

Vancouver Island Visitor Centre, (VIVC) Comox Valley Annual Report – 2017



Table of Contents

- Introduction 3
- Visitor Statistics 3
- Visitor Origin 4
- True Visitor Parties 3
- Nights in Community 4
- Information Requested..... 5
- Activity and Event Bookings 6
- Summary..... 6
- Trip Advisor Reviews..... 6

Introduction

The Vancouver Island Visitor Centre (VIVC) continues to experience steady growth. True visitor party numbers in 2017 have continued to grow over 2016 figures, by 9%. In 2017 the VIVC welcomed 30,680 visitors, up from 2016's total of 29,976 numbers of visitors. True visitor parties into the building continue to rise; this year proved to show an impressive increase of 6%. Europeans represent the third highest Visitor Origin to visit the centre. Online activity bookings through the newly implemented REZGO online booking system, Boardroom and Facility bookings and Marketing Opportunity sales also saw increases. Trip Advisor reviews continue to show a high level of guest satisfaction.

Visitor Statistics

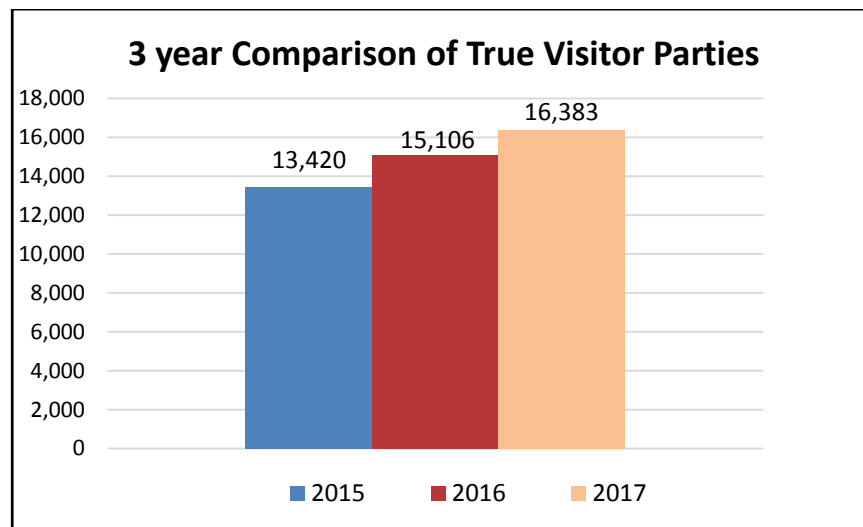
Visitor parties are defined as any group travelling together regardless of the number of people, while visitor numbers are the total number of individuals who came into the Centre. True visitor parties are what would be considered as "tourists" – visitor parties from outside of the Comox Valley area.

The following chart shows a comparison of statistics between 2016 and 2017:

Statistics	2016	2017	% Change
Total Visitor Parties	18,619	20,099	8%
Local Parties	3,513	3,716	5%
True Visitor Parties	15,106	16,383	9%
Visitor Numbers	29,976	30,680	5%

