metro Vancouver. Seven respondents indicated that it was their second to fourth time visiting the region, with one respondent expressing they had visited over ten times.

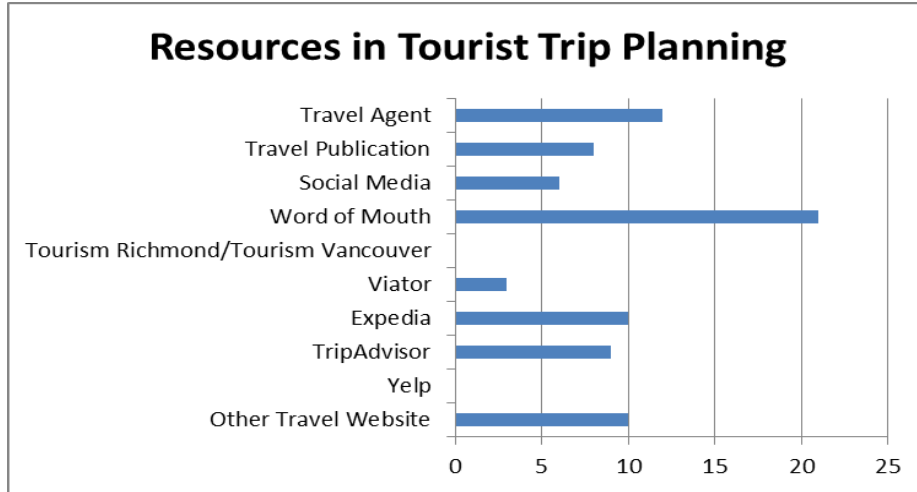
Of the respondents surveyed in Steveston, five out the fifteen respondents indicated that it was their first time visiting Metro Vancouver. Nine indicated that they had visited 2-4 times. Four indicated that they had visited over 10 times.

Across all respondents, twenty-three were staying in Vancouver, six were staying in Richmond, and one was staying in North Vancouver. The most common length of stay is 3-4 nights, with 67% of respondents indicating as such. Those staying with friends and family were typically staying longer (up to three weeks).

## **Itinerary Planning**

When asked about what resources played a role in their trip planning, 70% of respondents indicated word of mouth, followed by 40% indicating use of a travel agent, and 33% indicating use of Expedia or other travel websites. Tourism Richmond/Tourism Vancouver nor Yelp were selected by any of the survey respondents.

**Figure 5 – Resources used in tourist trip planning**



86% of respondents indicated that they are interested in visiting an attraction during their stay to Metro Vancouver. The most popular attractions they planned to visit included Capilano Suspension Bridge, Grouse Mountain, Stanley Park, Vancouver Art Gallery, Flyover Canada, and Gastown.

## **Olympic History**

Table 2 illustrates participant responses to questions regarding their interest in visiting museums and in Vancouver’s Olympic history. 60% of the respondents indicated that they are generally interested in museums, with 37% indicating that they would be interested in visiting an Olympic museum. Awareness of the Richmond Olympic Oval is low at only 10%, with awareness of the ROX being even lower at 7%.

**Table 1 – Tourist interest in Vancouver’s Olympic history**

<b>QUESTION POSED TO SURVEY RESPONDENT</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Are you interested in visiting museums?	18 (60%)	12 (40%)
Are you interested in Vancouver’s Olympic history?	11 (37%)	19 (73%)
Would you be interested in visiting an Olympic museum?	11 (37%)	19 (73%)

Have you heard of the Richmond Olympic Oval?	3 (10%)	27 (90%)
Have you heard of the Richmond Olympic Experience (ROX)?	2 (7%)	28 (93%)

## 4.2 Interviews with Destination Marketing Organizations

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four senior staff from three different destination marketing organizations (DMOs). DMOs operate at a system-wide level to market the destination regionally, nationally, and internationally, and also to support industry development and growth. The interviewees were quite knowledgeable and willing to share their perspectives and experience. The results of the interviews are listed below.

### Trends

All four of the interviewees commented on the impact of economic factors on tourist activity such as the strength of the Canadian currency, the price of gasoline, and the global economy. Canada’s current tourism boom is partly attributed to the lower value of the Canadian dollar as compared to the US dollar. Tourists can do more while spending less.

With the tourism boom, however, there is stiff competition from other attractions and activity providers who are all aggressively marketing their products. With its tagline “Beautiful British Columbia” and social media hashtag “#exporebc,” the province of British Columbia is positioning itself as an outdoor, natural, eco-adventure destination. As an indoor attraction located well outside of the Vancouver downtown core, the ROX will need to find ways to compete with the iconic, outdoor experiences offered by other attractions and tour operators.

Three of the four interviewees touched on the perceptions of Canada being a safe destination. This perception is fuelling the desirability of Canada as a tourism destination, to the detriment of some countries in Europe such as the United Kingdom, Belgium, France and Spain which are losing tourism business as a result of recent terror attacks.

Two of the four interviewees touched on the disruptive nature of digital technology on the travel sector. The rise of online travel agencies (OTAs) such as Expedia and TripAdvisor make it easier for individuals to research and book flights, accommodations, transportation, and even attractions. This increasing use of the internet has a negative impact on traditional travel influences such as travel agents and visitor centres, which have had to compete in an increasingly competitive and digital marketplace.

### Role of Attractions

All four of the interviewees indicated that attractions play a positive role in the tourism sector as people are looking for experiences when they travel. However, the level of importance to the tourist’s overall experience of a destination varied among respondents. One respondent indicated that attractions are “a nice surprise” at the destination and add value to the visitor’s stay. Similarly, another expressed that tourist attractions do not play a significant role when people are deciding upon which destination to visit, but they add to the flavour of the experience when the

travellers get there. Conversely, another respondent highlighted that it is the attractions which people remember most about a destination. It is the net sum of all of the attractions in an area that add to a destination's desirability. The fourth interviewee expressed that attractions are a powerful influence and can inspire an individual's desire to visit a destination, as is the case when pictures shared on social media spark interest to visit a location. This idea is further supported by the fact that visiting attractions such as the Eiffel Tower or the Coliseum can be the primary purpose of the trip.

### **What makes for a great attraction?**

When asked what factors characterize a great attraction, one participant countered that the term attraction is a very broad term. Consumers do not use the word attraction, nor do they conceptualize it the way the industry or literature do. They conceptualize it as something they want to see or do when they arrive at a destination. This can be paid or free. Dining and shopping are things people want to see or do, but they are not commonly captured under the category of attraction unless there is something novel or extraordinary about the experience that makes it a draw.

A common theme in the responses by all four of the interviewees is that great attractions leave a lasting impression or impact on the visitor. This impact or impression can take many forms, from observing natural beauty to experiencing something new, to learning about a culture or place.

A great attraction provides value for dollar spent. It also provides value for time spent, as a tourist's limited time is just as important as their financial resources. Great attractions are thus accessible, and not difficult to get to.

