

Vancouver Island Visitor Centre (VIVC) Comox Valley Annual Report – 2016



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Visitor Statistics	3
Visitor Origin.....	4
True Visitor Parties	4
Nights in Community	5
Information Requested	5
Activity and Event Bookings	6
Summary.....	7
TripAdvisor Reviews	7

Introduction

The Vancouver Island Visitor Centre (VIVC) continues to experience steady growth and visitation at the Centre compares positively to visitation throughout the Region. In 2016 the VIVC welcomed 30,071 visitors, which are up from 2015's total of 27,799 numbers of visitors, an 8% increase over last year. True visitor parties into the building continue to rise. This year proved to show an impressive increase of 9%. Europeans represent the third highest Visitor Origin to visit the Centre. Online activity bookings through the newly implemented REZGO online booking system and Boardroom and Facility bookings also saw increases. TripAdvisor reviews continue to show a high level of guest satisfaction for visitors using the Centre.

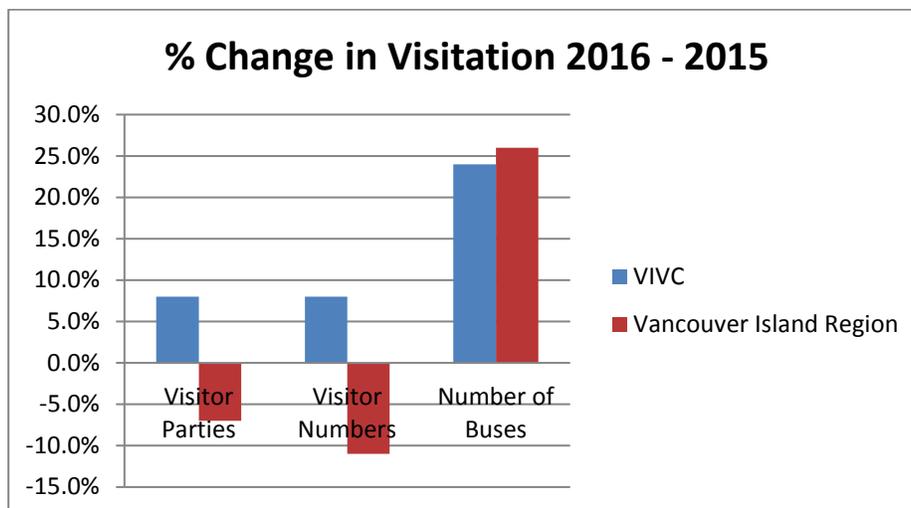
Visitor Statistics

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 2015:

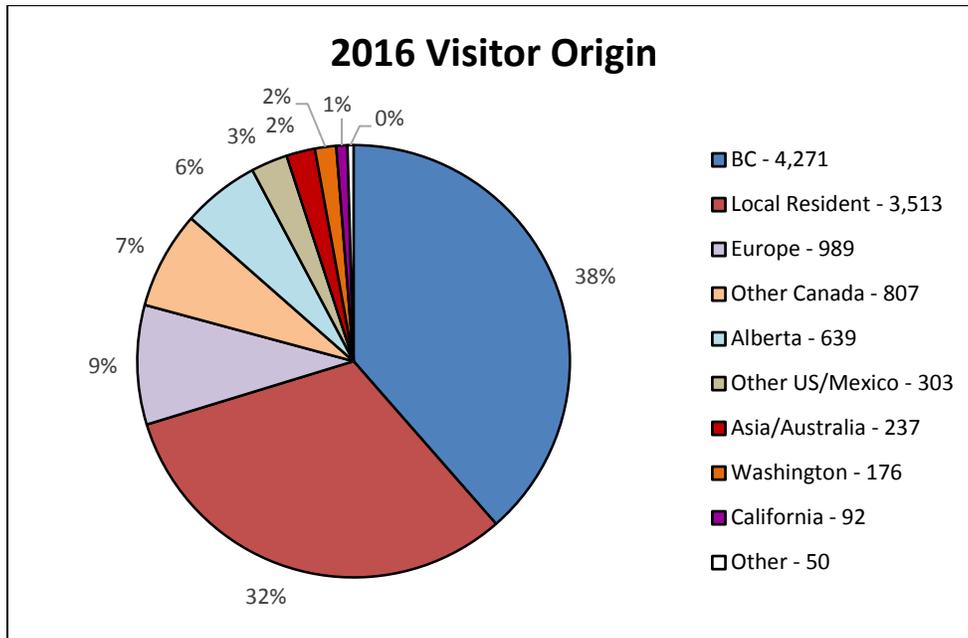
Statistics	2016	2015	% Change
Total Visitor Parties	18,205	16,988	7%
Local Parties	3,528	3,568	-1%
True Visitor Parties	14,677	13,428	9%
Visitor Numbers	28,825	26,659	8%
Number of Buses	38	28	26%