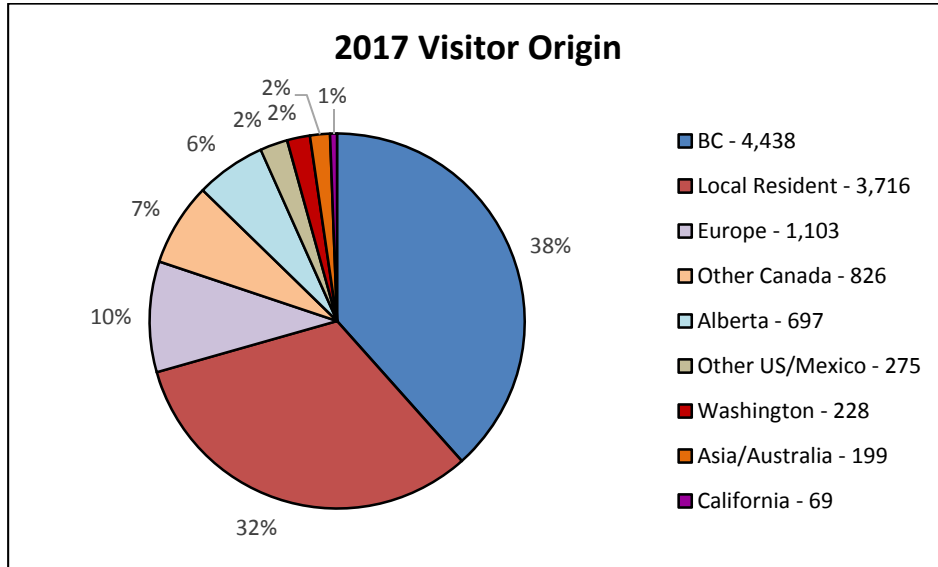
True Visitor Parties

The number of local parties was up over last year from 3,513 to 3,716 which an increase of 6% in 2017. The visitation from true visitors has increased significantly by 8% which allows the staff at the VIVC to encourage longer stays and promote the bookable products available to visitors through the centre. The following chart shows 3 year comparison, and subsequently, the increase in true visitor numbers from 2015 to 2016:



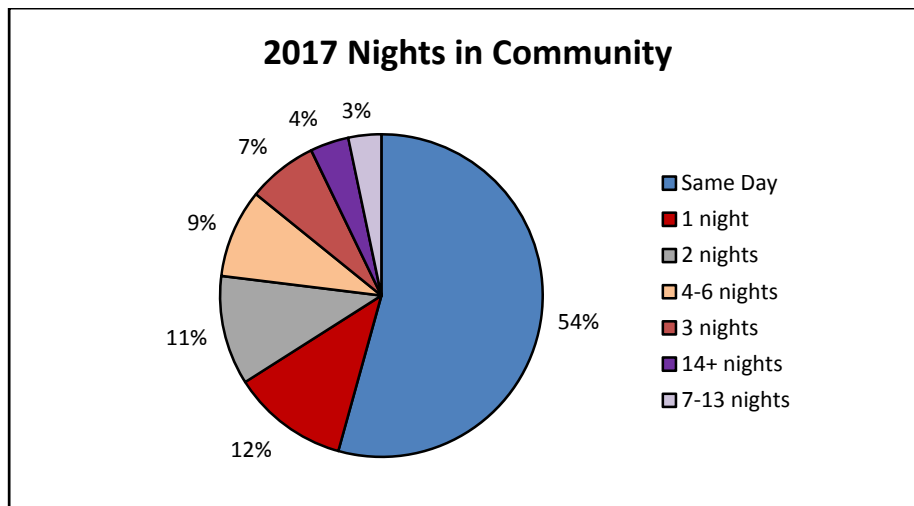
Visitor Origin

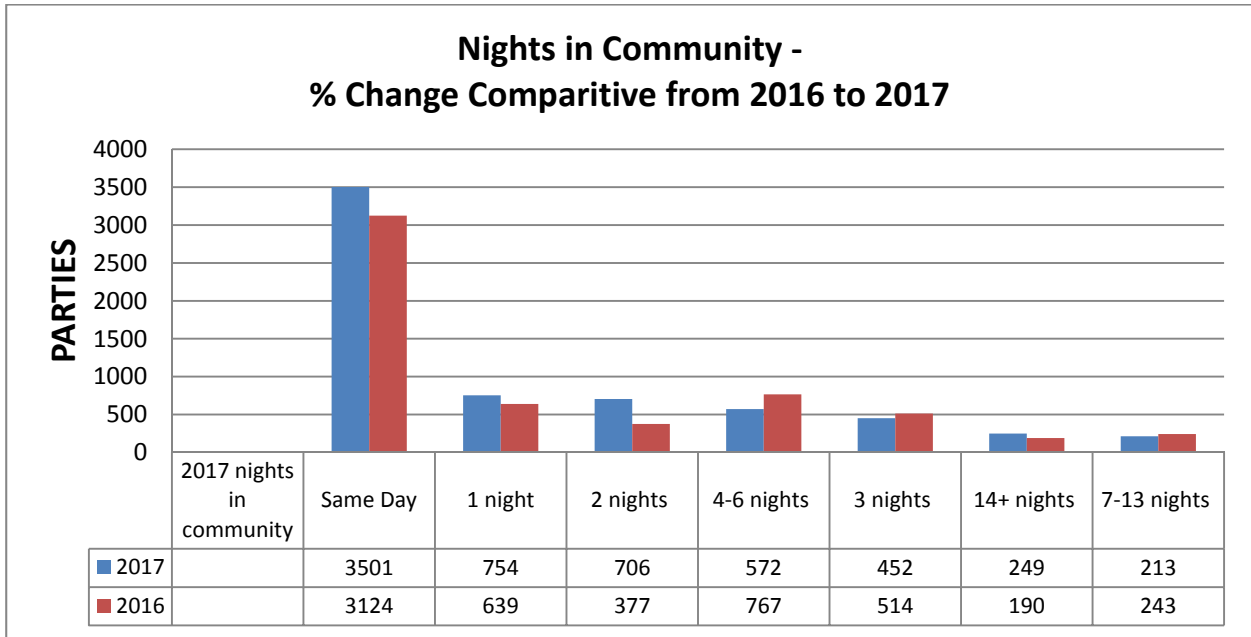
The following chart shows BC residents continue to represent the slightly higher number of visitors 38%. It also shows strong support for the Visitor Centre and the Comox Valley. This is in line with the increase of BC residents vacationing within the province. The next highest percentages of visitors are those from the local Comox Valley Region (32%). This holds true that many local residents bring out-of-town guests to get information for their stay or just to browse the grounds and exhibition gallery. Europe is, once again, the 3rd highest Visitor Origin into the centre (10%). You can see the breakdown of visitors by origin shown in the chart below:



Nights in Community

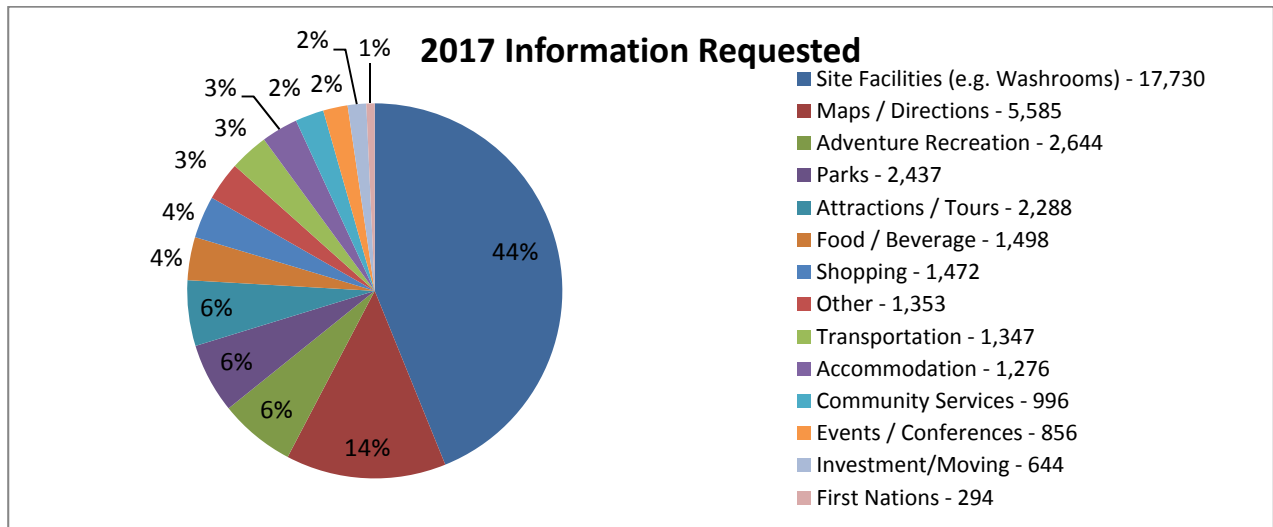
Other information about the parties who visited the Centre is shown in the charts below. The following chart shows the number of nights spent in the local community by visitor party. It is typical in visitor centres across BC that the largest group (53% provincially), are same day visitors. These are visitors who are passing through the area and have not spent a night locally. As with all visitors, counsellors work diligently to create a positive first impression and encourage longer stays and repeat visits. In 2017, 1 night and 2 night stays have increased to 754 and 706 parties, from 639 and 377 respectively, in 2016.





