



Parks  
Canada

Parcs  
Canada

Canada



# Gulf of Georgia Cannery

National Historic Site of Canada

Management Plan

2024





2024

# Gulf of Georgia Cannery

National Historic Site of Canada

## Management Plan



© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, represented by the President & Chief Executive Officer of Parks Canada, 2024.

GULF OF GEORGIA CANNERY NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA MANAGEMENT PLAN, 2024.

Paper: R64-620/2024E  
978-0-660-72807-0

PDF: R64-620/2024E-PDF  
978-0-660-72806-3

*Cette publication est aussi disponible en français.*

For more information about the management plan or about  
**GULF OF GEORGIA CANNERY NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA:**

Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site of Canada  
12138 Fourth Ave  
Richmond, British Columbia, V7E 3J1

Tel: 604-513-4777  
Email: [fort.langley@pc.gc.ca](mailto:fort.langley@pc.gc.ca)  
[www.parks.canada.ca/lhn-nhs/bc/georgia](http://www.parks.canada.ca/lhn-nhs/bc/georgia)

*Front cover image credits  
top from left to right: Parks Canada  
bottom: Parks Canada*

## Foreword



As the steward of national historic sites, national parks, and national marine conservation areas in Canada, Parks Canada is committed to protecting and restoring the ecological and commemorative integrity of protected heritage areas from coast to coast to coast.

We are committed to work with, learn from, and share leadership with Indigenous peoples and elders who have walked the land since time immemorial and who have made possible the creation of so many protected places.

We acknowledge and appreciate the key role that x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) First Nation, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society and neighbouring communities play in helping Parks Canada to fulfill its mandate, on behalf of Canadians, including many collaborations aimed at protecting ecological and commemorative integrity and the provision of natural and cultural tourism related services for visitors to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site.

We are proud to collaborate with Indigenous partners, local and regional residents and interest-holders, visitors past and present, and with interested people and parties from across the country.

Together, we strive to ensure heritage places in Canada are welcoming and include diverse voices and perspectives. We invite all Canadians to these sites to discover nature and connect with the rich and varied history in Canada.

As the key accountability documents for the management of heritage places, management plans are developed through extensive consultation. These plans articulate long-term visions, set strategic management directions and establish objectives for Parks Canada administered places.

I would like to thank everyone involved in the development of this management plan for their contributions and their commitment to the future of this special place. I am pleased to present the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site Management Plan.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Hallman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a period at the end.

Ron Hallman  
*President & Chief Executive Officer*  
*Parks Canada*



## Recommendations

*Recommended by:*



---

Andrew Campbell  
*Senior Vice-President  
Operations Directorate*



---

Mark LeBlanc  
*Superintendent  
Coastal British Columbia Field Unit*





## **Executive summary**

The Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site sits on the traditional ancestral lands and waters of x̣məθḳəỵəm (Musqueam) in Metro Vancouver on the South Arm of the Fraser River along the Strait of Georgia. The site is located in the community of Steveston in Richmond, British Columbia.

In 1976, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada recognised the West Coast fishing industry from the 1870s to the modern era as a national historic event due to its cultural traditions, economic significance, international reach, and involvement of people from many origins. Along with the national historic event designation, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery was recognised as an appropriate place to commemorate the West Coast fishing industry.

This management plan outlines the objectives and direction set for Parks Canada, which are informed by x̣məθḳəỵəm (Musqueam) First Nation and the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society and are advanced within respective roles and responsibilities agreed upon together. While Parks Canada owns the physical structures of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery and provides a level of annual operating funds to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society, it is the Society that operates the site on a day-to-day basis according to their own internal strategic plan, including events, programming, retail activities, fundraising, and collections.

The management plan focuses on three key strategies that will guide the management of the national historic site. The plan presents a 15 to 20-year vision for the site, and outlines strategies and objectives that support the vision.

### **Key Strategy 1: Working with communities**

- This strategy focuses on the importance of collaboration and relationships that support the success of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery.

### **Key Strategy 2: Conserving cultural heritage**

- This strategy focuses on the conservation of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery’s cultural resources—built heritage (buildings), equipment, collections and artifacts—for the benefit of current and future generations, as part of the network of protected heritage places in Canada.

### **Key Strategy 3: A place that reflects Canada and the world**

- This strategy focuses on reaching the local community, Canadians, and international visitors through new and meaningful visitor experiences, outreach activities, and community events.