### **Impressions of the ROX**

All four of the DMO interviewees had been to the ROX and were familiar with the product. All of the interviewees spoke positively about the attraction, describing the experience using words such as "unique," "fresh," and "educational." It was described by one interviewee as "a place of nostalgia where you could go and remember what it felt like during the Vancouver Olympics."

Despite its novelty, it was seen by all to fit in a category below the "Category A" or "must-see" classification of attractions. In Metro Vancouver, this top tier of attractions is commonly seen to include Stanley Park, Capilano Suspension Bridge, Grouse Mountain, Sea to Sky Gondola, and FlyOver Canada. Second tier attractions include the Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver Lookout, Telus World of Science, and Van Dusen Gardens. The ROX was described by one interviewee as a "second-tier" attraction because of its size and location. It was described by all as being challenged by its location away from the downtown core and its lack of proximity to reliable and easily accessible public transportation. One respondent also commented on the amount of construction occurring in the area, making it uninviting to tourists. Not only is this construction aesthetically unappealing, but pedestrian corridors to rapid transit stations are also interrupted due to the construction, creating wayfinding challenges.

The ROX was described by one interviewee as an interesting mix of digital screens, interactive activities, artifacts in glass cases, and written interpretive content. The experience was perceived to be disjointed in that elements of the exhibits are located on various floors of the building, and two of the interviewees expressed that their experience was hindered by one of the simulators being out of commission.

There was also a shared opinion among all four respondents that the artifact experience is one-way, inanimate, and flat. One participant expressed that the artifacts and written content within the ROX would be of greater interest to visitors if there were engaging speakers available to provide interpretation and share interesting anecdotes and stories. The ROX is not perceived to be alone in this regard, as all museums are facing this same challenge of how to engage audiences with static exhibits and limited resources to animate them.

### **Suggested Actions or Strategies to Improve Visitation**

As experts in the tourism field, all four of the interviewees suggested practical actions or strategies that could help improve tourist visitation to the ROX. The following list captures the most significant recommendations from these individuals.

- Create a promotional rack card or pamphlet that is targeted towards the tourist audience and distributed at popular tourist information outlets.
- Use the Explorer Quotient (EQ) framework to identify which type of traveller the ROX appeals to, and target marketing efforts towards that type of traveller's preferences.
- Develop a concierge and visitor centre sales program whereby their agents sell ROX tickets on a commission-basis.
- Conduct visitor surveys with patrons as they are exiting the ROX to get a better understanding of who they are, how they found out about the ROX, and what can be improved about the experience.
- "Animate the inanimate" by bringing in guest speakers such as Olympians to share impactful and memorable stories.
- Partner with other organizations to cross-promote and leverage marketing resources. This can include joining the Vancouver Attractions Group or creating a separate and distinct Richmond Attractions Group.
- Use social media to share emotive and impactful stories about the ROX. These are perceived as being more authentic to target audiences. It is essential to invest in high quality, emotive videos that can be shared on social media. Social media should not be used primarily as a sales and marketing tool.
- Participate annually in the Tourism Passport Challenge and Taxi Challenge programs to familiarize industry staff with the product.
- Attend events such as Canada's West Marketplace and the Canadian Inbound Tourism Association - Asia Pacific (CITAP) Winter Function to meet directly with tour operators.

## **4.3 Interviews with Group Tour Operators**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten senior staff of group tour operators with businesses located in either Richmond or Vancouver. The tour operators ranged in size from

small local operators to large global industry leaders. The tour operators were selected to represent a range of countries of origin, including Japan, Korea, China, and USA/Canada. Eight of the ten tour operators specialized in standard group tour travel, with two of the operators specializing in educational and student travel programs for youth. Their responses to the interview questions are summarized below.

### **What factors are considered in developing your travel itineraries?**

All ten of the interviewees expressed that people are drawn to Canada, and British Columbia in particular, because of its scenic landscapes and natural beauty. A common and popular Canadian travel itinerary for international group tours includes three nights in Metro Vancouver, three days of travel by bus through the Canadian Rockies to Banff and Calgary, and then a flight to Toronto and Montreal for a seven-day experience of Eastern Canada. Clients are also interested in Metro Vancouver's shopping and dining experiences, with Asian clientele perceiving the Chinese food in Metro Vancouver to be among the best in the world outside of China.

On average, group tours are booked 3-4 months in advance, with itinerary development and confirmation taking place a minimum of six months in advance, and sometimes as far out as two years for educational travel programs. Tour operators have to confirm their block of room bookings with hotels 30-45 days in advance which challenges their ability to take reservations past that point. Group tour sizes typically range from 20-100 people, with the average size being 40-50 (enough to sit comfortably on a charter bus).

The eight conventional group tour operators all expressed that the time spent in Metro Vancouver is quite limited and that they are pressed to fit in as much as they can in a short time frame. The four days and three nights spent in Vancouver often include a day trip to Whistler and an overnight trip to Victoria. Stanley Park, Gastown and Canada Place are popular sightseeing destinations in Metro Vancouver travel itineraries. Seven of the eight group tour operators include one or two attractions with paid admissions in their itineraries. The most common paid attractions are Capilano Suspension Bridge, FlyOver Canada, Sea to Sky Gondola, whale watching, and Victoria's Butchart Gardens. The itineraries and packages offered are well established with high levels of customer satisfaction. There would need to be a compelling reason to drop one of the existing stops in an itinerary for a new product.

Educational or student travel itineraries are quite different. These itineraries typically stay in one destination such as Metro Vancouver as opposed to being on the move and seeing an entire region or country. The two student travel operators indicated that their groups spend 7-14 days in Metro Vancouver and combine an educational learning component with experiential activities.

### **What are the key trends, opportunities, and challenges impacting the group tourism sector in Metro Vancouver?**

All ten of the interviewees indicated that safety is an essential factor for their clients in the selection of travel destinations. Metro Vancouver has become a popular destination because of its perception of being safe. This boom in local business has led to increased competition as well as regional capacity challenges related to accommodations and transportation.

Technology has been disruptive to the group tour industry. Travellers are now able to research and book their travel itineraries online and book at discounted and competitive rates, making group tours less appealing to younger, tech-savvy travellers.

Six respondents identified the role played by economic factors. The strength of the Canadian dollar has made Canadian destinations appealing.

Educational travel is growing at a rapid pace worldwide, particularly to English speaking countries. The top five destinations for Anglo-educational travel are the United States, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. Canada is increasingly on the rise because of its perception as a safe destination, its reputation for compassion and friendliness, its multiculturalism, and the clarity with which the English language is spoken. Much of the educational travel to Metro Vancouver is from Asia-Pacific countries. Schools in countries such as China and Japan offer special educational travel programs to position themselves competitively.

