



EXPERIENCE THE FRASER

Lower Fraser River Corridor Project

CONCEPT PLAN





“...it flows majestically, unhurriedly,
towards the Pacific Ocean.”



“AT HOPE, THE FRASER RIVER ABANDONS THE LAST REMNANTS OF ITS WILD PAST, SWINGS WESTWARD IN A GREAT 90 DEGREE ARC AND ASSUMES A TRANQUIL FACE AS IT FLOWS MAJESTICALLY, UNHURRIEDLY, TOWARDS THE PACIFIC OCEAN. STILL 140 KILOMETRES FROM THE SEA, THE RIVER AT HOPE IS ONLY ABOUT FIVE METRES ABOVE SALT WATER. FOR A WHILE MOUNTAINS LOOM DARKLY OVERHEAD, RELUCTANT TO LET THE RIVER GO; DISCREETLY, THEY WITHDRAW TO A RESPECTFUL DISTANCE. NOW, AT LAST, THE FRASER HAS SPACE ENOUGH TO ASSUME A WIDTH APPROPRIATE TO ITS GRANDEUR. THE VALLEY WIDENS, FERTILE WITH SOIL CARRIED BY THE RIVER FROM ERODING SLOPES HUNDREDS OF KILOMETRES UPSTREAM. CARESSED BY A GENTLE OCEANIC CLIMATE, THE GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND IS A WIDENING CORNUCOPIA POURING ITS WEALTH TOWARD THE SEA.”

RICHARD C. BOCKING - MIGHTY RIVER, A PORTRAIT OF THE FRASER (1997)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Experience the Fraser (ETF) is a recreational, cultural and heritage project that extends along the Lower Fraser River Corridor connecting Hope to the Salish Sea. The ETF Concept Plan expresses the Project's Vision and Goals and presents a framework for the long-term development of this land and water based initiative that aims to showcase the Fraser River and its rich natural and cultural heritage. It presents Trail and Blueway routes which form the signature backbone of the project, and which link communities and Fraser River themed features, amenities and experiences. The Concept Plan presents a number of opportunities to add to and build upon these experiences, therefore in sum creating an outstanding world class destination. The Plan also offers an Illustrative Foundational Program that once completed would define an ETF identity and brand, and provide a solid presence and framework from which to continue to build the project. A series of implementation strategies is also identified, establishing strategic priorities to move the project toward implementation.





1.0 A BOLD VISION

1.1 VISION

EXPERIENCE THE FRASER IS AN INVITATION TO “EXPERIENCE AND EXPLORE THE DYNAMIC LOWER FRASER RIVER CORRIDOR FROM HOPE TO THE SALISH SEA... TO CELEBRATE THE SPIRIT AND STORIES OF ITS VARIED LANDSCAPES, DIVERSE COMMUNITIES AND RICH NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE.

Experience the Fraser is a recreational, cultural and heritage project defined by the Fraser River that seeks to connect communities and the places where Fraser River themes and stories can be experienced from canyon to coast. At its heart, ETF is defined by over 550 kilometres of trails and a recreational blueway with ample amenities to support both land and water based use. The Trail will connect existing points of interest, amenities and features along the Lower Fraser River Corridor, and once in place, will also be a catalyst for others to package and add their own Fraser River experiences. The result will be the creation of a unique product that provides unprecedented opportunities to celebrate shared culture and heritage; to showcase the Lower Fraser River Corridor and its landscapes, features, wildlife and people as one of the great river communities of the world; to link and create a suite of outstanding tourist attractions; encourage active and healthy living; and to enhance land and water-based recreational opportunities throughout the region.