## Table of Contents

Foreword .....	iii
Recommendations .....	v
Executive summary .....	vii
1.0 Introduction.....	1
2.0 Significance of Gulf of Georgia National Historic Site .....	1
3.0 Planning context .....	4
4.0 Development of the management plan.....	8
5.0 Vision .....	9
6.0 Key strategies .....	9
7.0 Summary of strategic environmental assessment .....	13
 <b>Maps</b>	
Map 1: Gulf of Georgia Cannery location in Metro Vancouver .....	2
Map 2: Regional setting .....	4
Map 3: Site map of Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site.....	6



## 1.0 Introduction

Parks Canada administers one of the finest and most extensive systems of protected natural and historic places in the world. Parks Canada's mandate is to protect and present these places for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. Future-oriented, strategic management of each national historic site, national park, national marine conservation area, and heritage canal administered by Parks Canada supports its vision:

*Canada's treasured natural and historic places will be a living legacy, connecting hearts and minds to a stronger, deeper understanding of the very essence of Canada.*

The *Parks Canada Agency Act* requires Parks Canada to prepare a management plan for national historic sites administered by Parks Canada. The *Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan*, once approved by the President & Chief Executive Officer of Parks Canada, ensures Parks Canada's accountability to Canadians, outlining how historic site management will achieve measurable results in support of its mandate.

The x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) are important to the stewardship of this heritage place, with connections to the lands and waters since time immemorial. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society leads visitor operations and collaborates with Parks Canada on site management. Indigenous communities, partners, interest-holders and the public were involved in preparing the management plan, helping to shape the future direction of the national historic site. The plan sets a clear, strategic direction for the management and operation of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site, by articulating a vision, key strategies, objectives, and targets. Parks Canada will report annually on progress toward achieving the plan objectives and will review the plan every ten years, or sooner if required.

This plan is not an end in and of itself. Parks Canada will maintain an open dialogue on the implementation of the management plan to ensure that it remains relevant and meaningful. The plan will serve as the focus for ongoing engagement and—where appropriate—consultation, on the management of Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site in years to come.

## 2.0 Significance of Gulf of Georgia National Historic Site

The Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site is situated on the traditional ancestral lands and waters of x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), in an area which was built atop of x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) seasonal village sites known as q'weya? xw (Garry Point) and qwle'yem (Driftwood place) (Map 1). The Fraser River estuary has been an important source for fishing, hunting, trapping, and gathering since well before European contact and colonial harvesting.

x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) continue to practice their traditions and culture today. They have knowledge to share about their deep cultural connections to the lands, waters, resources, and activities. Therefore, it is important that the site presents the cultural and historic setting of the area now known as Steveston, including the use and occupancy of the Fraser River estuary in the times before the development of a European colonial resource extraction industry and fishing canneries.

Acknowledging the impact of colonialism on Indigenous peoples is a critical part of healing and a step toward reconciliation. Parks Canada's priority is to support Indigenous peoples in sharing their history and experiences, and to welcome more narratives, perspectives, and voices to be heard. Sharing these histories and interrelated themes at Gulf of Georgia Cannery are guided by Parks Canada's *Framework for History and Commemoration: National Historic Sites System Plan (2019)*. This framework highlights an inclusive, accessible, and engaging approach to Canada's history and will guide the interpretation plan that considers the site's values and opportunities, in addition to acknowledging the reasons for designation as a national historic site.

Map 1: Gulf of Georgia Cannery location in Metro Vancouver



### Historical industrial prominence

Steveston rose to industrial prominence in the early 1870s as cannery and port facilities expanded along the Fraser River. Canneries were constructed in the Steveston area to take advantage of the Fraser River's sockeye salmon runs, which through canning, could be preserved for sale to emerging global markets. The salmon fishery further expanded through to the 1890s as companies secured capital to build major canning and packinghouse facilities. The buildings were constructed in 1894, during this era of rapid growth for Canada's colonial fishing industry. While the canning industry in British Columbia started with sockeye salmon from the Fraser River, it quickly spread up the central and north coast and on Vancouver Island. In the early 1900s, close to 100 canneries were operating in British Columbia, including 15 canneries in the Steveston area.



In its prime, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery was known as the Monster Cannery, being the largest building of its kind and the leading producer of canned salmon. Between 1894 and 1979, it operated as a salmon cannery, a raw fish depot, and a net loft and repair facility for the Canadian Fishing Company. In its later years, it was a herring cannery and reduction plant (where fish or fish parts were “reduced” to produce fish oils and fishmeal used in vitamin supplements for humans and in feed for animals). For long-time residents of Steveston, the smell of the herring reduction process has a strong association with the Gulf of Georgia Cannery.

### **Reasons for designation**

Fishing is vitally important to people on Canada’s west coast. Since time immemorial, First Nations on the west coast have relied on fishing as integral to their cultures and the well-being of their communities. Due to its cultural traditions, economic significance, international reach, and the involvement of people from many origins, the West Coast fishing industry from the 1870s to the modern era was recognised in 1976 as a national historic event by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. Along with the national historic event designation, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery was recognised as an appropriate place to commemorate the West Coast fishing industry. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery was transferred to Parks Canada from the Department of Fisheries in 1984. A group of concerned, heritage-conscious citizens were instrumental in galvanizing support for the designation of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery as a national historic site because they saw the need to save a piece of their local history. This group helped form the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society in 1986 to help conserve and present the cannery.