### **Do any of your travel itineraries currently include time spent in Richmond?**

Five of the eight group tour operators had itineraries that spent time in Richmond. The groups typically spend more time in Richmond if the travellers are staying in accommodations in Richmond. Dining at Richmond's renowned Asian restaurants and shopping at McArthur Glen Designer Outlet are the most popular activities. Four out of these five group tour operators had itineraries that included a stop to Steveston village. The operator that does not include Steveston commented that Steveston village is not "tour bus friendly" logistically and that there is little to see on the way to Steveston.

One of the educational travel operators regularly brings international student groups into Richmond. These itineraries include visits to Steveston village and the ROX for educational and experiential activities. The other educational travel operator interviewed indicated that it currently does not bring student groups into Richmond, but is exploring the possibility of bringing students to the ROX in 2018.

### **Have you visited the Richmond Olympic Experience? If so, how was your experience? What were your impressions?**

Eight out of the ten interviewees had visited the ROX before. The two that had not visited were familiar with the attraction. The overall impressions of the ROX and the Richmond Olympic Oval were favourable, but there was a strong and clear message that it is not an appealing option for conventional group tour operators. One participant described the Richmond Olympic Oval as an impressive facility, but that tourists would see it as just another sports complex. For this reason, it may be better suited for residents than of interest to international travellers.

One tour operator indicated that his company's tours sometimes drive past the Oval and stop for pictures with the Olympic rings outside the building. This operator did not believe his clients would have any interest to visit inside the building, especially given the limited time that they

have to spend in Metro Vancouver. The ROX faces stiff competition from other attractions such as Capilano Suspension Bridge and the Vancouver Aquarium. These attractions are popular and rated highly. In order for the ROX to be added to itineraries, there has to be demand for it by the clients, and something has to be dropped off the existing itineraries.

Two of the interviewees expressed that the ROX was better suited for younger audiences because of its interactive components. There is not much interest in the sporting artifacts, and the written content is difficult to read and understand by international travellers with limited English ability. Educational travel and student travel programs were identified as being a more suitable target audience.

The two educational travel operators spoke quite highly of the ROX, expressing that it offered unique educational and experiential opportunities.

### **What can the Olympic Experience do to better position itself to be included in your group tour travel itineraries?**

Seven of the eight conventional group tour operators expressed that there wasn't much that the ROX can do to be included in their group travel itineraries because it did not align with the interests of their customers and their tight timelines. One interviewee expressed that Chinese speaking tour guides would be helpful and make the experience more appealing. Another expressed that the experience is too short, engaging guests for only 30-60 minutes. Adding interesting exhibits, films, or programs would increase the value to the visit and make it more appealing.

The two educational tour operators felt that the ROX was already well positioned for their business. They felt that it is a new product and that many people still do not know about it. The only suggestion for improvement was the addition of sport simulators or interactive displays during the next exhibit refresh.

## **4.4 Smart Practices Review**

A smart practices review was conducted with five tourist attractions located in Metro Vancouver. 3 of these (FlyOver Canada, Vancouver Art Gallery, and the Vancouver Aquarium) are located in Vancouver's downtown core, with the Museum of Anthropology and the Capilano Suspension Bridge located outside the city centre.

The smart practices review was conducted through scanning of websites, publically available corporate documents, and visits to each of the venues. Table 2 highlights the findings of this review and the key strategies implemented by each of the attractions.

**Table 2 - Smart practice review of marketing strategies implemented by Metro Vancouver attractions**

Marketing Strategy	Capilano	FlyOver	Art Gallery	MOA	Aquarium
Rack Cards or Pamphlets	X	X	X	X	X
Transit Ads	X		X	X	X
MobiMaps		X	X		X
Social Media Advertising	X	X	X	X	X
Expedia	X		X		X
TripAdvisor/Viator	X	X	X	X	X
Vancouver Attractions Group	X		X	X	
CityPass			X	X	X
Visitor Centre Sales Program	X	X	X		X
Concierge Sales Program	X	X	X		X
Where Magazine	X	X	X		X
Tourism Vancouver Membership	X	X	X	X	X
Show Your Badge Program	X	X			X
Tourism Passport Challenge	X	X	X	X	X
Canada's West Marketplace	X				X

## 4.5 Summary

The field research successfully built on the information from the literature review related to tourist decision-making and marketing strategies of tourist attractions. The tourist surveys, interviews with DMO staff and tour operators, and smart practices scan of other attractions provided a level of detail that was directly related to the research question and filled in a gap where that was limited knowledge.

Across all respondent groups, it is clear that the most commonly identified factors influencing a tourist's or tour operator's decision to visit an attraction include:

- **Reputation:** Travellers were interested in visiting what are commonly seen as Vancouver's iconic "must-see" attractions.
- **Location:** Travellers were interested in visiting attractions in a centralized hub such as downtown Vancouver, or near their accommodations.
- **Value for time and money:** Travellers were sensitive to being "ripped off" and overpaying for an experience, or for investing their time into an activity that was not worthwhile.

The next section will outline key themes arising from these findings.

## 5. Discussion

This section presents key themes arising from the literature review and the research findings. Thematic content analysis was the method used to identify patterns in the research data and then framed to form cohesive and relevant themes. The section begins with a situational analysis, which presents the internal strengths and weaknesses of the ROX in relation to the external opportunities and challenges it faces. This is followed by an examination of eight key themes that emerged from the data analysis. The section concludes with a discussion of areas for further research.

### 5.1 Situational Analysis

The data collected was thematically grouped and analyzed to form a situational analysis. A situational analysis is an assessment of an organization’s internal and external contexts (Bryson, 2011, p. 150). It is often referred to as a SWOC analysis as it presents information on an organization’s strengths and weaknesses in relation to the opportunities or challenges it faces (Bryson, 2011, p. 172). This analysis is found in Table 3.