Centre Creek, Surrey Bend Regional Park

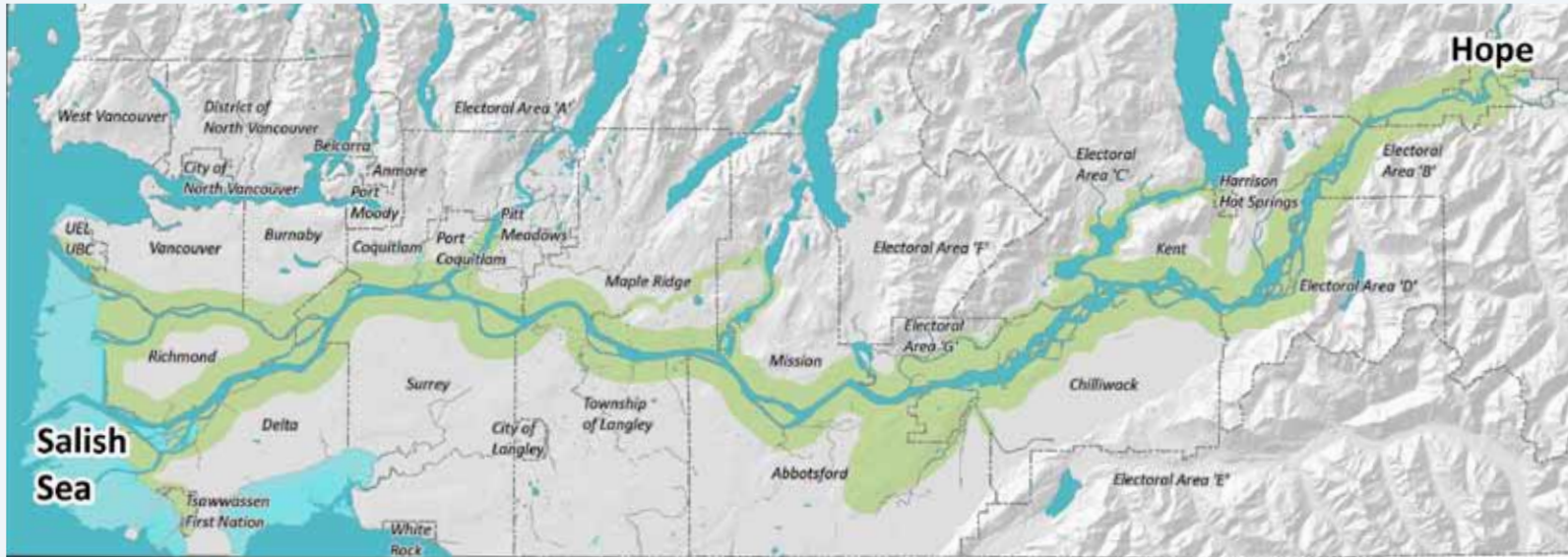


FIGURE 1: THE PROJECT AREA

The Project Area extends 160 km from Hope to the Salish Sea. Its width varies to capture as many Fraser River communities and points of interest as possible and to allow for trail routing. Additionally, the following areas were intentionally included: BC Ferries' Tsawwassen Terminal and Causeway; the Tsawwassen First Nation and Delta waterfronts; Pitt River past the Pitt River Bridge; Kanaka Creek to Rolley Lake and south along the Hayward Lake and Stave River; Harrison River to Harrison Lake; Sumas Mountain; the Vedder Canal to the Keith Wilson Bridge; and routing options through Kent and Electoral Area B. The Project Area is more than 100,000 hectares in size, and about 20% of the shoreline is protected. The North Arm of the Fraser was added as part of the Concept Planning process. This addition brings Vancouver, Burnaby, and the northern part of Richmond into the Project. The planning work for this addition will be undertaken in the early phases of Implementation, and the results will be added to this plan as an addendum.

The Fraser River travels nearly 1,400 kilometres from its headwaters in the Rockies to the Salish Sea¹. The 'Mighty Fraser' drains a quarter of British Columbia and is the tenth longest river in the world. By the time the river runs past Hope, it has flowed from rushing river to alluvial plain, characterized by large gravel reaches, and soon slows and stretches further into the Fraser estuary. The Lower Fraser is home to more than 2.3 million people and is the confluence of a myriad of cultures, values, interests, and activities that interact with, and are often dependent on, the river. The Fraser River has an incredible history and continues to be a defining feature in the Province of British Columbia, playing an integral role in the lives of Lower Fraser River residents. Here are just some of the values, interests and activities associated with the river:

1 The Province of BC, jointly with Washington State, officially named the area covered by the inland waterways of the Strait of Georgia and Puget Sound the Salish Sea in 2010. This official name pays homage to the Coast Salish peoples' collective history and this rich and diverse marine ecosystem.

- First Nations have lived, travelled and traded along the lower reaches of the river for thousands of years. The Stó:lō, whose traditional territory spans beyond the entire project area, are known as the People of the River. By believing in S'ólh Téméxw te íkw'élò - Xólhmet te mekw' stám ít kwelát, which means “This is our land - We have to look after everything that belongs to us,” protecting, preserving, and managing heritage and environment in a way that is consistent with Stó:lō values, beliefs, and traditions, is an overarching guiding principle.
- Named after Simon Fraser, the first European to fully travel its waters in 1808, the Fraser River was designated as a Canadian Heritage River in 1998 to honour its rich cultural and natural history².
- Parts of the Lower Fraser were initially dyked in the 1860s and 1870s by early settlers to create and protect agricultural lands. Early dyking efforts were found in Chilliwack, Sumas and Matsqui prairie areas as well as on Lulu Island. The Fraser Delta has some of the richest agricultural soils in Canada, is home to diverse agricultural operations growing over 130 different products, and although it comprises only 1.5 percent of the total agricultural land in BC, it generates over a quarter of the Province's gross farm income.
- The Fraser River estuary, one of the largest along the west coast of North America, is recognized as a globally important ecosystem³. It has the largest wintering concentrations of water birds and raptors in Canada, and provides significant habitat and feeding areas along the Pacific Flyway. It is the largest salmon producing river along the Pacific Coast and is one of three rivers in BC in which white sturgeon spawn.
- The Fraser River is integral to industry as a transportation corridor and location for businesses, including pulp and sawmills, piling and dredging companies, fisheries, and fish processing. It plays a vital role the region's economy contributing to 80% of the provincial economic output.
- Port Metro Vancouver cargo terminals and other port activities are essential to the functioning of our economy and metropolitan region. Their jurisdiction stretches across 600 kilometres of shoreline and waterways including the Fraser River up to Kanaka Creek. The Port trades \$75 billion in goods annually with more than 160 trading economies, generating over 125,000 jobs, and \$10.5 billion in GDP.
- A number of communities line the banks of the river and people continue to be drawn to live along its edge.
- The Lower Fraser River Corridor also provides ample recreation opportunities including wildlife viewing, fishing, hiking, geocaching, cycling, camping, boating, or horseback riding.
- The Lower Fraser River Corridor is an integral part of BC's Tourism industry which generates \$12.7 billion in revenues annually. People come from all over the world to experience a combination of the interests and themes listed above. ETF will create an even greater draw to this part of the province.



² The Canadian Heritage River System (CHRS) Board, made up of private citizens and officials appointed by federal and provincial governments called the Fraser a ‘river of superlatives’. The CHRS was established in 1984 to conserve rivers with outstanding natural, cultural and recreational heritage, to give them national recognition, and to encourage the public to enjoy and appreciate them. Today, there are 41 Canadian Heritage Rivers.

³ RAMSAR site at Alaksen National Wildlife Area has been designated as a Wetland of International Importance; proposed as a Western Hemispheric Shorebird Reserve Network, an international initiative that identifies and protects habitats used by migrating shorebirds.



Lower Hatzic Slough and Lake

1.2 GOALS

There are four goals that guide the realization of the Experience the Fraser vision:

Goal 1 Connect Hope to the Salish Sea

Experience the Fraser will connect Hope to the Salish Sea along the Fraser River by means of a network of over 550 kilometres of trail, 43% of which is already in place along regional, municipal and community trails. In addition, the river itself and associated stream networks provides an incredible recreational opportunity and adds a Blueway component to this goal of connectivity. The Trail and Blueway networks are the backbone of the project and will connect communities, parks, natural areas, historic and cultural sites and other experiences along the river. The intent of the goal is to draw upon the rich natural and cultural heritage along the river, to better integrate the waterway into the lives of residents and visitors thereby fostering a stronger sense of place and stewardship. The Trail and Blueway networks will provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities that promote active, healthy living for Lower Fraser River residents. Also, this network will enhance land and water-based recreational amenities positioned strategically to fill service gaps and support tourism.

Goal 2 Link and inspire experiences along the river

There are already a multitude of existing opportunities to experience the Fraser River. For example, there are Circle Farm tours, farm gate sales, and wineries. From an outdoor recreation and environmental perspective, there are parks and trails that provide river access, and amazing fishing spots and that interpret the river's ecological importance to salmon, raptors, and bird migrations. Heritage and culture can be explored at the Xa:ytem Longhouse Interpretive Centre, Fraser River Discovery Centre, Britannia Shipyards, Fort Langley and Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Sites, Hyack's Fraserfest, the Fraser Valley Bald Eagle Festival and the Artists on the River, all of which provide opportunities to celebrate the river's heritage and cultural values.