Information Requested

The following chart shows information requested by visitor party in 2016. It should be noted that most parties request more than one type of information, so although site facilities is the highest category, it is likely they also asked questions from other categories. After facilities requests, the highest category of information requested is Maps and Directions, in age of hand held devices and online booking and mapping tools.



Requests for information specific to the Town of Comox and City of Courtenay as follows:

	2016
Courtenay	2,136
Comox	1,749

	2017
Courtenay	2,494
Comox	2,032

Activity and Event Bookings

The following list is the activities and events on Vancouver Island bookable in 2017 by the VIVC:

49 North Helicopters	Island Gourmet Trails
Adrenaline Zipline Tours	Island Joy Rides
Aboriginal Journeys	Lady Rose Marine Services
Ambassador Transportation	Mt. Washington (lift tickets)
BC Salmon Farmers Association	Orca Spirit Adventures
BC ferries Northern Routes	Pacific Pro Dive & Marine Adventures
Campbell River WW	Royal BC Museum
Comox Harbour Charters	Stubbs Island
Discovery Marine Safaris	West Coast Water Sports
Fanny Bay Oysters	Wild Play Nanaimo
Harbour Air	Sea Smoke Whale Watching
Horne Lake Caves	

Summary

The statistics and revenues show that the Vancouver Island Visitor Centre continues to fulfill its role of improving the economic benefit of tourism to the area by promoting longer stays and return visits to prospective visitors and those who have come into the Centre.

The VIVC outreached significantly more in 2017 as compared to previous years as a result of the new Mobile Visitor Centre, which was funded through the Innovations Grant via DBC. This outreaching initiative was about extending the regions Visitor Servicing assistance & support beyond the doors of the Centres traditional brick and mortar location and bringing the services of the visitor centre to the visitor. It was to be proactive in providing Visitor Centre tools, resources and booking capacity at key events and conferences to drive increased visitation to regional attractions, businesses, as well as bookings and sales. The VIVC Staff were able to provide the same level of visitor engagement & quality service, as with the staff running the Visitor Centre. Further, staff were able to bring brochures and other collateral to have in the mobile rack, providing stakeholders additional exposure and providing more useful take away tools for the visitors. The mobile unit launched at the BC Hospital Foundation Golf Tournament, June 14. Since the Mobile Visitor Centre was established it has attended 7 events and served 20,099 parties and 30,680 visitors.

2017 was the inaugural year of a streamlined online booking system, which proved to be very successful. This ultimately allowed the supplier to receive quicker confirmation of their products and services being booked through the VIVC, the customer could book as they plan their trips and it allowed the entire team to generate efficient reports.

Trip Advisor Reviews

Below is sample of 35 reviews, and the team's replies, from the VIVC Trip Advisor page. This shows that that the Centre is continuing to surpass visitor expectations and is leaving them with a memorable impression of their time spent at the VIVC:



sueward2408
Nanaimo,
Canada
2



Reviewed 16 October 2017 via mobile

Excellent stop

Lovely building. Helpful staff. Clean washrooms. Interesting exhibits. Nice gift shop. Definitely a worthwhile stop.

Thank sueward2408

VIVC-CV, Visitor Information Counsellor at Vancouver Island Visitor Centre, responded to this review

Responded 23 October 2017

Thank you for your kind review of our establishment



Gail P
Oliver, British
Columbia
175 76



Reviewed 14 October 2017

Knowledgeable people work here!

This is a large information centre serving visitors to the Comox valley and other island attractions. The staff are friendly and very helpful. The gift shop is well presented with local arts and crafts plus souvenir specials depicting Canada. The whole area including washrooms is... [More](#)

Thank Gail P

VIVC-CV, Visitor Information Counsellor at Vancouver Island Visitor Centre, responded to this review

Responded 23 October 2017

Thank you for your kind review, we love what we do and play "tourist" in our own back yard so we are better informed to help visitors.