**Table 3 – Situational analysis of the ROX.**

<p><b>Strengths</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ROX is unique, being the only IOC-sanctioned Olympic museum in North America.</li> <li>• For those interested in Olympic history, the ROX is one of the few places you can go to learn about the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games.</li> <li>• The sport simulators and interactive exhibits are popular and memorable.</li> <li>• The ROX is housed within the Richmond Olympic Oval, which has many activity offerings including rock climbing, ice skating, sport courts, and a fitness centre.</li> <li>• Proximity to the airport and hotels.</li> <li>• Availability of marketing resources (i.e., staff and budget).</li> <li>• The ROX is an indoor attraction in a region that gets a lot of rain.</li> <li>• Established and active social media channels.</li> <li>• Positive reviews and ratings online.</li> <li>• Relationships with destination marketing organizations including Tourism Richmond, Tourism Vancouver, and Destination BC.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ROX is perceived as being small.</li> <li>• The ROX is challenging to get to via transit.</li> <li>• Heavy construction in the area makes walking to the venue and wayfinding challenging.</li> <li>• There is no promotional rack card or pamphlet in distribution.</li> <li>• Regional interest in the Olympic Games is waning as many years have since passed.</li> <li>• The ROX competes with the BC Sports Hall of Fame at BC Place which is similarly a sport-themed museum with interactive elements.</li> <li>• The dwell time at some text heavy exhibits and static artifact displays is zero, making them under-utilized.</li> <li>• There are sometimes technical challenges with the sport simulators or interactive exhibits. As the ROX is small, this can have high impact on the quality of a visitor’s experience.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of the visitor experience can vary from customer to customer depending on the strengths and abilities of the volunteers on shift.</li> <li>• User generated content on social media (considered a form of eWOM) is low.</li> <li>• While the online reviews and ratings are generally positive, there are not a lot of them.</li> <li>• Lack of proximity to other tourist attractions in Richmond.</li> <li>• The ROX and the Richmond Olympic Oval are not well integrated as products and brands, creating confusion in the industry and marketplace.</li> <li>• The ROX is not listed on popular OTA sites such as Expedia, TripAdvisor, and Viator.</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The addition of programming can lengthen the visit, add value to the customer’s experience, and provide talking points for the media and other influencers in the tourism sector.</li> <li>• The next Olympics will be hosted in South Korean (2018), Japan (2020), and China (2022), which are all countries in which travel to Canada is popular. The rising level of interest in the Olympics in these countries can be used as a draw through programming.</li> <li>• Educational travel and student travel can be a niche market for the ROX as it aligns well with their objectives.</li> <li>• Visitors who have had a positive experience can be encouraged to review the ROX online to build up its online reputation and profile.</li> <li>• OTAs and Visitor Centres are generally looking for new products to showcase and sell.</li> <li>• Partnering with other attractions in marketing will help expand reach.</li> <li>• Local DMOs are providing funding support for cooperative marketing initiatives.</li> <li>• In Fall 2017, local DMOs are introducing programs on social media, explorer quotient, and visitor experience.</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ROX is competing with long-established attractions.</li> <li>• If the Canadian dollar rises, it may negatively impact regional tourism.</li> <li>• Working with OTAs and Visitor Centres requires paying out commission, usually in the amount of 15-20%.</li> </ul>

The situational analysis presented above was useful in better understanding the internal and external contexts within which the ROX exists. The exercise assisted the researcher in the identification of key themes.

## 5.2 Key Themes

This section identifies eight salient themes that emerged from analysis of the literature review and the research findings.

### **Theme 1 – Building brand reputation takes time and investment.**

Most of Vancouver’s top tier or “must-see” attractions such as Capilano Suspension Bridge, Grouse Mountain, and the Vancouver Art Gallery have been in operation for several decades. They have built up a strong profile and reputation over this time which works to their advantage. The ROX is in its second year of operation, and as such is in its infancy. Although the DMO interviewees and most of the RTO interviewees were familiar with the product, the surveys

conducted with tourists highlight that only 7% of the interviewees had heard of the ROX before. The ROX can benefit from continuing to host familiarization tours, attending networking events, and aggressively advertising using print and digital methods.

## **Theme 2 – Location matters.**

The ROX is inherently challenged to attract high volumes of tourist visitation due to its location in Richmond. It is located in an emerging urban neighbourhood that is 15 minutes walking distance to the nearest rapid transit station connecting Richmond to Vancouver. The journey from downtown Vancouver to the ROX is between 45-55 minutes via public transit and walking. There is no other attraction in the vicinity to add additional value or purpose to this journey. Furthermore, due to the heavy amounts of construction in and around the venue, the ROX is challenged to receive impromptu walk-in visitor traffic, which is an advantage that the attractions clustered in downtown Vancouver enjoy.

All four of the DMO staff that were interviewed identified the ROX's location in Richmond as a challenge to attracting tourist visitation. This challenge was affirmed by the responses of the tourists surveyed at Jack Poole Plaza. Only one of the fifteen participants expressed they would be interested in visiting Richmond. Many also expressed that location was an important factor in determining which attractions they visited, with preference being given to attractions that are near their accommodations or clustered near a hub of some sort.

## **Theme 3 – Technology has changed the travel experience for consumers. Attractions must be active and proactive in the online digital realm.**

Digital disruption is a trend impacting the entire travel industry and tourism sector, and tourist attractions are not excluded from this impact. Almost every aspect of a travel experience (including flights, accommodations, transportation, restaurants, tours, and attractions) can be researched and booked online. Not only is this increasingly the trend among travellers, but it can also be done in a matter of seconds and on a mobile device.

As a result of this digital disruption, use of travel agencies and tourism visitor centres is in decline. 12 out of the 30 tourists surveyed expressed use of a travel agent, and zero survey respondents indicated the use of Tourism Vancouver or Tourism Richmond's website or visitor centres. Travellers are increasingly using online travel agencies (OTAs) such as Expedia and TripAdvisor to research and book aspects of their trip. As such, it is imperative for attractions to be listed on these sites as one of the "Things to Do" and to be able to have their tickets sold directly on these sites. The finding of the smart practices review supports this theme as all five of the attractions that were reviewed feature advertising and ability to purchase tickets on TripAdvisor, and three of them were also using Expedia for these purposes.

## **Theme 4 – Attractions must form partnerships and collaborate to maximize resources and effectively reach larger audiences.**

All four of the destination marketing interviewees touched on the importance of partnerships and collaboration. There is an advantage to pooling resources together and collectively marketing to

reach a wider range of audiences. This also meets the needs of the tourist, who can learn about Metro Vancouver's different attractions in one place rather than visiting multiple websites or picking up multiple rack cards.

Working with other attractions to create bundles or packages is a strategy utilized by Metro Vancouver attractions and encouraged by DMO staff. Bundling promotes a perception of value for money and promotes visitation of more attractions than the typical person might otherwise visit (Litvin, 2007, p. 16).

Businesses are increasingly using consumer data and leading advertising technology to understand consumer needs, strategically target larger audiences, and make informed business decisions. This technology is sophisticated and expensive. By partnering with others, attractions can leverage their combined resources and work more efficiently.

### **Theme 5 – Word of mouth plays a significant role in tourist decision-making. It is important for attractions to get local influencers onboard as ambassadors.**

21 of the 30 (70%) of tourists surveyed indicated that word of mouth played a role in their travel planning decisions. This demonstrates the importance of referrals in the tourism industry. Hotel concierge staff, visitor centre personnel, and taxi cab drivers are important points of contact with tourists and influencers. The importance of engaging these influencers and incentivizing them to promote attraction through referral or sales commissions was identified by two of the four DMO interviews and was also observed as a smart practice by four of the five attractions reviewed.

### **Theme 6 – Tourists look for authentic experiences.**

There are many complex factors and motivations that underlie a person's travel-related decisions. The desire for authentic experiences was a prominent theme in the literature review. Museums are inherently places of authentic cultural experiences (Prentice, 2001, p. 6). They have the power to provide impactful tourist experiences that resonate with the customer (Lachel & Procter, 2013, p. 105). The appeal of museums as tourist attractions is supported by the results of the tourist surveys, in which 19 of the 30 (63%) participants expressed that they are interested in visiting museums when they travel.