The first part of this goal speaks to linking these experiences, to knitting them together with a common Experience the Fraser brand and to recognizing the appeal and promotional value in their synergy. ETF offers a way to build on and package these experiences and opportunities. The second part of the goal is about enhancing and adding to what is already in place – about utilizing the Trail and existing experiences and amenities as a catalyst upon which to build an integrated suite of recreation, cultural and heritage amenities and features. The outcome will be a world-class tourism destination that can be traveled end to end or theme by theme. The Lower Fraser River Corridor will be promoted and known as one of the great river destinations of the world, inspiring participation, generating economic growth and jobs, and fostering pride and sustainability.



Goal 3 Develop enduring and committed partnerships

The success of ETF is reliant on developing and nurturing long-term partnerships among different levels of government, First Nations, other agencies, the private sector, non-profit organizations and citizens. Because Experience the Fraser is a long-term vision that will be realized over a number of decades, building understanding and support helps ensure that the ETF concept is a shared vision and at the forefront of people's minds when planning and developing local projects. Integral to the success of the project is the development of sustainable governance and financing models to support leadership and long-term implementation.



Bedford Channel

Experience the Fraser – Concept Plan

Goal 4 Build and deepen connections to the river

Experience the Fraser strives to build and deepen people's physical, emotional, and spiritual connections to the river. Utility and transportation corridors and industrial, residential and agricultural uses separate communities and people from the river so that its physical closeness is often imperceptible. We cross over the river in our cars on our daily commute, but how often do we dip our toes in it, walk along its edge or understand the diversity and dynamism that it represents? This goal is about celebrating the river itself and its rich cultural and natural heritage – it is about exposure and reconnection, not just in a physical sense, but also a cognitive one. **Through exposure and experience come understanding and appreciation – and from these come a sense of ownership and protection**⁴.

Connectivity is important from an ecological perspective, and linking parks and open space helps to protect habitat, remedy the effects of fragmentation and support biodiversity. ETF embraces environmental sustainability objectives critical to maintaining the ecological health of the Lower Fraser River Corridor, and is committed to enhancing awareness and stewardship of these values through education and interaction with river ecology.

⁴ Extrapolated from Freeman Tilden's "through interpretation, understanding, through understanding, appreciation, through appreciation, protection" (1957)



Fish release at Kanaka Creek Regional Park

1.3 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Lower Fraser River Corridor has been the focus of attention and planning for many people, agencies, businesses, groups and partnerships for years. There is a substantial body of work, research and relationships to draw upon. ETF hopes to continue to build with these partners and on the work they have completed. In addition, ETF complements a number of existing initiatives associated with the Fraser River including the Fraser River Discovery Centre, the Trans Canada Trail, and Heart of the Fraser⁵. ETF seeks to highlight and link the multiple values and interests Fraser River stakeholders embody through a tangible, overarching vision for recreation, culture and heritage.

The inspiration of ETF was the idea for a continuous trail along the Fraser River between Hope and the Salish Sea on both sides of the river with crossings creating a series of loop options and connections to major trails beyond the region. Because of this original idea, ETF is a project that is rooted in an outdoor recreation perspective - assuming that the user will be on foot, bicycle, horseback or boating. Therefore, the next step was to look at what kind of support, both infrastructure and program, would be required to facilitate this form of experience in terms of staging areas, parking, washrooms, boat launches, camping opportunities, and dyke and trail upgrades.

The challenge was posed – if a user is travelling along this trail, what would they be interested in seeing, doing, and experiencing along the journey? What would lead them to take the journey in the first place and inspire them to explore further? This prompted an inventory of existing recreational, cultural and heritage features, the result being the development of a multi-dimensional project that seeks to link together, via the ETF Trail and recreational Blueway, the multitude of experiences the Lower Fraser River Corridor has to offer.

⁵ In 2009, The Fraser River Discovery Centre opened its doors to a 17,000 square foot space that offers displays and exhibits, a resource centre and a place showcase the living, working river. The Trans Canada Trail's route through the Lower Fraser River Corridor mutually supports ETF. Heart of the Fraser is a conservation initiative founded in 2006, supported by The Nature Trust of BC, BCIT, the North Growth Foundation and the Pacific Fisheries Resource Conservation Council. It is focused on acquiring lands along the Fraser River, from Hope to Mission, and it seeks to boost public awareness of this area's outstanding attributes while promoting the need to set aside key properties for conservation purposes.

In April 2009, the Province of BC provided the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) and Metro Vancouver (MV) \$2.5 million dollars to undertake ETF planning and to implement two demonstration projects. \$2 million was allocated toward developing a comprehensive Concept Plan by Fall 2011.

An integral component then was to “demonstrate” the potential of Experience the Fraser in communities along the river and to provide an opportunity for people to understand what an “experience” of the Fraser might in fact be. As a result, \$500,000 was allocated for two demonstration projects to ‘get started on the ground’.

Demonstration Projects

MISSION WATERFRONT

The Mission Waterfront Demonstration Project, a partnership between FVRD and the District of Mission, opened on May 15, 2010. It includes an elevated square, trail, living plant wall, benches, picnic tables, banners, lights, and unique First Nations’ public art.

HISTORIC FORT LANGLEY TO GOLDEN EARS BRIDGE

The Historic Fort Langley to Golden Ears Bridge Demonstration Trail Project, a partnership between Metro Vancouver, Township of Langley, and Trails BC, provides an important segment of the Trans Canada Trail.

The first project phase, from Edgewater Bar in Derby Reach Regional Park to 208th Street including trail, interpretive art and riverside amenities, opened on July 23, 2011.



“THE GOAL IS TO HAVE A TRAIL NETWORK CONNECTING FROM HOPE RIGHT TO THE OCEAN. IT WILL PROVIDE ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES – AND YOU CAN TAKE WHATEVER LENGTH OF TRIP YOU WANT.”