The following chart shows the changes in visitor parties, visitor numbers and buses for the Vancouver Island Visitor Centre compared to all visitor centres in the Vancouver Island Tourism Region:



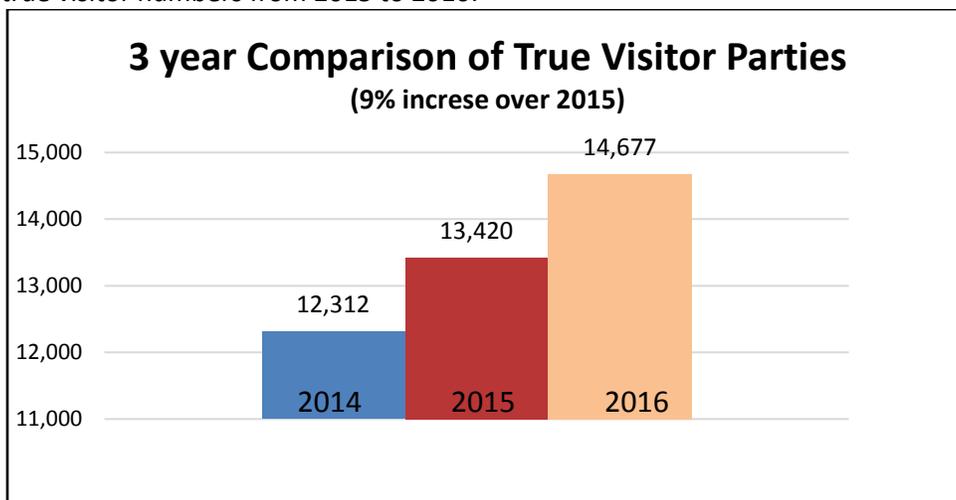
Visitor Origin

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. It is very interesting to point out that Europe is, once again, the 3rd highest Visitor Origin into the centre (9%). You can see the breakdown of visitors by origin shown in the graph below:



True Visitor Parties

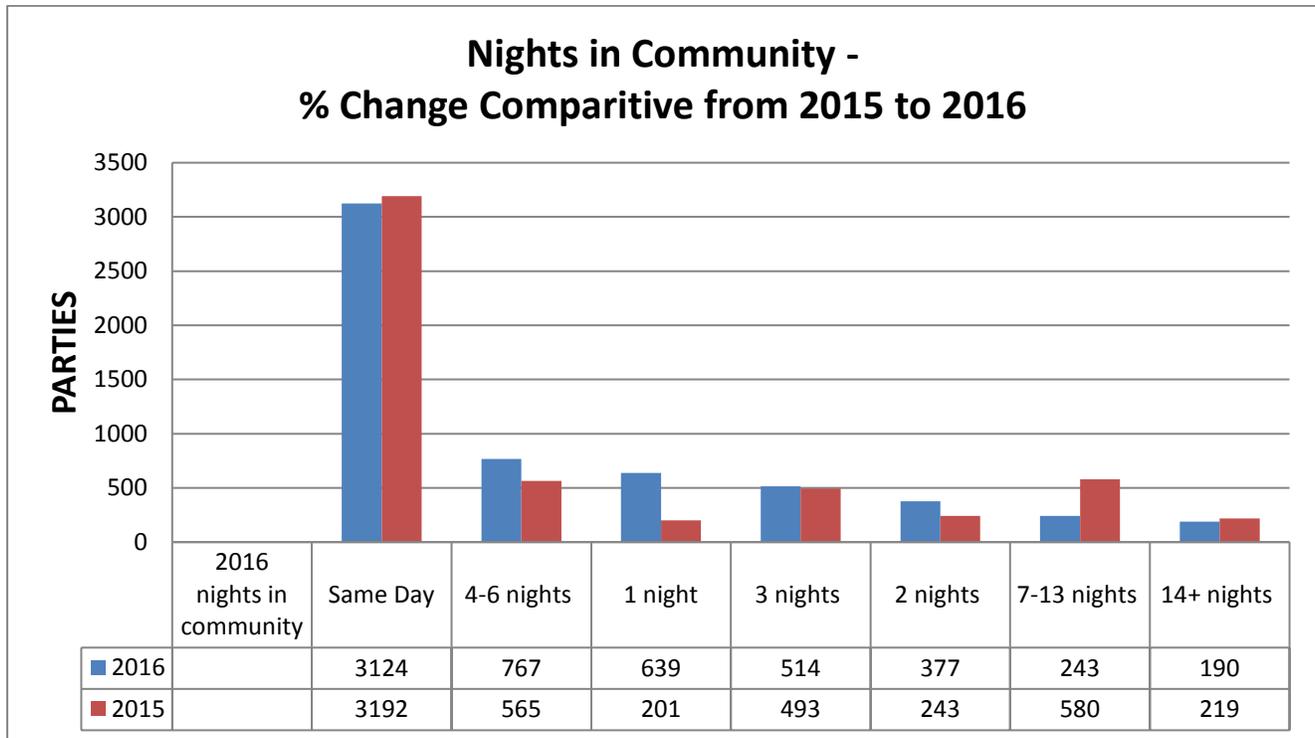
Although the number of local parties declined slightly in 2016, the visitation from true visitors has increased significantly by 9% which allows the staff at the VIVC to encourage longer stays and promote the bookable products available to visitors through the centre. The following chart shows 3 year comparison, and subsequently, the increase in true visitor numbers from 2015 to 2016:



Nights in Community

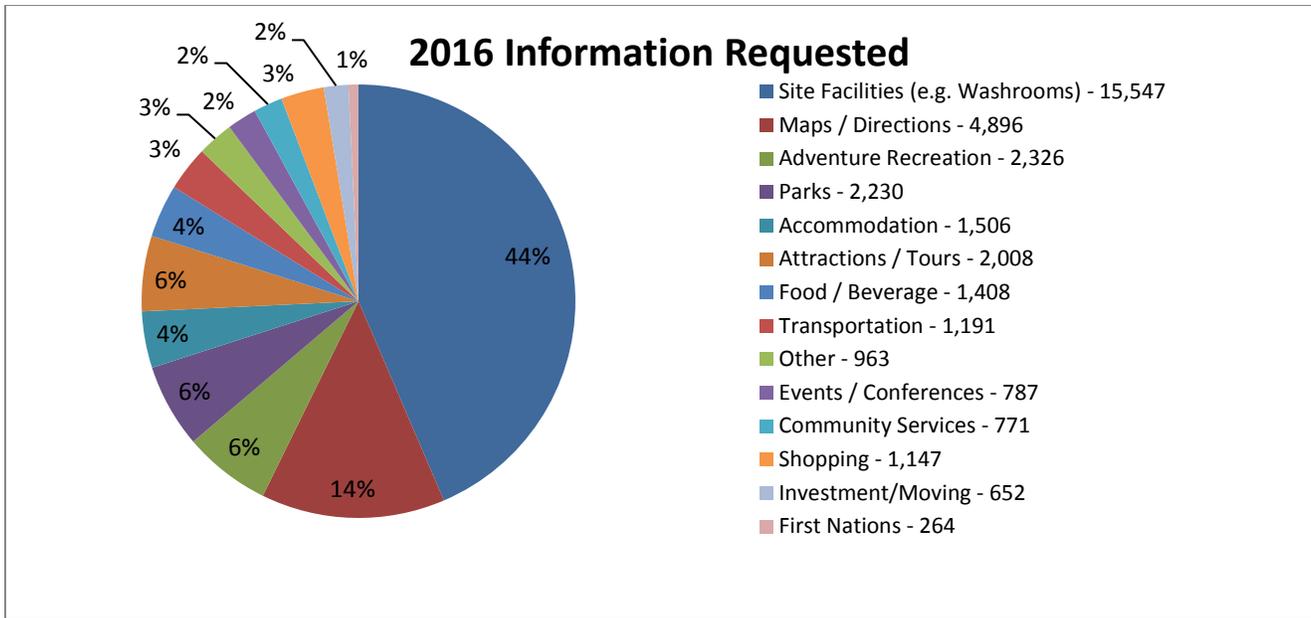
Other information about the parties who visited the Centre is shown in the charts below:

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. 4-6 nights has increased to 767 parties from 580 in 2015.



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 that after these visitors located and used the facility required, they also asked questions from other categories. When washroom facilities are not taken into account, the highest category of information requested is Maps and Directions, in age of hand held devices and online booking and mapping tools.



Of the three major communities in the Comox Valley, Courtenay is the most inquired about City.

	2016
Courtenay	2,090
Cumberland	1,762
Comox	1,706

	2015
Courtenay	1,659
Cumberland	1,523
Comox	1,463

Activity and Event Bookings

The VIVC team anticipates an increase for 2016 as more suppliers province wide have been contacted earlier than usual, resulting in signed contracts. Another contributing factor to the decrease, experienced province wide, was due the drought and forest fire conditions. Travellers were not booking in advance with visitor centres, but instead were booking direct with suppliers.

The following list is the activities and events on Vancouver Island bookable in 2016 by the Vancouver Island Visitor Centre:

- Ambassador Transportation
- BC Salmon Farmers Association
- BC ferries Northern Routes
- Campbell River WW
- Comox Harbour Charters
- Discovery Marine Safaris
- Fanny Bay Oysters
- Harbour Air
- Horne Lake Caves
- Island Gourmet Trails
- Island Joy Rides

- Lady Rose Marine Services
- Mt. Washington (lift tickets)
- Orca Spirit Adventures
- Pacific Pro Dive & Marine Adventures
- Royal BC Museum
- Stubbs Island
- West Coast Water Sports
- Wild Play Nanaimo
- Sea Smoke Whale Watching
- Aboriginal Journeys

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 region by promoting longer stays and return visits to prospective visitors and those who have come into the Centre.

This year saw a renewed focus on the Vancouver Island Visitor Centre being the point of sale for visitors and locals alike with the integration of a streamlined online booking system, which proved to be very successful, extending the reach of visitors services and allowing visitors to book tours and events from anywhere in the world. The online booking system also empowered the tour operators the centre has Booking Agreements with, by allowing the supplier to receive quicker confirmation of their products and services being booked through the VIVC.

TripAdvisor Reviews

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



Frogbox
Los Angeles, CA
Level 1 Contributor
4 reviews
9 helpful votes

"Fantastic place"

★★★★★ Reviewed 25 September 2016 via mobile

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!

Visited September 2016

Helpful?

Thank Frogbox

Report

[Ask Frogbox about Vancouver Island Visitor Centre](#)

This review is the subjective opinion of a TripAdvisor member and not of TripAdvisor LLC

VIVC-CV, Tourist Information Counselor at Vancouver Island Visitor Centre, responded to this review, 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 to post such a positive review. We appreciate your feedback.