As a brand, the "Richmond Olympic Experience" was intentionally developed to reflect the interactive and experiential nature of the new museum. However, feedback received in the RTO interviews indicates that this branding can be confusing for their international clients who do not know it is, in essence, a museum. To appeal to the traveller looking for authentic cultural experiences and interested in museums, the Richmond Olympic Oval may benefit from finding ways to convey that the ROX is an Olympic museum through taglines or visual branding.

### **Theme 7 – The potential for the ROX to capitalize on business from group tours is low.**

The interviews with the RTOS conveyed a strong message that there is little opportunity for the ROX to be built into group tour itineraries. Group tours have very little time to spend in Metro Vancouver as they stay only 3-4 nights. The existing itineraries are finely tuned and well

established. In order for the ROX to be considered for addition into group tour travel itineraries, it would need to build its reputation as being a must-see attraction in Metro Vancouver.

### **Theme 8 – The potential for the ROX to capitalize on business from educational student travel is high.**

The interviews with the RTOs, and also highlighted by one of the DMO interviewees, reveals that there is a significant opportunity for the ROX to build its business with educational travel programs. These groups visit Metro Vancouver for 7-14 days and combine a formal educational focus with experiential programming.

## **5.3 Areas for Further Research**

A gap in the literature is the role played by Olympic facilities and venues as tourist attractions in the years following an Olympic Games. It is commonly perceived that Olympic venues can have lasting impacts on a host city or region as symbolic tourist attractions or heritage sites (Ploner & Robinson, 2012, p. 99). However, there are no studies that could be found that discuss what role, if any, these facilities play in the local tourism economies and how they factor into the travel plans of tourists. Are they a draw for tourists? If so, does this draw peak and then diminish in the years following the Games? In their study on the transformation of Beijing's tourism industry six years after hosting the Games, Singh and Zhou identify that the Olympic venues are attractions, but indicate that they are under-utilized (Sing and Zhou, 2014, p. 284). There is potential there to increase the growth of Beijing's tourism industry through reuse.

Another gap is in gauging the interest of Olympic museums as tourist attractions. The establishment of the Olympic Museums Network and its global member locations is relatively recent, having only been established in 2007. There is an opportunity for research in this area to determine the level of interest in visiting Olympic museums.

An area for further research by the Richmond Olympic Oval Corporation is the identification of a Net Promoter Score for the ROX. A Net Promoter Score is a metric used to gauge how likely it is that someone would recommend a product to a friend or colleague (What is net promoter, n.d.). It is a simple and commonly used technique for gauging a customer's overall satisfaction with a company's product or service and the customer's loyalty to the brand. Destination BC and Tourism Richmond have invested resources into identifying a Net Promoter Score for their respective destination jurisdictions as a whole. As this study has recognized the importance of word of mouth to customer choices, it would be of value to the ROX to assess its current level of customer satisfaction and use that data as a benchmark from which to improve.

## 6. Recommendations

The primary purpose of this project was to identify strategies that the Richmond Olympic Oval can implement to enhance tourist visitation to the ROX. In this section, twelve key recommendations are presented for the Richmond Olympic Oval to adopt.

These recommendations have been developed from the information obtained through the literature review, smart practices review, and primary research conducted with tourists, destination marketing officials, and receptive tour operators. The following criteria factored into the development of these recommendations: cost, efficiency, effectiveness, staffing, political viability, the opportunity cost of time and money, and ease of implementation.

The recommendations are divided into two sections: immediate actions and future actions. Immediate actions represent relatively easy to implement “quick wins” that do not require a large investment of time or money by the Richmond Olympic Oval. Future actions are strategies that will require a more significant allocation of resources, collaboration with other agencies, and planning.

### 6.1 Immediate Actions

#### **Recommendation 1 – Develop a rack card and distribute in high-traffic tourist areas.**

Despite the impact that digital technology and online searching has had on the travel industry, promotional materials such as information pamphlets and rack cards continue to play an important role in the tourism industry. While purchases such as airfare, accommodation, and transportation often occur prior to the trip, decisions about which attractions to visit typically occur while in the destination. Thus, it is important to have a visible presence in high-traffic tourist areas to promote awareness of the product.

All of Metro Vancouver’s “must-see” attractions have a rack card, available at strategic, high traffic visitor kiosks. The ROX has not yet developed a rack card, opting instead to promote via MobiMaps, which has not proven to be an effective marketing technique despite its widespread distribution. It is recommended for the ROX to distribute its rack cards at tourism visitor centres in Vancouver, Richmond, Surrey, the Vancouver International Airport, and the Tswassen Ferry Terminal, as well as select hotel sites in Richmond.

#### **Recommendation 2 – Partner with tourist visitor centres and hotel concierge staff to promote and sell tickets to the ROX on a commission basis.**

Word of mouth is a key influencer of tourist decision-making. Tourists look for recommendations from trusted local experts such as hotel concierge staff and tourist visitor centre personnel. It is recommended for the ROX to initiate a commissionable sales program to incentivize these individuals to refer the ROX to others. The smart practice review reveals that 20% commission is the standard for each referral leading to a ticket purchase.

**Recommendation 3 – Collaborate with Expedia, TripAdvisor, and Viator to sell ROX tickets online on their sites.**

Travellers are using travel agents less and OTAs more for research, recommendations, and bookings. The ROX should work with leading OTAs including Expedia, TripAdvisor, and Viator to sell ROX tickets on their sites. Although a 20% commission is deducted from each sale, the ROX benefits from the marketing exposure on these sites. The ROX can also expect for a certain percentage of tickets that are purchased to go unredeemed, thereby minimizing the impact of the commission deducted by these OTAs.

**Recommendation 4 – Use social media to share authentic, impactful stories for marketing and sales purposes and promote user-generated content among patrons.**

Social media is considered by many to be the modern day word of mouth. Social media has an incredible power to reach audiences and shape their impressions on a product or service. All of Metro Vancouver's major attractions effectively leverage social media to create excitement about their product and brand. Facebook and Instagram are the most popular social media channels for posting content about an experience, whether it be through check-ins, written content, or posting of images. Social media posts by patrons are considered to be a form of user-generated content (UGC), whereby unpaid users of a product or service play the role of advertiser by posting, tweeting, blogging, or sharing to their networks. The ROX has a social media hashtag (#ovalROX), but it is not intuitive to find on social media channels, nor is it visibly posted anywhere in the facility. To promote social media posts by patrons, one way to implement this recommendation is to identify 3-5 iconic photo opportunities inside the ROX and encourage the ROX volunteers to promote photograph taking and posting to social media.