GAYLE MARTIN, CO-CHAIR, ETF JOINT POLITICAL STEERING COMMITTEE

1.4 CONNECTED NETWORKS... Situating Experience the Fraser

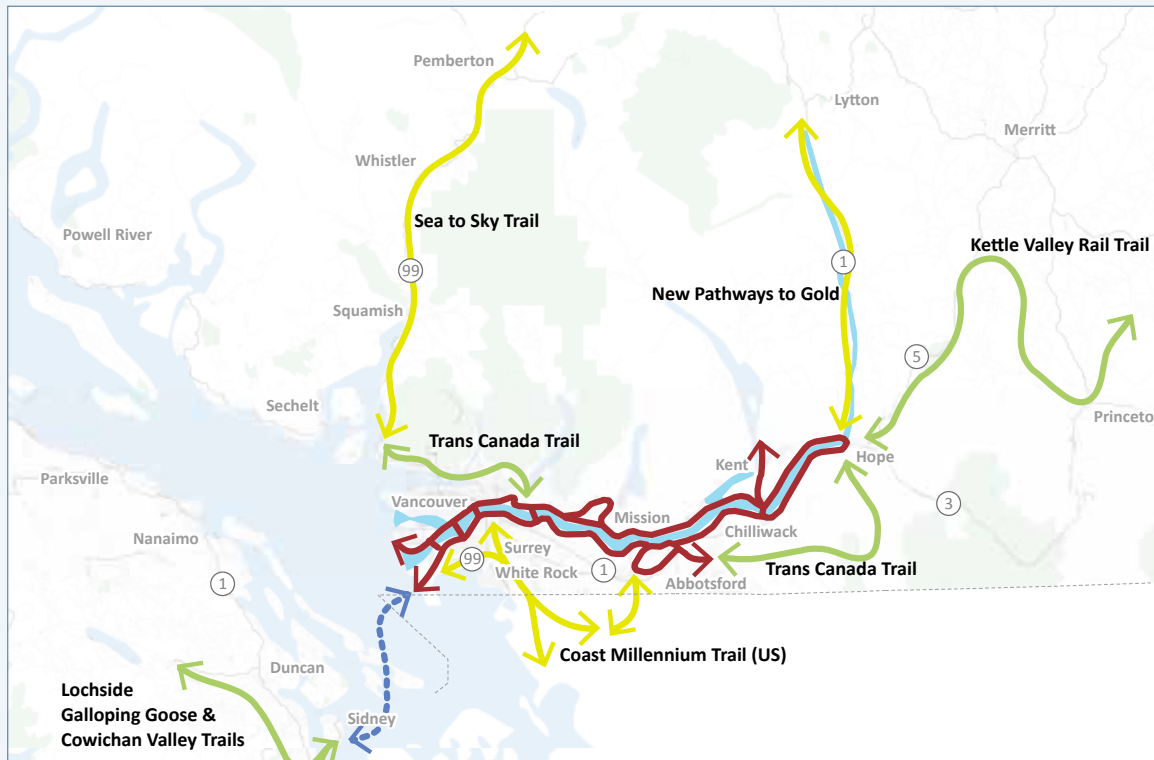


FIGURE 2: CONNECTED NETWORKS: SITUATING EXPERIENCE THE FRASER

One of the primary objectives for trail routing is to fill the gaps in the existing trail network along the Lower Fraser River Corridor between Hope and the Salish Sea. Embodied within this objective is the desire to ensure connectivity to, and integration with, existing and planned community trail networks and waterfront community centres with an aim to improving access to the Fraser River and connections among communities and trails.

While these local and regional connections are vital, so is ensuring connectivity to trail systems outside the Lower Fraser Corridor to help build a provincial trail network for residents and visitors alike. Integral to the planning and development of the Experience the Fraser route is the integration and inclusion of the Trans Canada Trail as it proceeds through the Lower Fraser River Corridor and connects with the rest of Canada from sea to sea. Looking beyond our national border, ETF seeks to make connections south to the United States. Therefore, once completed and connections are put in place, Experience the Fraser will provide not only an inter-regional trail between Hope and the Salish Sea, but it will also link to other regional, provincial, national and international trails, effectively nesting it within other initiatives and providing connectivity at multiple levels (Figure 2). Once complete, Experience the Fraser aspires to connect to:



Agassiz-Rosedale Bridge

International

- Pacific Northwest Trail: The 1,200 mile trail runs from the Continental Divide to the Pacific Ocean and is considered to be among the most scenic trails in the world. It is connected to the Pacific Crest and Coast Millennium trails.
- Pacific Crest Trail (PCT): Extending from the Canadian to the Mexican border, the PCT boasts the greatest elevation changes of any of America's National Scenic Trails and passes through six of North America's seven eco-zones. It offers users a unique, varied experience and connects into Canada at Manning Provincial Park.
- Coast Millennium Trail: A trail initiative that strives to connect Bellingham, Washington to White Rock along Boundary Bay with future phases envisioned to extend the trail south to Seattle, and north to Vancouver connecting to other regional trails including Experience the Fraser.

National

- Trans Canada Trail: A mosaic of local and regional trails built by provincial and territorial members of the Canadian Trails Foundation extending from Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic Oceans and providing 22,000 kilometres of trail linking 1,000 communities and 33 million Canadians.
- National Hiking Trail: An initiative for a pedestrian trail from Cape Spear, Newfoundland to White Rock, British Columbia.

Regional

- Sea-to-Sky Trail: A partnership initiative led by the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, the Sea-to-Sky Trail links communities from Horseshoe Bay north to Lillooet.
- New Pathways to Gold Society: A society that supports economic development through heritage tourism, First Nations Reconciliation, and community projects such as the Hudson's Bay Company (1849) Heritage Trail. The trail extends from Barkerville to Hope area and through the Gold Rush region of BC.
- Spirit of 2010 Trails: Four regional Rail to Trail initiatives that make up a portion of the Trans Canada Trail connecting Hope to Nelson including: The Hudson's Bay Company Heritage Trail from Hope to Tulameen and the Kettle Valley Rail Trail from Hope to Castelgar.
- Vancouver Island Trails: The Lochside Regional Trail begins at the Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal and connects to the Galloping Goose Regional Trail north to the Nanaimo Regional District where the Trans Canada Trail currently arrives on Vancouver Island at the Nanaimo Ferry Terminal.



Mountain to Sound Greenway - Hikers in the Cascade Mountains

1.5 LEARNING and DRAWING INSPIRATION from OTHER SUCCESSES

There are a number of projects analogous to Experience the Fraser throughout North America. This is no surprise, as waterfront cities recognize the merit of collecting and showcasing their amazing amenities and features into a synergized, value added package. Several of these projects bill themselves as recreational, cultural and heritage initiatives that act as catalysts for tourism, economic development, active, healthy living, and partnership development. Below are three examples of visionary, successful projects.