Constructed on timber pilings over the south arm of the Fraser River, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery is recognised for its historical, architectural, and environmental values, and is designated a classified heritage building by the Federal Heritage Building Review Office, which assists federal government departments and agencies in the protection of heritage buildings.

In addition to these reasons for designation, several complementary elements are integral to helping Canadians understand the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site’s significance:

- its location on the water at the mouth of the Fraser River, which has been one of the most important fishing harbours on the west coast since time immemorial;
- the evolution of fishing methods and processing technologies in the development of the industry as well as the buildings and equipment that reflect the industry’s development and innovation; and,
- the contributions made by people of many origins to the industry, including the roles of:
  - First Nations communities in the pre-industrial era, in fishing for industrial canneries and in working in canneries;
  - Chinese workers in processing plants;
  - Japanese people as boat builders, and in fishing and processing;
  - Persons of European origin in the fishing industry; and,
  - Women from various cultural communities in the fishing industry, including to replace male workers during the two world wars.

In the 1830s, the overseas export of salted salmon in barrels began. The connection between the West Coast fishing industry and global commerce is also presented through interconnected stories at Fort Langley National Historic Site, located approximately 50 kilometres upriver from Steveston (Map 2).

The Gulf of Georgia Cannery, one of the Pacific Coast’s few remaining salmon canneries from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is now a national historic site located in Metro Vancouver, British Columbia, on the South Arm of the Fraser River along the Strait of Georgia (Maps 1 and 2). Other related national historic site designations in British Columbia include the North Pacific Cannery and Britannia Shipyards. The North Pacific Cannery National Historic Site, located on the province’s northwest coast at the mouth of the Skeena River, was also designated a national historic site because of its association with the West Coast fishing industry. Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site, located in Steveston, commemorates the large complex of workshops and dwellings that served the shore-based salmon fishery and the diverse communities that lived and worked to support the West Coast fishing industry.

Map 2: Regional setting



While visitors to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery are immersed specifically in the post-1870s era of the industry as well as the development and evolution of canning operations, the deep historical and cultural connections that many First Nations have with west coast fisheries and canneries are also a significant part of the stories presented at the site. The Fraser River is designated as a Canadian Heritage River, which flows from the Rocky Mountains near Jasper National Park to the Pacific Ocean running right past and underneath the Gulf of Georgia Cannery.

### 3.0 Planning context

Situated on the traditional ancestral lands and waters of  $x^w m \theta k^w \dot{a} y \dot{a} m$  (Musqueam), the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site is located in the community of Steveston in the city of Richmond within Metro Vancouver (Map 1). The site is located less than an hour away from most locations in Metro Vancouver. The site is accessible by road and public transportation while water access is permitted to commercial, working, and pleasure vessels.

Over the past ten years, the city of Richmond has grown significantly and is currently the fourth most populous municipality in Metro Vancouver. It is home to diverse ethnocultural communities, with approximately 80 percent of the population classified as a “visible minority.”<sup>1</sup> This is the second-highest

<sup>1</sup> Defined by the Government of Canada’s Employment Equity Act as “persons, other than [Indigenous] peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.”

percentage among Canadian municipalities. Within this diverse population, the Chinese community is the largest, not only in Richmond but among all Canadian municipalities.<sup>2</sup>

Steveston is an important representation of British Columbia's fishing industry and much of the waterfront remains devoted to fishing and related activities. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery forms part of a heritage area recognised by the City of Richmond, which includes the Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site. School groups can visit both national historic sites, experiencing the work-related history at Gulf of Georgia Cannery and the home lives of workers at Britannia Shipyards. Visitors often spend time along Steveston Harbour, visiting the Fisherman's Wharf, shops, or local restaurants. A visit to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery ties the experiences together.

This management plan outlines the objectives and direction set for Parks Canada, which are informed by x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) First Nation and the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society and are advanced within respective roles and responsibilities agreed upon together. While Parks Canada owns the physical structures of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery and provides a level of annual operating funds to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society, it is the Society that operates the site on a day-to-day basis according to their own internal strategic plan, including events, programming, retail activities, fundraising, and collections. Parks Canada and the Society work together through several committees to ensure the Parks Canada Management Plan and the Society's strategic plan are harmonious and advance shared objectives.