**Recommendation 5 – Conduct visitor exit surveys to obtain a better understanding of what types of customers are currently visiting the ROX, how they found out about the attraction, and their overall customer experience.**

The ROX does not currently have detailed data on visitor demographics or customer satisfaction levels. An exit survey will provide useful data that the ROX management staff can use to make informed business decisions. The exit survey can also find out how the visitor found out about the ROX as a way of identifying which marketing tactics are having a positive impact and which ones are not.

**Recommendation 6 – Encourage satisfied customers to provide online reviews of the ROX on sites such as Google, TripAdvisor, Facebook, Expedia, and Yelp.**

As online reviews constitute a form of modern-day word of mouth (or e-word of mouth as distinguished in the literature), satisfied customers with positive experiences should be encouraged to provide an online review. Some attractions distribute small business sized cards with links to TripAdvisor, Expedia or Facebook pages as a prompt for visitors to review online.

**Recommendation 7 – Aggressively outreach to educational student travel providers by providing familiarization tours and competitive rates.**

Educational student travel is a niche market from the ROX with a lot of potential and worth aggressively pursuing. Student groups spend significantly more time in Metro Vancouver than other tourists, and they are actively seeking authentic cultural experiences to complement the formal learning aspects of their educational itineraries. As a popular “clear voice” English-speaking destination, Metro Vancouver will only see continued growth in this area while the currency remains competitive and it maintains a perception of safety. This target audience is active year-round, making it appealing to target during non-peak seasons.

## **6.2 Future Actions**

### **Recommendation 8 – Promote the ROX to local tour operators by attending the Canada’s West Marketplace and CITAP Winter Function as a tourism product seller.**

As a new tourist attraction in only its second year of operation, the ROX has to be aggressive in building its profile and creating awareness of its existence. Canada’s West Marketplace and the CITAP Winter Functions are cost-effective forums bringing together DMOs, OTAs, RTOs, accommodation providers, transportation companies, and attractions. The ROX should attend these types of events regularly to build relationships with key individuals and industry influencers, develop mutually beneficial business partnerships, and integrate learning into daily operations to better meet the needs of target audiences.

### **Recommendation 9 – Become a member of the Vancouver Attractions Group to leverage this collective’s marketing influence and distribution.**

With its limited marketing resources, the ROX is limited in its ability to independently advertise out of market. The Vancouver Attractions Group (VAG) is a marketing collective of 21 attractions that focus on collectively advertising and providing discounts and packaged offers to travellers, both in market and at their points of origin. The VAG has used its collective voice to leverage over \$100,000 in cooperative marketing funding from Destination BC, allowing it to do even more. As a member, the ROX would be featured in international marketing campaigns, VAG brochures, and have tickets available for purchase on the VAG website. The ROX would also benefit from being listed alongside Metro Vancouver’s “must-see” attractions, helping to build its profile and reputation.

### **Recommendation 10 – Develop a Guided Tour Program to be delivered at various times during the day or available for booking.**

Although elements of the ROX are interactive and experiential in nature, a significant portion of the content is static. As identified in the RTO interviews, exhibits that are heavy in written content pose a challenge for many international visitors who have limited English ability. Additionally, the written content and the static nature of the artifact displays do not appeal to younger audiences, who prefer experiences that are hands-on, interactive, or two-way in nature. Many attractions offer guided tours or interpretive programming to provide animation and a storytelling aspect to the visitor’s experience. It is believed that a guided tour program can enhance the impact of ROX exhibits that are artifact-centric or heavy in written content.

**Recommendation 11 – Partner with other Richmond attractions and a local transportation provider to bring a hop-on hop-off sightseeing service to Richmond.**

The ROX is in a challenging location for tourists as it is not easily accessible by public transit, and heavy construction along pedestrian routes makes it unappealing as a walking destination from rapid transit stations. Furthermore, it is disconnected from Richmond's other tourist attractions such as Steveston village, McArthurGlen Designer Outlet, and River Rock Casino Resort. A hop-on hop-off sightseeing service would connect Richmond's tourist attraction sites and provide opportunities for visitors to explore an entire region efficiently and cost-effectively. There are a number of providers operating out of downtown Vancouver, with one having recently approached Tourism Richmond with interest in such a venture on a risk-sharing financial model.

**Recommendation 12 – Develop new programs and exhibits as a way of continually engaging the attention of Metro Vancouver's tourism industry and encouraging repeat visitation.**

Vancouver's tourist attraction marketplace is highly competitive. To leverage media coverage and maintain its presence and profile, it is important to refresh ROX exhibits and introduce innovative new programs regularly. This will help promote repeat visitation among tourists returning to the region as well as residents.

## 7. Conclusion

This report highlights many of the significant challenges faced by tourist attractions today. A key challenge that emerged from the research includes the fact that tourists are by no means a homogenous group. Not only do they differ in their point of origin (i.e., where they call home), they differ in interests, preferences, and motivations. Their travel-related decision-making is influenced by personal factors such as personality, self-image, attitudes, motivations, perceptions, lifestyle, age, family lifestyle, education, and profession. They can be affected by social factors such as culture, family, and social class. They are also impacted by situational factors such as time, physical or social ambiance, and state of mind. It has also been theorized that the generation in which a person is born can impact their travel-related behaviours. New tourist attractions like the ROX must consider these factors when developing marketing strategies in order to attract visitors and remain financially sustainable.

This report has presented twelve recommendations in response to the overarching research question:

- *What strategies can the Richmond Olympic Oval implement to enhance tourist visitation to the ROX for the period 2017-2020?*

The strategies presented are evidence-based and built using smart practice in the tourism attraction sector. The implementation of the recommended strategies will enhance the profile of the ROX and build its reputation as a “must-see” tourist destination.

This research can be of value to new tourist attractions looking to develop a tourism strategy, or to established tourist attractions that operate outside of a tourist hub or downtown core. It can also be of value to Olympic venues that have long-term post-Games tourism objectives.

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## 9. Appendices

### Appendix 1: Survey Instrument for Independent Tourists

This survey instrument is to be used for independent travellers from outside British Columbia and over the age of 18 years old.