Mountains to Sound

The Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust leads and inspires action to conserve and enhance the landscape from Seattle across the Cascade Mountains to Central Washington, ensuring a long-term balance between people and nature. This project is organized around Highway I-90, and since 1991, 87,000 hectares of land have been conserved and over \$275 million invested. Today, the Greenway Trust, the body responsible for the project, encompasses a 60-member Board of Directors, a 30-member Advisory Council, a 100-member Technical Advisory Committee, a 15-member staff, and a community of hundreds of citizens and dozens of interest groups.



The Great Waterfront Trail Adventure



Originally part of Route 66, The Chain of Rocks Bridge is now one of the longest pedestrian/ cyclist bridges in the world

Waterfront Trail

The Waterfront Trail stretches from Niagara-on-the-Lake in Ontario to the Quebec border, along the shores of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. The Trail includes 41 communities, 182 parks, 152 arts and culture heritage attractions and 37 major annual waterfront festivals. 780 km of trail have been built and/or designated. The project is run by the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, and partners with CIBC, Heart and Stroke Foundation, Province of Ontario, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Welcome Cyclists, Ontario Trails Council, 63 local governments and Conservation Authorities, two cycling groups and three other private sector companies.

The Confluence

Located in the heart of the St. Louis Region at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, the Confluence is a dynamic conservation, heritage and recreation corridor. The project area is 52,000 hectares. The Confluence Project is an ambitious, long-term undertaking where investments in land conservation, facilities and public programs for this unique regional initiative will ultimately exceed \$200 million. Today, the Confluence is an evolving system of conserved open space, parks, museums, heritage sites, and recreational trails along the Great Rivers of the bi-state St. Louis area. By reconnecting the public to the wealth of natural, historic and recreational resources at the heart of the community, this project contributes significantly to quality of life and economic competitiveness in the 21st century. Currently, over \$150 million has been secured or committed by various governmental agencies and non-profit organizations, and the transformation of riverfronts is well underway. An impressive set of early achievements encourages community residents and tourists to care and protect the land and water in the Confluence region as they reconnect to two of America's great rivers.



1.6 THEMES

Concept planning and trail route identification included an inventory of existing Fraser River amenities, features and experiences. As this work progressed, it became apparent that these points of interest could be grouped or categorized into themes. Consequently, part of the trail routing resulted from the gathering or linking of these features, points of interest and amenities. Many plan contributors and participants have identified locations where these themes can be explored, illustrated, and experienced. This has led to the Concept Plan being more infrastructure or spatially based, focusing on acknowledging the venues where these themes can be experienced rather than interpreting the themes themselves. The project's focus is the Trail and Blueway and providing a way to link or package the experiences together. As a result, the project is informed by the following eight Fraser River themes:

AGRICULTURE

Farms, wineries, local food, farmers' markets, agri-tourism, parks, museums, education and interpretation

CELEBRATION

Festivals, celebration, tours and events that promote and advance river connections, Fraser River Festival, arts and cultural events, Rivers Day, educational & historical tours

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE

Parks, Conservation Areas and Ecological Reserves, stewardship and volunteer opportunities, salmon runs, education and interpretation, bird and wildlife habitat, marshes and mudflats

FIRST NATIONS

Cultural and historical interpretation, industry and commerce, tourism and economic development opportunities, festivals and community celebrations



HERITAGE AND CULTURE

Historic sites, museums, cultural centres, guided heritage tours, landscapes, festivals, settlements, businesses

INDUSTRY AND TRANSPORTATION

The role and importance of the “working river”, fisheries, log booms, tug boats, debris trap, water dependent industry, port & rail operations, access & crossings, infrastructure and new technologies

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Parks, trails, water access and boat launches, camping, fishing, day-use facilities, wildlife viewing, marinas

RIVERFRONT COMMUNITIES

Connecting to and integrating with the river, trail and blueway connections, river access, orientation and wayfinding, education and interpretation, food and accommodation services, business development and sales, waterfront revitalization initiatives

In addition, the themes provide a framework for others (e.g. the private sector or other potential partners) who want to:

- a) package and program these points of interest and utilize the trail as a means of travel or connection (e.g. a tourism opportunity such as winery or heritage tours by bike or foot); or
- b) add a new experience / amenity along the river that ‘fits’ with one of the themes therefore creating an added value for themselves of having other similarly themed experiences be in close proximity with them connected by the trail (e.g. an economic development opportunity such as bicycle or boat rentals or a trail-side café).

1.7 A STORIED RIVER... stories of people and place unfolding

The myriad of stories related to the Fraser River are as plentiful and intertwined as the tributaries which flow into it. Experience the Fraser recognizes the importance of these stories in enhancing the recreational and cultural experiences of each visitor. Certain stories lend themselves to being told through multiple venues over the length of the Lower Fraser River Corridor. A sampling of five of these stories is presented here. These stories would be developed and programmed by historians, First Nation elders and other willing story-tellers. They hint at the incredible influence the river had, and continues to have, on our lives and the connections that flow strongly among stories, people and places.

The Story of the Living River... from Salmon to Sandpiper

This journey highlights the story of the Fraser River's natural history and paints an ecological picture of one of the most biodiverse areas in Canada.

- The Fraser produces more salmon than any other river system in the world;
- The Fraser is one of just three rivers in British Columbia in which the white sturgeon spawn;
- The Fraser River Estuary is one Canada's premier Important Bird Areas providing a crucial staging area on the Pacific Flyway;
- The dynamic river conditions of the Fraser from the canyon to the coast;

- The future of the living river is another critical storyline for interpretation. Humans have put pressures on the river system, and changed it from its natural course. Much of the Fraser Valley is naturally a floodplain, but is now protected by dykes which prevent the river from inundating the land and people have influenced the life of the Fraser, just as the river has permeated our lives;
- The formation of the wetlands and bogs of the Lower Fraser (e.g. Burns Bog);
- Augment the work currently being done to tell the Living River story by enhancing this work through coordinating resources and introducing new outlets.

The Living River stories could be presented through a Living River Tour supported with a smartphone interpretive guidebook application.