### **Relationships with First Nations**

Parks Canada places a high priority on building effective relationships with local First Nations. At the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, a relationship with x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) is particularly important, because it sits on their traditional territory. x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) First Nation and their leadership expressed interest in working more closely with Parks Canada and determining how best to collaborate on areas of mutual interest. Parks Canada will continue discussions with x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) on how best to collaborate in the future.

The location of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery on x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) traditional territory was a place of harvest and gathering for many other First Nations since time immemorial, and those stories, part of the commemoration of the site, also have a place in the overall narrative of the story of the West Coast fishing industry.

### **Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society**

The Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society (the Society), a non-profit organisation incorporated in 1986, is dedicated to working in close collaboration with Parks Canada to conserve the Gulf of Georgia Cannery and to manage the day-to-day operations and revenues. The relationship between Parks Canada and the Society, supported through a series of collaborative and financial agreements, has been in place since 1996 and continues to reflect the high level of community support that led to the initial heritage designations and the first management plan. This is a unique relationship within the Parks Canada framework, as the Gulf of Georgia Cannery is one of the few heritage places operated by a non-profit organisation.

The Society has been the full-time operator of the site since 2000 with responsibility for the day-to-day aspects of site operations such as visitor services and programs. Parks Canada retains responsibility for conservation efforts such as major capital repairs and renovations.

The Society is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors who meet regularly. Board members chair a variety of operational committees. The Society and its board members host annual fundraisers, with proceeds supporting Gulf of Georgia Cannery operations. The Society continues to maintain strong relationships with community partners, such as the Steveston Harbour Authority, the City of Richmond, Tourism Richmond, the Steveston Merchants Association, and the Steveston Historical Society, as well as with elected officials at all levels of government.

---

<sup>2</sup> City of Richmond. (July 2023). *Ethnocultural Hot Facts*. Retrieved from the City of Richmond website: [https://www.richmond.ca/\\_shared/assets/2006\\_Ethnicity200987.pdf](https://www.richmond.ca/_shared/assets/2006_Ethnicity200987.pdf)

### Japanese Canadian and Chinese Canadian communities

Japanese Canadian and Chinese Canadian cultural groups, including families with direct connections to local canneries, maintain a passionate interest in the history of Steveston's fishing industry. Driven by their personal connections, many members of Japanese Canadian and Chinese Canadian communities provide ongoing generous support to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, sharing knowledge, photographs, and other records. These cultural groups play a key role in continuing to improve the stories shared at the site. The Society works to maintain strong relationships with related community and academic institutions and collaborates with organisations such as the National Nikkei Museum, the Steveston Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre, and the Chinese Canadian Museum.

### Buildings and exhibits

The Gulf of Georgia Cannery is made up of a complex of wood frame buildings and heavy timber construction, supported, for the most part, by wooden pilings. The scale of the buildings, tank deck, and wharf make the Gulf of Georgia Cannery a significant presence in the community, and an excellent representation of the West Coast fishing industry. The assembly of wooden buildings represents a range of functional structures, utilitarian design, and special purpose equipment that define the character of the national historic site and contribute to its commemorative integrity.

While the original cannery buildings were constructed in 1894, the associated buildings changed over time. As the industry evolved, adaptations and additions were required, and considerable changes were made up to 1964, including those needed to support the shift from canning fish to producing oils. The history of these buildings and processes is presented as visitors tour the site to explore the canning line, reduction plant, and other exhibits (Map 3). The intriguing names of these spaces alone evoke the noisy and bustling environment of fish processing: Boiler House, Ice House, vitamin oil shed, sliming table, iron butcher, gang knives, cookers, separators, evaporators, and the "Stinkeroo" (odour control). In addition, because the Gulf of Georgia Cannery is a massive, old, industrial building, the exhibit space is unheated. The cold adds an authentic feel in terms of appreciating the experiences of cannery workers, however, the cool interior environment limits enjoyment for some visitors and the use of the space for private events.

Map 3: Site map of Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>A</b> Main Cannery Building                          | <b>I</b> Stinkeroo  |
| <b>B</b> East Wing of Main Cannery Building (Gift Shop) | <b>J</b> Oil Drum Shed  |
| <b>C</b> South Dock                                     | <b>K</b> Oil Drum Cradles   |
| <b>D</b> Ice House                                      | <b>L</b> Watchman's Shed  |
| <b>E</b> Dryer Shed                                     | <b>M</b> Lead Foundry   |
| <b>F</b> Tank Farm Deck                                 | <b>N</b> Administration Building  |
| <b>G</b> Vitamin Oil Shed                               | <b>O</b> Parking lots and other Parks Canada property   |
| <b>H</b> Grinding Shed and Sacking Facility             |  Other properties (not Parks Canada) |

Maintenance of these historic buildings and mechanical exhibits is an ongoing requirement in the management priorities at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. In the 12 years since the 2011 management plan, the Government of Canada invested over 10 million dollars in the rehabilitation of Gulf of Georgia Cannery infrastructure. Investments included over 5 million dollars for a fire suppression system and 2.5 million dollars on upgrades to the building envelope, dramatically improving the condition and the long-term security of the buildings. Recent upgrades at the site also addressed energy efficiency and seismic upgrades and included the installation of a new sanitation system. Since the *State of the Site Assessment* (Parks Canada 2018) was completed, the condition rating of the site's buildings improved from "fair" to "good."