Rudi W
Nanoose Bay,
British
Columbia,
Canada
12 1



Reviewed 7 October 2017 via mobile

Friendly service

Stopped in and were warmly greeted and staff was helpful with variety of suggestions of what we could do while in the area.

Thank Rudi W

VIVC-CV, Tourism Information Counselor at Vancouver Island Visitor Centre at Vancouver Island Visitor Centre, responded to this review

Responded 9 October 2017

Thanks for stopping in and hope you had a chance to check out the other suggestions we gave to you.



Wayne C
Parksville,
Canada

61 18



Reviewed 12 September 2017

walking trails

very informed people they now there work they now all there is to do on vancouver island .a must stop if you need help . [More](#)

Thank Wayne C

VIVC-CV, Tourism Information Counselor at Vancouver Island Visitor Centre, responded to this review

Responded 15 September 2017

Hi Wayne, Thanks for taking the time to write your feedback. We take pride in being able to help visitors with all their information needs, both here in the Comox Valley and on the Island as a whole. Drop by any time you are going... [More](#)



TRCD
Toronto,
Canada

12 13



Reviewed 24 August 2017 via mobile

Great place

We visited and found it to have a great little gift shop and clean washrooms. It was a nice place to take a quick break.

Thank TRCD

VIVC-CV, Tourism Information Counselor at Vancouver Island Visitor Centre, responded to this review

Responded 3 September 2017

Thanks for dropping in to the visitor centre and taking the time to share your experience. We take pride in our clean washrooms and glad you let us know they were up to snuff! See you on your next visit.



spud0018
Mississauga,
Canada

299 69



Reviewed 5 August 2017

Great New Centre

New information centre - great restroom facilities, gift shop and display on the area. Glad we stopped.

Thank spud0018

VIVC-CV, Visitor Information Counselor at Vancouver Island Visitor Centre, responded to this review

Responded 3 September 2017

Hello, thanks for taking the time to give us your feedback! We hope you enjoyed your trip to the Island and look forward to welcoming you again.



sarah_qb
Qualicum
Beach, Canada
3

5 Reviewed 26 June 2017

perfect first stop for a day trip to Courtenay

Stopped here on the way into Courtenay to get some advice on places to see. Staff were very knowledgeable and provided some great recommendations. Displays were an added bonus.

Thank sarah_qb

VIVC-CV, Tourism Information Counsellor at Vancouver Island Visitor Centre, responded to this review

Responded 30 June 2017

Hello Sarah, Many thanks for the kind words. I'm very glad we were able to help you with your Courtenay day trip. Drop in anytime when you are going by.



roaminggreeds
rochester, ny
2 3

5 Reviewed 4 January 2017

spontaneous day in vancouver

i found myself with a 12 hr layover at the vancouver airport. Rather than sit around all day, I took a train to the last stop which was the water, to see what I could see. It just so happened that the tourism visitor center... [More](#)

2 Thank roaminggreeds

VIVC-CV, Travel Counsellor at Vancouver Island Visitor Centre, responded to this review
Responded 6 January 2017

Thank you for writing a wonderful review but I just wanted to let you know that you posted it to the wrong Visitor Centre. It should be for the Tourism Vancouver Visitor Centre on Burrard Street in Down town Vancouver. They would be thrilled to... [More](#)



Frogbox
Los Angeles,
CA
4 9

5 Reviewed 25 September 2016 via mobile

Fantastic place

Really helpful staff, wonderful small exhibits, nice little gift shop. Very glad I stopped in and found some off the beaten track spots to explore! [More](#)

Thank Frogbox

VIVC-CV, Tourist Information Counselor at Vancouver Island Visitor Centre, responded to this review

Responded 8 October 2016

Hello, Thanks for visiting the Comox Valley and stopping in to see us at the Visitor Centre. Our staff prides itself on its expert local knowledge and we're so glad our advice was helpful to you in your exploring. Thank you for taking the time... [More](#)