INTERPRET ... AND UNDERSTAND THE RIVER HYDRAULICS AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE RIVER COURSE, THE GEOLOGY AND THE FORCES WHICH HAVE SHAPED THIS ICONIC LANDSCAPE AND DELTA OVER MILLENNIA.

The Story of the Working River... from Canneries to Catch and Release

This journey presents storylines that relate to the commerce of the Fraser River over time from First Nations fur trading through the harvesting of a variety of natural resources to the present river-based economy and industry.

- Fishing industry (sustenance, commercial and recreational);
- Salmon fishing through the ages (Aboriginal to present day; salting and canning);
- Forestry (sawmills, shingle mills, log booming);
- Mining and gravel extraction;

- Agriculture and floodplain; and
- Port activities (cargo terminals and goods movement).

The Working River storyline could be enhanced through a focus on the Fraser River Discovery Centre for major Working River interpretive exhibits⁶. Ideas for supporting the telling of the story could include interactive historical activities about fishing, farming, milling, and towing, an important and particularly representative industry on the Lower Fraser.

⁶ There are other venues where these stories could be explored and told including: the Fort Langley and Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Sites and Britannia Shipyards. In addition, this is only one of many stories interpreted at the Fraser River Discovery Centre.

GROWING UP NEAR THE RIVER, I REMEMBER THE MAYHEM & ACTIVITY OF THE EULACHON RUN EVERY JUNE. THE EULACHON WERE EASY TO CATCH, BUT NOT THAT GOOD TO EAT.

IDEAS FORUM PARTICIPANT (OCTOBER 28, 2010)

A WEALTH OF RESOURCES ... LEARN ABOUT THE WORKING RIVER AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LOWER FRASER AS A PLACE OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE AND A SOURCE OF ECONOMIC PROSPERITY IN BC.



The Story of Travel on the River... from Cedar Canoes to Tug Boats

This journey would tell the story of the Fraser River as the historical main transportation conduit from the coast to the interior of BC.

- Historical accounts of different British Columbians' journeys up and down the Fraser through time (Aboriginal, Simon Fraser, present day explorers);
- Railways;
- Bridges and Crossings of the Fraser;
- Boats of the Fraser across time: First Nations canoes, steamboats, paddle wheelers, barges, tug boats, fishing boats, present day kayaks;
- Role in supporting the region – goods and services and movement;
- Recreational Blueway.

Travel on the River stories could be told through:

- River education and interpretation centres (i.e. Mission Harbour River Interpretation Centre);
- Bridge and crossing signage and interpretation program;
- A land based “shipyard” museum and playground.

The Story of Communities on the River... from Village to Settlement to City

This journey would tell the stories of the many communities that were and are established along the riverfront, how they came to be, and the cultural landscapes that emerged.

- First Nations villages and settlements;
- European settlement – Fur trading (HBC), resource based communities, dyking, flooding and the development of agriculture based communities, historic river landings;
- Stories of ethnically rich communities along the river



TRANSPORT ... SEE THE BARGES, FISHING BOATS AND CONTAINER SHIPS AND BECOME CONNECTED TO THIS WATERWAY AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN OUR SOCIETY AS A LIFELINE AND TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR.

(e.g. Hawaiian community at Kanaka Creek, Japanese community on Don Island, Chinese community on Lion Island, Greek community on Deas Island);

- The stories of real people of the river – First Nations, immigrants and migrants, entrepreneurs and homesteaders.

Communities of the River stories could be told through:

- A Geo-caching and Passport program telling the stories of various journeys and travel routes (i.e. gold, fur, fish, trading, First Nation, pioneer).

The Story of the Fraser River Dykes... from Floods to Fortification

This journey would tell the unique story of how the Fraser River was dyked to manage its seasonal floods, develop rich agricultural lands from the floodplain, and protect large parts of the region's infrastructure and population.

- May, 1894, largest flood on record, but property damage was limited as settlement was sparse;

- 1948 flood led to evacuation of 16,000 people, damage or destruction of 2300 homes, and recovery costs of over \$150 million;

- Early efforts to manage flooding and develop agricultural lands along the lower reaches;

- Sumas Lake (4,050 hectares in size) was drained to create farmland;

- Scope and scale of the dyking system in the Lower Fraser River Corridor – now over 600 km of dyke structures, 400 floodboxes and 100 pump stations in the Fraser Basin;

- Future concerns given climate change and sea level rise.

Given that the dyke system forms a significant part of the trail itself, the Fraser River Dyke story could be told through interpretive signage, viewpoints, photos of the major floods and other means. These stories could also be told at the Fraser River Discovery Centre amongst other locations.



CONNECT... TO THE 10,000 YEARS OF STORIES OF THE RIVER AND OF THIS PLACE AND THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE LIVED, TRADED, FISHED, EXPLORED AND ADVENTURED ON AND AROUND ITS WATERS.



A PLACE TO CALL HOME ... HOW DID OUR PRESENT DAY COMMUNITIES COME TO BE? FROM FORTS AND FURS TO FIELDS AND FARMING, LEARN ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RIVER AS THE HOME FOR GENERATIONS OF FAMILIES.

2.0 EXPERIENCE THE FRASER: THE CONCEPT



TRAVELING ON, OR ALONG, THE LOWER FRASER, STARTING FROM THE TOWN OF HOPE AND HEADING DOWNSTREAM TO THE SEA, ENABLES ONE TO EXPERIENCE THE VERY HEART OF ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT WATERWAYS; ONE OF THE MOST PRODUCTIVE STRETCHES OF RIVER ON EARTH.