Impacts of climate change on the buildings and cultural resources are a concern at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, with coastal erosion, rising sea levels, and intensified weather events already affecting the site. These impacts could cause cumulative effects such as damage to infrastructure, leading to higher maintenance costs or loss of cultural resources. Climate change risks are complex and affect all Parks Canada program areas. Parks Canada will need to work with management partners to consider both preventative and restorative measures to make informed decisions about asset sustainability and cultural resources at the site.

The machines, models, photographs, recordings, interactive displays, and other interpretive media on site invite visitors to learn about fish, the journey of a fish from net to can to plate, the workings of the canning line and reduction plant, and the diversity of people who worked in the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. Visitors are immersed in the sights and sounds of the West Coast fishing industry. Popular features include 3-D models of local fish species on "the fish wall," a wooden skiff, and a wheelhouse model that introduce visitors to fishing on the west coast, as well as the more industrial elements of the canning line and reduction plant.

The Society offers activities and programs for school and youth groups. Guided programs, specialised tours, and live machine demonstrations are key elements of the experience of touring the site. The permanent exhibits are complemented by a children's area and a gallery used for feature exhibits and changing displays. While visitor satisfaction remains high, the permanent exhibits at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery are over 20 years old and will need replacement.

The Society operates a gift shop that is open year-round, offering unique, local souvenirs and gifts both on site and online. The Cannery Store is well supported by the community and the sales form an important part of the Society's revenue.

### **Visitors and events**

At the time of developing this management plan, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery welcomes an average of 44,550 visitors through general admissions per year and 6,500 visitors through promotional events at no cost. Each year the Society continues to evaluate, develop and introduce new community events intended to support Parks Canada's mandate and create renewed interest in visiting the site. Current community events like *Welcoming the Sun*, which celebrates Indigenous cultures and fishing history, remain popular and strengthen connections to multicultural interests, particularly those related to seafood. Before 2020, community events accounted for approximately half of the site's overall visitation and in recent years partner-led events helped attract people to the site and strengthened the Gulf of Georgia Cannery's place in the community.

The Society maintains a website that includes online resources to make stories about the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, its collections, and the West Coast fishing industry available for global access. The website highlights personal stories about specific jobs, the roles of women, the involvement of various cultural groups, and the influence of the fishing industry on their lives, families and communities.

### **Key considerations**

This is the fourth management plan for the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site. This plan builds on the successes and lessons learned from the 2011 management plan. Based on the previous management plan's implementation, directions that emerged during the development of this management

plan, the *State of the Site Assessment* (Parks Canada 2018), and key planning considerations, management priorities include:

- **Working with x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam)** – x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) First Nation and Parks Canada have shown interest in working together on shared objectives, and discussions will continue to determine the best approach for future work.
- **Collaborative site management efforts** – The site is largely known as a Society-run attraction and sometimes visitors are unaware of its status as a national historic site administered by Parks Canada. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery’s profile as a national historic site of Canada and awareness of its connection to the greater Parks Canada network could be elevated.
- **Conserving assets and adapting to the impacts of climate change** – Heritage buildings and other assets require regular inspection, maintenance, and reinvestment in order to maintain their integrity. In addition, climate change impacts are expected to cause cumulative effects on assets and cultural resources. Working with partners and interest-holders is important to provide a better understanding of climate change impacts and helps inform future conservation responses and site management decisions on asset sustainability.
- **Managing collections** – In the *State of the Site Assessment* (Parks Canada 2018), the condition of the collections—over 7,500 archival, artifacts and library collections of Parks Canada and the Society—were not rated. Inventories and condition assessments need to be completed in order to rate these collections.
- **Relevance to the community** – Remaining relevant is crucial to maintaining visitation and community stewardship. As Steveston continues to develop, there is a concern that urban revitalisation could erode the community’s heritage charm, weakening the connection between the Gulf of Georgia Cannery and its historic significance. This could diminish its status as a major community attraction. The permanent exhibits at the site are aging and relevance to a 21<sup>st</sup>-century audience has diminished, however, Parks Canada, the Society, and First Nations will have ongoing dialogue on refreshing the exhibits and renewing personal interpretation to engage a variety of audiences with an improved visitor experience.