Location

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Vancouver International Airport
- Jack Poole Plaza

#### A. Demographic Information

1. What province, state or country do you currently live in? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many times have you visited Metro Vancouver?
  - First time
  - 2-4 times
  - 5-9 times
  - 10+ times
3. How long is your stay in Metro Vancouver?
  - >1 night
  - 1-2 nights
  - 3-4 nights
  - 5-6 nights
  - 7+ nights
4. Where are you staying?
  - Richmond
  - Vancouver
  - Other
5. How are you travelling?
  - Single
  - Couple
  - Family
  - Group

#### B. Itinerary Planning

6. Why did you choose Metro Vancouver as the destination for your trip? (select all that apply)
  - Business

- Visiting family or friends
- Leisure/vacation
- Other

7. Please identify your likelihood to do one of the following activities while on your trip?

	Very Likely	Likely	Undecided	Unlikely	Very Unlikely
Adventure or eco-tourism (e.g. whale watching, hiking, outdoor activities)	1	2	3	4	5
Sightseeing and visiting attractions (e.g. Capilano Suspension Bridge, Grouse Mountain)	1	2	3	4	5
Festivals, concerts and entertainment	1	2	3	4	5
Restaurants and bars	1	2	3	4	5
Shopping	1	2	3	4	5

8. Which of the following played a role in your trip planning? (select all that apply)

- Expedia
- TripAdvisor
- Viator
- Yelp
- Tourism Vancouver
- Tourism Richmond
- Word of mouth recommendations from friends or family
- Facebook or other social media
- Travel website
- Travel publication, book or magazine
- Travel agent
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

9. Are you planning on visiting a sightseeing attraction during your trip to Metro Vancouver (e.g. Capilano Suspension, Bridge, Grouse Mountain, Steveston Village)?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

10. If yes, which sightseeing attractions are you planning on visiting?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

11. What are the most important factors for you in determining which sightseeing attractions you will visit during your stay? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Do you like to visit museums when you travel?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

13. Are you interested in learning about the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games and Olympic history?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

14. What is your level of interest in visiting an Olympic museum during this trip?

Interested	Somewhat Interested	Undecided	Somewhat uninterested	Uninterested
1	2	3	4	5

### C. Visiting Richmond

15. Are you likely to visit Richmond during this trip?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

16. If yes, what are your reasons for visiting Richmond?

- Business
- Staying in Richmond
- Visiting friends or family
- Recreation
- Shopping
- Restaurants or bars
- Sightseeing and visiting attractions
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Have you heard of the Richmond Olympic Oval?

- Yes
- No

18. If yes, how did you hear about it? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Have you heard of the Richmond Olympic Experience (or ROX)?

- Yes
- No

20. If yes, how did you hear about it? \_\_\_\_\_

21. Do you have any additional comments related to the study that you would like to share?

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 2: Interview Questions for Destination Marketing Organizations**

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and your experience in the tourism industry?
2. Can you tell me a bit about your current role and responsibilities with this organization
3. In your opinion, what are some of the most important trends, opportunities and challenges impacting the tourism industry in Metro Vancouver?
4. In your opinion, what are tourists typically looking for in a Metro Vancouver travel experience?
5. What do you think the Richmond Olympic Experience is currently doing well?
6. What do you think the Richmond Olympic Experience can improve on?
7. What are new actions or strategies that the Richmond Olympic Experience can implement to attract the tourist sector?
8. The next phase of this research study includes connecting with group tour operators to better understand their business operations, programming, and needs. Can you suggest some key group tour operators that would be good for me to connect with?
9. How can the Richmond Olympic Experience better partner with your organization?
10. Do you have any other comments related to this study that could be helpful?

### **Appendix 3: Interview Questions for Group Tour Operators**

11. Can you tell me a bit about the group tour programs and services you offer?
12. What factors are considered in developing your travel itineraries?
13. How far in advance are your itineraries established?
14. Are paid attractions included in your travel itineraries? If so, what factors are involved in determining how these attractions are selected?
15. When working with attractions with entrance fees, what is the typical group discount on admission rates?
16. In your opinion, what are the key trends impacting the group tourism sector of the tourism industry in Metro Vancouver?
17. Do any of your travel itineraries currently include time spent in Richmond? If so, please describe.
18. What are you looking for in a familiarization (FAM) tour? What makes for a great FAM tour?
19. Have you visited the Richmond Olympic Experience? If so, how was your experience? What are your impressions?
20. In your opinion, what can the Richmond Olympic Experience do to position itself to be included in group tour travel itineraries?
21. Do you have any other comments related to this study that could be helpful?

## **Appendix 4: Implied Consent Text for Independent Tourists**

### **Showcasing Richmond's Olympic Legacies: Recommendations for Increasing Tourist Visitation to the Richmond Olympic Experience**

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *Showcasing Richmond's Olympic Legacies: A Tourism Strategy for the Olympic Experience at the Richmond Olympic Oval* that is being conducted by myself, Paul Brar.

I am a Graduate Student in the School of Public Administration in the Faculty of Human and Social Development at the University of Victoria. I am also an employee of the project client, the Richmond Olympic Oval and City of Richmond, reporting to Shana Turner, Director, Finance and Corporate Services. I can be reached at 604-838-7285 or [pbrar@richmond.ca](mailto:pbrar@richmond.ca).

As a Graduate Student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a masters degree in Public Administration. It is being conducted under the supervision of Kim Speers. You may contact Kim Speers if you have further questions at 250-721-8057 or [kspeers@uvic.ca](mailto:kspeers@uvic.ca).

#### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of the study is to research, analyze, and report on the factors influencing tourist decisions related to which sightseeing attractions they will visit while in Metro Vancouver. The research study focuses on two target audiences: independent travellers and group tour operators. The research will ultimately be used to inform the development of marketing and programming strategies to attract tourists to visit the Olympic Experience at the Richmond Olympic Oval.

Research of this type is important as Metro Vancouver is expected to have a record-breaking year for tourist visitation. An understanding of what motivates, inspires and attracts tourists is vital for service providers such as the City of Richmond and the Richmond Olympic Oval to develop, market and program its Olympic legacy products appropriately.

#### **Participant Selection**

You are being asked to participate in this study because it is important to supplement the findings in the literature with the perspectives and experiences of actual tourists to Metro Vancouver. As a visitor to the region and part of our target market, your participation in the study allows for us to learn more about how you developed your travel itinerary so that we may improve our own marketing and programming strategies.

#### **What is Involved**

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include completing a survey verbally administered by the researcher. This survey will take approximately 10 minutes.

## **Inconvenience**

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including personal or professional time related to participating in the interview. No other inconvenience is anticipated.

## **Risks**

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

## **Benefits**

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include an opportunity for you to advance knowledge in this area and to contribute your expertise to the improvement of the Richmond Olympic Experience, which would be a benefit to the betterment of society.

## **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. Your decision to participate in this survey will be interpreted as an indication of your consent to participate. If you do participate, you may withdraw at any time during the survey without any consequences or any explanation. Your data will be destroyed and will not be used. As the information is being collected anonymously, you will not be able to withdraw from the study following the completion of the survey.

## **Anonymity**

No identifying information, such as name, position, or organization, is being collected. Anonymity will be protected, and your data will be identified through a participant code and not by name.

## **Confidentiality**

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by storing digital files on a password protected computer. Your name will not be identified in the study.

## **Dissemination of Results**

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways:

- Written and electronic copies provided to the City of Richmond, Richmond Olympic Oval, and the University of Victoria's School of Public Administration.
- A presentation at the student's final defense.

In addition, a summary report of the results can be made available to participants upon request.

## **Disposal of Data**

Data from this study will be disposed of immediately following the successful defense of the project by destroying electronic files and shredding paper copies. This is anticipated to be no later than December 31, 2017.