MARK ANGELO, CHAIR EMERITUS, RIVERS INSTITUTE AT BCIT

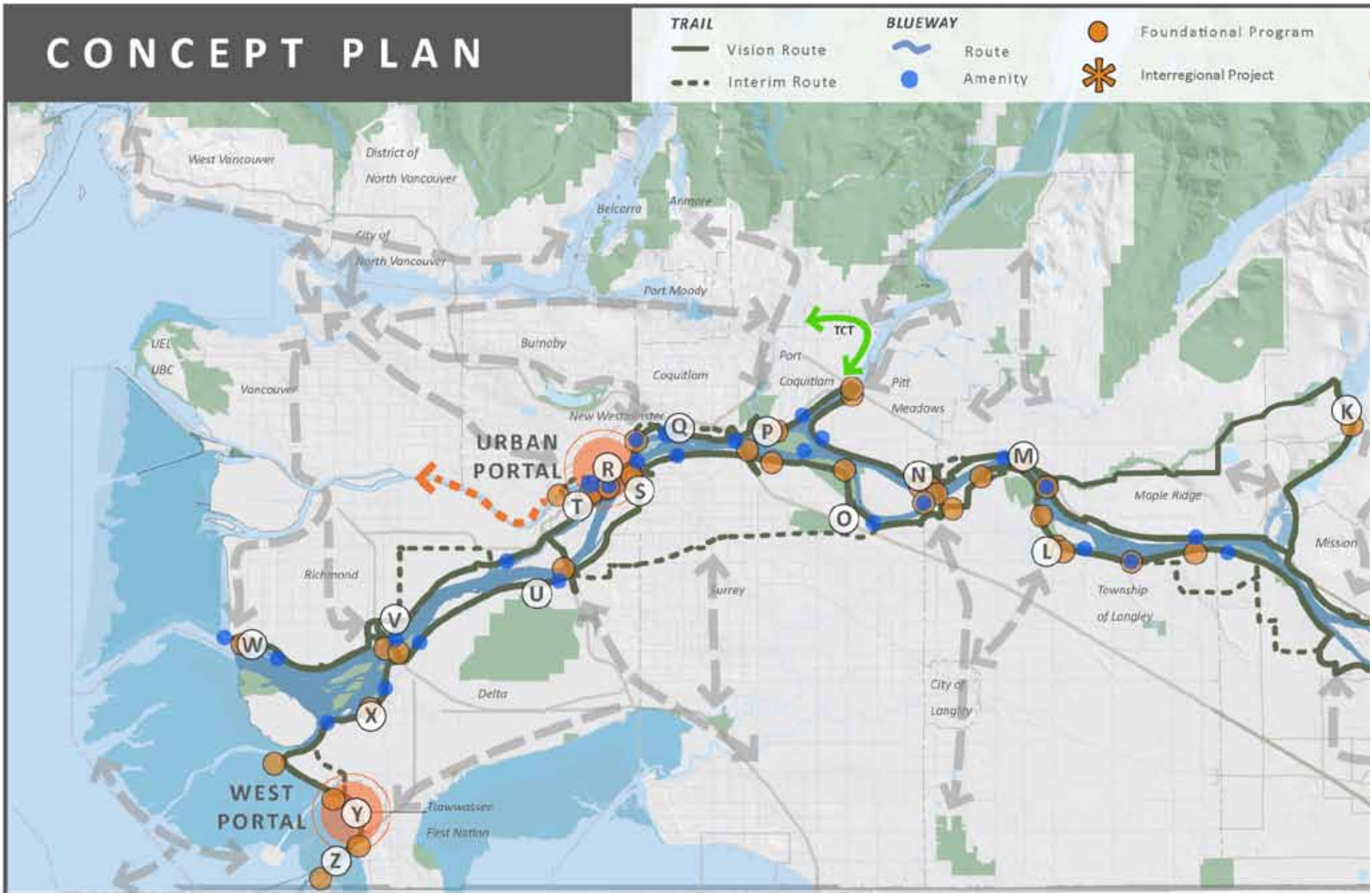
2.1 THE CONCEPT

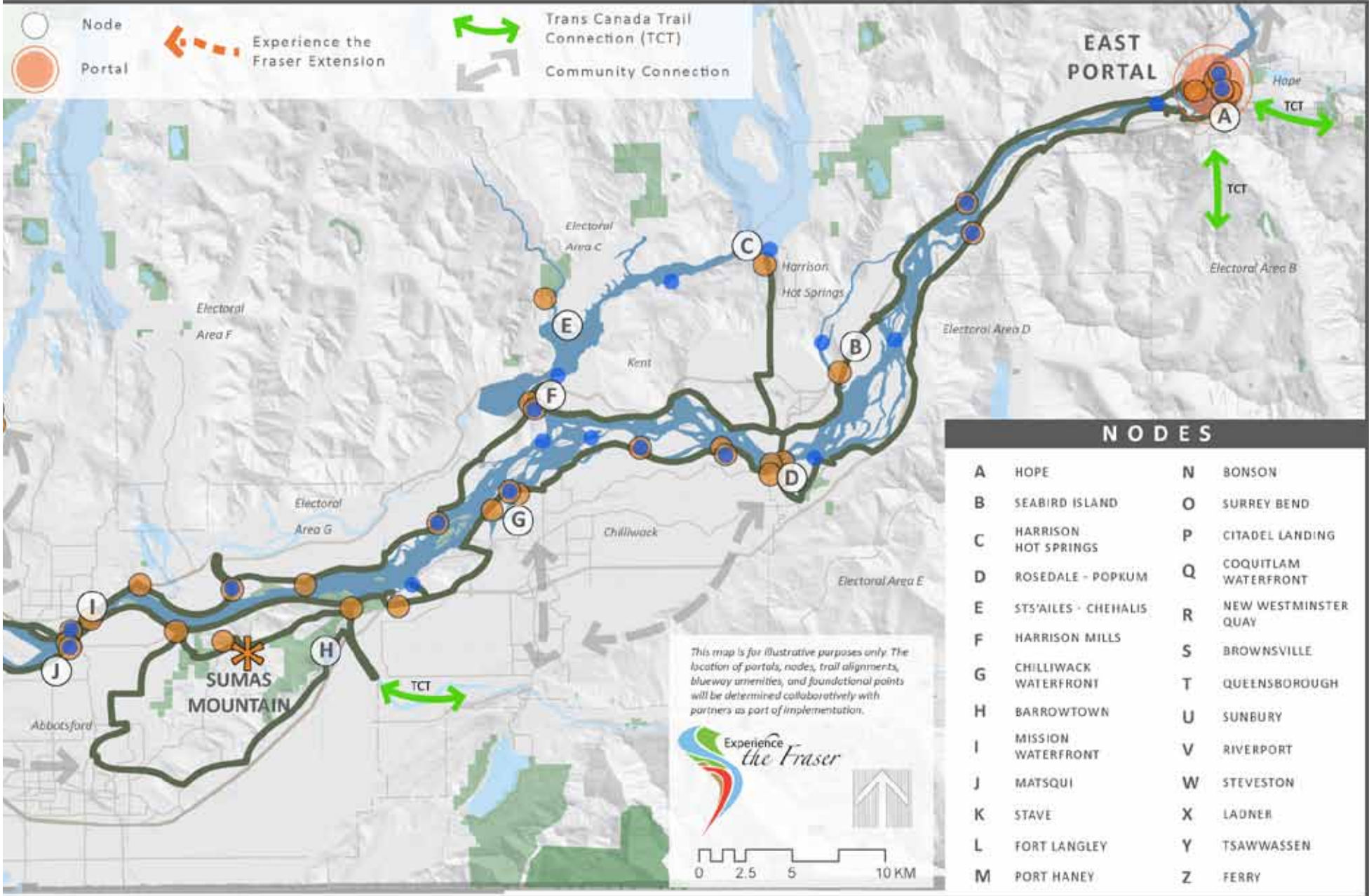
The Experience the Fraser Concept is, at its heart, quite simple - it is a recreational, cultural and heritage project that seeks to connect Hope to the Salish Sea along the Fraser River and to link and inspire river and other theme-based experiences. The Trail and recreational Blueway serve as the connectors, linking communities, the multitude of stories, river-based amenities, and the natural, recreational, cultural and heritage features and experiences that the Lower Fraser River Corridor offers.