## 4.0 Development of the management plan

Consideration of many topics and opportunities shaped the development of this management plan, including the *State of the Site Assessment* (Parks Canada 2018), site research, supporting plans that guide site management (e.g., interpretation plan), Parks Canada’s corporate priorities, Society priorities and comments from consultation.

An introductory consultation phase helped shape the direction for the Gulf of Georgia Cannery draft management plan. In March 2020, in consideration of the global COVID-19 pandemic, Parks Canada temporarily suspended consultations related to management planning. Consultation resumed the following summer with letters of notification and invitations to participate sent to First Nations, key partners, and interest-holder groups. The purpose of the first phase of consultation was threefold: 1) introduce the planning program; 2) identify opportunities to be involved in shaping the management plan, and 3) begin discussing topics of mutual interest that might help shape the draft plan. All comments were considered as this draft plan was developed.

Representatives from partner and interest-holder groups participated in virtual meetings and discussions, and x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) First Nation provided written feedback. The focus of discussions was the Gulf of Georgia Cannery’s physical presence, the human connections to the site, the untold stories, visitor experiences, climate change, and site management. Feedback from x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) First



Nation focused on the framing and context of their traditional ancestral lands and waters in relation to the site.

A second phase of consultation was held in spring 2024 to obtain feedback on the site's draft management plan. A variety of methods was used to obtain feedback including an online survey, in-person meetings, and virtual engagement sessions to provide feedback on the draft vision, key strategies, and objectives. Participants in the in-person and virtual engagement sessions included Society volunteers and board members, representatives from the City of Richmond and Steveston Harbour Authority, local heritage practitioners and academics, members of equity-deserving groups, and the public.

All feedback provided during consultations was carefully reviewed and considered to finalise the *2024 Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site Management Plan*. Many thanks to all who participated. Feedback received helped to shape the management plan for the site.

## 5.0 Vision

The vision expresses the desired state of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site in 15 to 20 years.

The Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site protects, commemorates, presents, and promotes the interconnected and evolving histories shaped by the West Coast fishing industry. Together, Parks Canada, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society, x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) First Nation, partners, and diverse community members collaborate to fulfill this vision.

The site encourages visitors of all ages to reflect on relationships with the natural world, environmental sustainability, and each other through stories—sometimes challenging—that delve into the use of resources and social conflicts central to its historical narrative. As a portal to the past, it inspires connection through dynamic, educational and immersive experiences featuring diverse voices, particularly those of First Nations, Chinese Canadians, and Japanese Canadians, who formed the core of its historic workforce.

A vital cultural destination, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery draws visitors from near and far, serving as an anchor for tourism in the lower mainland and serving as a gateway to Richmond's experiences. The site continues to thrive, bringing energy, opportunity, and pride to Steveston, where community engagement actively supports its future stewardship.

## 6.0 Key strategies

As a long-term strategic plan, consistent with the Government of Canada's approach to results-based planning, the management plan focuses on the results that Parks Canada wants to achieve. The purpose of the management plan is not to identify ten years' worth of specific actions, but instead to provide decision makers with the priorities that will guide decisions.

The components of results-based planning work together as follows:

- Vision – describes the desired future state, setting the management direction;
- Key Strategies – present major themes, introducing management approaches and commitments;
- Objectives – identify management outcomes, indicating desired results;
- Targets – tie directly to the objectives, defining the amount of change expected; and,
- Annual Reporting – publicly communicates ongoing implementation, connecting actions to the direction set in the management plan.

Primarily working with x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əy<sup>ə</sup>m (Musqueam) First Nation and the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society, Parks Canada will make decisions to meet the targets identified in this plan. Over the ten-year timeframe, this approach allows flexibility, based on available resources, evolving priorities, and emerging opportunities. Indigenous peoples, partners, interest-holders, and the public are updated about how ongoing decisions, actions, or projects fit with the management plan through annual implementation updates and other communications.

Each key strategy contains objectives and targets to guide site management and decision-making over the next ten years. The objectives describe desired outcomes following the implementation of program activities. The targets in this plan are generally measured against 2024 levels, which serve as benchmarks derived from assessments that guided the plan's development. Wherever possible, targets are based on measurable data that are monitored through programs implemented across Parks Canada. Other benchmarks and targets may need to be established and measured locally at the site. Parks Canada's programs and tools that are common sources of measurable targets include:

- Parks Canada monitoring programs (state of the site assessments)
- Visitor surveys
- Attendance records
- Permits
- Media tracking
- Partnering arrangements

Specific timeframes are provided where reaching targets are possible; otherwise, targets will be achieved during the ten-year plan period.

The key strategies are not in any order of priority and are interconnected. Collectively, they aim to achieve the site vision and fulfill Parks Canada's mandate. In many cases, direction for site management activities is integrated into several different key strategies. For the duration of this management plan, three key strategies were developed to guide the management direction for the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site.