## **Contacts**

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include the researcher and the graduate student supervisor (see contact information listed at the beginning of this consent form).

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concern you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria at 250-472-4545 or [ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca).

Please keep this form for your records. Thank you for your time and consideration.

## **Appendix 5: Participant Consent Form for Destination Marketing Organizations**

### **Showcasing Richmond's Olympic Legacies: Recommendations for Increasing Tourist Visitation to the Richmond Olympic Experience**

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *Showcasing Richmond's Olympic Legacies: A Tourism Strategy for the Olympic Experience at the Richmond Olympic Oval* that is being conducted by Paul Brar.

Paul Brar is a Graduate Student in the School of Public Administration in the Faculty of Human and Social Development at the University of Victoria. He is also an employee of the project client, the Richmond Olympic Oval and City of Richmond, reporting to Shana Turner, Director, Finance and Corporate Services. Paul can be reached at 604-838-7285 or [pbrar@richmond.ca](mailto:pbrar@richmond.ca).

As a Graduate Student, Paul Brar is required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a masters degree in Public Administration. It is being conducted under the supervision of Kim Speers. You may contact Kim Speers if you have further questions at 250-721-8057 or [kspeers@uvic.ca](mailto:kspeers@uvic.ca).

#### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of the study is to research, analyze, and report on the factors influencing tourist decisions related to which sightseeing attractions they will visit while in Metro Vancouver. The research study focuses on two target audiences: independent travellers and group tour operators. The research will ultimately be used to inform the development of marketing and programming strategies to attract tourists to visit the Olympic Experience at the Richmond Olympic Oval.

Research of this type is important as Metro Vancouver is expected to have a record-breaking year for tourist visitation. An understanding of what motivates, inspires and attracts tourists is vital for service providers such as the City of Richmond and the Richmond Olympic Oval to develop, market and program its Olympic legacy products appropriately.

#### **Participant Selection**

You are being asked to participate in this study because it is important to supplement the findings in the literature with the perspectives and experiences of actual tourists to Metro Vancouver. As a visitor to the region and part of our target market, your participation in the study allows for us to learn more about how you developed your travel itinerary so that we may improve our own marketing and programming strategies.

#### **What is Involved**

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include completing a survey verbally administered by the researcher. This survey will take approximately 10 minutes.

## **Inconvenience**

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including personal or professional time related to participating in the interview. No other inconvenience is anticipated.

## **Risks**

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

## **Benefits**

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include an opportunity for you to advance knowledge in this area and to contribute your expertise to the improvement of the Olympic Experience at the Richmond Olympic Oval, which would be a benefit to the betterment of society.

## **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you decide to withdraw from the study, your data will be destroyed and will not be used.

## **Anonymity**

In terms of protecting your anonymity, your data will be identified through a participant code and not by your name. Any identifying information, such as name, position, or organization, will be removed from electronic and paper files of the data. The final project will not include any identifying information, including name, position, or organization.

## **Confidentiality**

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by storing digital files on a password protected computer. Your personal name nor your organization will not be identified in the study. However, there does lie a potential for people reading the report to guess which organizations may have been involved.

## **Dissemination of Results**

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways:

- Written and electronic copies provided to the City of Richmond, Richmond Olympic Oval, and the University of Victoria's School of Public Administration.
- A presentation at the student's final defense.

In addition, a summary report of the results can be made available to participants upon request.

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In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concern you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria at 250-472-4545 or [ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca).

## Signature of Consent

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher, and that you consent to participation in this research project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.*

## **Appendix 6: Participant Consent Form for Group Tour Operators**

### **Showcasing Richmond's Olympic Legacies: Recommendations for Increasing Tourist Visitation to the Richmond Olympic Experience**

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *Showcasing Richmond's Olympic Legacies: A Tourism Strategy for the Olympic Experience at the Richmond Olympic Oval* that is being conducted by Paul Brar.

Paul Brar is a Graduate Student in the School of Public Administration in the Faculty of Human and Social Development at the University of Victoria. He is also an employee of the project client, the Richmond Olympic Oval and City of Richmond, reporting to Shana Turner, Director, Finance and Corporate Services. Paul can be reached at 604-838-7285 or [pbrar@richmond.ca](mailto:pbrar@richmond.ca).

As a Graduate Student, Paul Brar is required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a masters degree in Public Administration. It is being conducted under the supervision of Kim Speers. You may contact Kim Speers if you have further questions at 250-721-8057 or [kspeers@uvic.ca](mailto:kspeers@uvic.ca).

#### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of the study is to research, analyze, and report on the factors influencing tourist decisions related to which sightseeing attractions they will visit while in Metro Vancouver. The research study focuses on two target audiences: independent travellers and group tour operators. The research will ultimately be used to inform the development of marketing and programming strategies to attract tourists to visit the Olympic Experience at the Richmond Olympic Oval.

Research of this type is important as Metro Vancouver is expected to have a record-breaking year for tourist visitation. An understanding of what motivates, inspires and attracts tourists is vital for service providers such as the City of Richmond and the Richmond Olympic Oval to develop, market and program its Olympic legacy products appropriately.

#### **Participant Selection**

You are being asked to participate in this study because it is important to supplement the findings in the literature with the perspectives and experiences of actual tourists to Metro Vancouver. As a visitor to the region and part of our target market, your participation in the study allows for us to learn more about how you developed your travel itinerary so that we may improve our own marketing and programming strategies.

#### **What is Involved**

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include completing a survey verbally administered by the researcher. This survey will take approximately 10 minutes.

## **Inconvenience**

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including personal or professional time related to participating in the interview. No other inconvenience is anticipated.

## **Risks**

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

## **Benefits**

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include an opportunity for you to advance knowledge in this area and to contribute your expertise to the improvement of the Olympic Experience at the Richmond Olympic Oval, which would be a benefit to the betterment of society.

## **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you decide to withdraw from the study, your data will be destroyed and will not be used.

## **Anonymity**

In terms of protecting your anonymity, your data will be identified through a participant code and not by your name. Any identifying information, such as name, position, or organization, will be removed from electronic and paper files of the data. The final project will not include any identifying information, including name, position, or organization.

## **Confidentiality**

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by storing digital files on a password protected computer. Your name will not be identified in the study.

## **Dissemination of Results**

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways:

- Written and electronic copies provided to the City of Richmond, Richmond Olympic Oval, and the University of Victoria's School of Public Administration.
- A presentation at the student's final defense.

In addition, a summary report of the results can be made available to participants upon request.

## **Disposal of Data**

Data from this study will be disposed of immediately following the successful defense of the project by destroying electronic files and shredding paper copies. This is anticipated to be no later than December 31, 2017.

## Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include the researcher and the graduate student supervisor (see contact information listed at the beginning of this consent form).

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concern you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria at 250-472-4545 or [ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca).

## Signature of Consent

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher, and that you consent to participation in this research project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.*