[Report response as inappropriate](#)

This response is the subjective opinion of the management representative and not of TripAdvisor LLC



Vivian E
Nanaimo, British Columbia
Level 3 Contributor

- 19 reviews
- 10 attraction reviews
- 1 helpful vote

“Stopped to find out what was happening in Comox”

Reviewed 2 August 2016 via mobile

I think this visitor centre was the best one I have ever visited. They had areas for resting, items to buy for gifts or keep sakes, but the most interesting part of this centre was the area they setup telling you all about the local attractions. The different type of trees in the area, what a average snow fall would look like at the ski hill, water life and other interesting facts for that area. Very clean and staff very friendly. Worth the time, plus gives you a rest from driving.

Visited August 2016

Less ▲

Helpful?

[Ask Vivian E about Vancouver Island Visitor Centre](#)

This review is the subjective opinion of a TripAdvisor member and not of TripAdvisor LLC

Linda Y, Manager at Vancouver Island Visitor Centre, responded to this review, 12 August 2016

We thank you for taking the time to write such a great review! Our staff are passionate about this this building and the diverse activities and attractions our area has to offer, and are delighted we were able to share that with you. For more events, attractions and activities in our area please feel free to visit our website or Facebook page. We hope to see you again!

[Report response as inappropriate](#)

This response is the subjective opinion of the management representative and not of TripAdvisor LLC



Via_girl
Qualicum Beach, Canada
Level 6 Contributor

- 386 reviews
- 243 attraction reviews
- 348 helpful votes

“It's like a mini amusement park”

Reviewed 5 August 2016

There's more than tourist information here. This building has beautiful displays, a playground and picnic area. The walls are adorned with First Nation's art. Watch for the entrance as you drive off the main highway into Courtenay. A Tutor Aircraft mounted in front is something to see too.

Check their website and download the self-guided tour before going.



Visited May 2016

Helpful?

[Ask Via_girl about Vancouver Island Visitor Centre](#)

This review is the subjective opinion of a TripAdvisor member and not of TripAdvisor LLC

Linda Y, Manager at Vancouver Island Visitor Centre, responded to this review, 12 August 2016

Thank you for taking the time to write a wonderful review for us. We do have unique and interactive displays in our exhibit gallery for everyone to enjoy. We are proud of our First Nation's art and are delighted to hear you enjoyed your trip up Island to our visitor centre. We are open 7 days a week and look forward to welcoming you again.

[Report response as inappropriate](#)

This response is the subjective opinion of the management representative and not of TripAdvisor LLC



Double0Seven
SE Washington State
Level 5 Contributor

- 82 reviews
- 11 attraction reviews
- 31 helpful votes

“Great introduction to the area”

Reviewed 1 August 2016

A well-designed and staffed Visitor Centre that drew us into helpful information about the area. The museum area provides attractive, up-to-date displays focused on information and attractions of interest to travelers. The focus is on the area as it currently exists rather than on history. Very well done. Impressive.

Visited July 2016

Helpful?

Thank Double0Seven

Report

[Ask Double0Seven about Vancouver Island Visitor Centre](#)

This review is the subjective opinion of a TripAdvisor member and not of TripAdvisor LLC

Linda Y, Manager at Vancouver Island Visitor Centre, responded to this review, 12 August 2016

Thank you for taking time to write such a glowing review. The team here are happy to hear you received great information on our area during your recent visit to Canada. We invite you to stay in touch and follow us on Facebook and visit our web site. We are open 7 days a week year round so if you return to our area, we look forward to the opportunity we may have to welcome you back.

[Report response as inappropriate](#)

This response is the subjective opinion of the management representative and not of TripAdvisor LLC



blatchp
Marlborough, United Kingdom
Level 5 Contributor

- 66 reviews
- 23 attraction reviews
- 25 helpful votes

“Best place for information”

Reviewed 5 July 2016

Great stop-off with a very friendly staff member who helped us greatly in advising us on local walks and attractions. Easy to find and park. Small coffee machine and some food I think, but plenty of seating - we were lucky to be in fine weather when we visited and sat outside the rear of the centre where it was very relaxing. We'd say make this your priority if visiting the area.

Visited May 2016

Less ▲

Helpful?

Thank blatchp

Report

[Ask blatchp about Vancouver Island Visitor Centre](#)

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