### **Key Strategy 1: Working with communities**

This strategy focuses on the importance of collaboration and relationships that support the success of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. Strengthening relationships with local First Nations is a priority for Parks Canada and the Society. Parks Canada and the Society will focus their efforts on developing and furthering meaningful connections with x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əy<sup>ə</sup>m (Musqueam) First Nation to better understand how they would like to be involved with the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. This will help to determine how to move forward. The stories of First Nations, shared in their own voices, will be prioritised for exhibits and interpretation.

Japanese Canadian and Chinese Canadian communities who played pivotal roles in Steveston's canneries and the West Coast fishing industry will continue to be involved with the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, providing a contemporary link to the historic communities that drove the industry. Their stories of hardship and discrimination, as well as prosperity and success, are important takeaways for visitors. Other cultural communities, such as Scandinavian and Mediterranean, who also contributed to the canning and fishing industries will be represented.

Parks Canada will continue to support the Society's efforts to identify other funding sources and further their collaborative efforts with local organisations to enhance visitor experiences at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery and tourism in Steveston. This will help to ensure they can leverage opportunities, facilitate cross-promotion with local businesses, and foster community-based stewardship. Cooperation and support of volunteers, local partners, cultural organisations, and other interest-holders will continue to be an important element to the stewardship of the site.

Increased exposure for the Gulf of Georgia Cannery will raise awareness about the stories associated with the site and the history of the West Coast fishing industry.

**Objective 1.1:** Parks Canada’s relationship with x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) First Nation is strengthened.

Targets

- Collaboration efforts and results between Parks Canada and x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) First Nation are evaluated annually.
- An agreement between x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) and Parks Canada related to the management of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery is established and evaluated regularly.

**Objective 1.2:** Parks Canada’s relationship with the Society is maintained and continues to be effective and mutually beneficial.

Targets

- The number of shared tools and resources between Parks Canada and the Society increases from 2024 levels.
- Parks Canada and the Society evaluate collaboration efforts and results annually.
- The identities of both Parks Canada and the Society are strengthened through a co-developed branding plan.

**Objective 1.3:** In collaboration with First Nation communities, First Nation-focused history is increased at the site.

Targets

- Within five years, the level of collaboration with First Nation communities increases, with more days when x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) and other First Nation guests are on site to co-deliver activities, events, and programs, from 2024 levels.
- The volume of interpretative media delivered in collaboration with First Nation communities increases from 2024 levels.

**Objective 1.4:** The Gulf of Georgia Cannery’s status as an anchor of larger tourism, heritage interpretation, and cultural experiences in Steveston and Richmond is maintained.

Targets

- In collaboration with the Society, the number of cross-promotional activities between the City of Richmond, its historic sites, and Tourism Richmond to promote the site along with other offers in Steveston increases from 2024 levels.
- Communication and collaboration with other community organisations, including the Steveston Harbour Authority, increases from 2024 levels within five years.

## Key Strategy 2: Conserving cultural heritage

This strategy focuses on the conservation of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery’s cultural resources—built heritage (buildings), equipment, collections, and artifacts—for the benefit of current and future generations, as part of the network of protected heritage places in Canada.

Parks Canada and the Society will continue to work together to manage and monitor heritage buildings, historic objects, and collections and utilise Parks Canada’s long-term capital planning cycle to make strategic investments. The deterioration of assets, and impacts linked to climate change and related emergencies (e.g., earthquakes, tsunamis, king tides, and extreme weather), is an important consideration in this management plan. Parks Canada, the Society, and other partners and interest-holders will continue working with national, regional, and local experts to better understand the range of options and mitigations in response to environmental threats that may have an impact at the site. This understanding will help to support informed site management decisions and how to plan and adapt to the impacts of climate change on asset sustainability, especially as the impacts pose higher risks to coastal communities. To support this, the existing fire plan will be expanded to become a comprehensive emergency response plan and will be supported by local and regional plans and strategies.

Parks Canada's extensive object collection will be assessed and refined through maintenance, management, and documentation including deaccessioning and repatriating objects as appropriate. Objects in suitable condition that best represent the commemorative themes of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery and the West Coast fishing industry will be displayed on site and included in programming.

Parks Canada will continue to support and provide guidance on collecting and recording intangible heritage related to the site, including the knowledge, skills and practices of various communities and groups with connections to fishing and canneries on the west coast.

**Objective 2.1:** The condition of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery's built heritage assets is maintained according to the 2010 *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*.

Target

- Through monitoring and strategic investment, the built heritage assets at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery remain in "fair" to "good" condition in the next state of the site assessment.

**Objective 2.2:** Through assessment, management of Parks Canada's collection of significant historic objects is improved at Gulf of Georgia Cannery.

Target

- The condition of the historic and archeological objects of national significance is rated in the next state of the site assessment.

### **Key Strategy 3: A place that reflects Canada and the world**

This strategy focuses on reaching the local community, Canadians, and international visitors through new and meaningful visitor experiences, outreach activities, and community events.

Responding to the needs and interests of target audiences, the programming that visitors experience at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery will foster deep connections to the site's history, those who worked there, and the evolution of the fishing industry. An interpretation plan will be advanced through engagement with x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam) First Nation and other First Nations to reflect the vital importance of fishing on the west coast and will inform exhibit renewal and potential future exhibits. The objectives and targets under this key strategy are supported by the completion and implementation of an interpretation plan that aligns with Parks Canada's *Framework for History and Commemoration: National Historic Sites System Plan (2019)*.

These initiatives build upon and complement the Society's existing offer, and will provide additional focus on experiential learning, new and innovative programming, outreach, and marketing. To advance the management plan vision over the next ten years, Parks Canada and the Society will launch new or renewed, unique, and innovative programs and exhibits in collaboration with others to highlight the past, present, and future of the West Coast fishing industry. Further, Parks Canada and the Society will increase their cross-promotion and collaboration efforts to help build a better public understanding of the links between Parks Canada, the Society and other partners and interest-holders.

Parks Canada and the Society will work together to better connect the site and the stories to more people. This includes presenting challenging stories of Canada's past and sharing them in an inclusive, welcoming, and open way. Various approaches will be used to inspire a diverse range of visitors of different ages, backgrounds, identities, abilities, and interests, to share their learning and excitement with others. To support this strategy, the site will be guided by the principles of accessibility and inclusion, ensuring it accommodates visitors from diverse cultural backgrounds, as well as varying neurotypes and physical abilities.

Parks Canada and the Society will also work together to connect the story of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery and its cultural and environmental landscape to a contemporary understanding of the impacts of climate change and the overharvesting of keystone species in the world's oceans.

**Objective 3.1:** Guided by the completion and implementation of an interpretation plan for the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, visitor experiences are improved.

Targets

- The number of interpretive media that showcase diverse stories and perspectives of First Nations, Japanese Canadians, Chinese Canadians and other ethnic groups increase from 2024 levels.
- Barrier-free, inclusive experiences and services for visitors with a wide range of abilities, identities improve from 2024 levels.

**Objective 3.2:** As a result of high-quality visitor experiences and effective promotion, visitation at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery is increased.

Targets

- The number of new and repeat visits increases from 2024 levels.
- Annual general admissions (paid) to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery increase by ten percent from 2024 levels.
- Ninety percent of visitors are satisfied with their visit to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery.

**Objective 3.3:** Cross-promotion between Parks Canada and Society-led activities and programs has increased.

Targets

- Parks Canada's efforts to promote the Society's site-specific activities increase from 2024 levels.
- The number of dual entry passes used by visitors to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site and Fort Langley National Historic Site increases from 2024 levels.

**Objective 3.4:** The site's identity as a community hub is maintained by through continued use of the site as a venue for hosting relevant events and activities in balance with the site's commemorative intent.

Target

- The number of relevant events increases from 2024 levels.

## 7.0 Summary of strategic environmental assessment

The purpose of a strategic environmental assessment is to incorporate environmental considerations into the development of public policies, plans, and program proposals, to support environmentally sound decision-making. In accordance with the *Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals* (2010), a strategic environmental assessment was conducted for the *Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site of Canada Management Plan*.

Many positive outcomes are expected as a result of implementing the management plan, such as the conservation of the cultural resources that contribute to the commemorative integrity of the site; enhanced visitor experience offerings founded on the principles of accessibility and inclusion; enhanced relationships with partners and interest-holders; the development of new and innovative programming; and, strengthened relationships with x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), who have connections to the lands and waters where the site is located. Operations at the site are required to mitigate impacts on climate according to the *Greening Government Strategy* and the management plan is anticipated to modestly contribute to the relevant goals of the *Federal Sustainable Development Strategy*.

There are no important negative environmental effects anticipated from the implementation of the management plan. Potential negative effects can be minimised by adhering to appropriate standards and guidelines, applicable legislation, relevant policy instruments, and collaboration with the Parks Canada

Indigenous Affairs and Cultural Heritage Directorate. Any individual projects proposed at the national historic site will be evaluated separately under the *Impact Assessment Act 2019* or successor legislation.

Indigenous communities, partners, interest-holders and the public were provided with opportunities to provide comments on the draft plan and summary of the draft strategic environmental assessment. Comments were incorporated into the strategic environmental assessment and management plan as appropriate.