The Experience the Fraser Concept builds from a strong base of existing infrastructure, amenities, features and Fraser River attractions. About 43% of the proposed Trail is already in place along segments provided by regional districts, municipalities and others. There are 15 sanctioned boat launches along this stretch of the river and many riverfront parks that provide water access and amenities. There are a number of cultural and heritage attractions and festivals for residents and visitors alike and several businesses that rent bicycles, boats and offer tours. Experience the Fraser is not starting from scratch. ETF simply seeks to fill the connectivity gaps and add to the experiences available.

The result will be a project that ties together, and adds strength and dynamism to, local tourism and economic development efforts as well as cultural, heritage, and recreational amenities. All of which will be branded under one banner. ETF will become an anchor enticing other tourism opportunities. The Lower Fraser River Corridor will be showcased and promoted as one of the world's great river destinations. People will be inspired to respect and protect its value. It is important to recognize that the Concept is a long-term vision and will be implemented by many, over decades.

FIGURE 3: EXPERIENCE THE FRASER: CONCEPT PLAN MAP



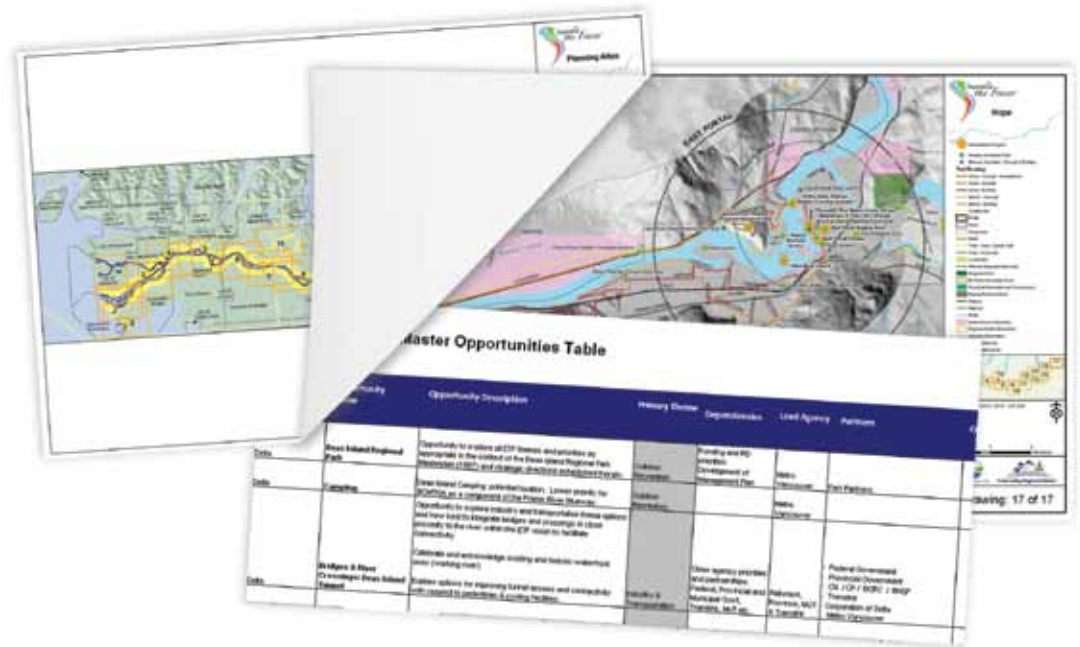


The Concept is structured around five elements: portals, nodes, the Trail, the Blueway, and amenity and feature points based on the eight Fraser River themes introduced above (Figure 3: Experience the Fraser Concept Plan Map). This structure highlights and facilitates connectivity among communities, features, amenities and ultimately, Fraser River experiences. It also highlights connections to, and overlap with, the Trans Canada Trail, and expresses a desire to expand the Project Area to include the North Arm of the Fraser River in the future.

In addition, Sumas Mountain is identified as an Interregional Project on the Concept Plan Map. Sumas Mountain is a dominant and unique landscape feature in the Fraser Valley that captures the appreciation and imagination of many. It holds special significance to First Nations, is popular with trail users and has high conservation values. The mountain also straddles regional park service areas of the Fraser Valley Regional District and Metro Vancouver, creating a unique opportunity for collaboration to advance outdoor recreation, cultural and conservation objectives supporting ETF goals, for the two regional districts and other partners.

A Planning Atlas and complementary Opportunities Matrix serve as the repository for ETF's collected knowledge. The Planning Atlas is the tool that allows navigation of the Concept at different scales, showing the Project from the Lower Fraser River Corridor scale, to specific river reaches, to community nodes, right down to a specific segment of trail, amenity or feature (Figure 4). Although this level of specificity cannot be shown here, the Planning Atlas is essential for providing detailed planning information as the project moves forward to implementation.

FIGURE 4: ETF PLANNING ATLAS



“EXPERIENCE THE FRASER WILL BECOME A CATALYST FOR VIBRANT COMMUNITIES ALONG THE FRASER THROUGH OFFERING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTIVE LIVING. IT WILL ALSO BECOME A CATALYST FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.”

JAMES ATEBE, CO-CHAIR, ETF JOINT POLITICAL STEERING COMMITTEE

2.2 ELEMENTS

The ETF Concept is spatially based around locations where the stories about the Fraser River, its history, industry, culture and environment can be told. As a result, there are five concept elements – “Canyon to Coast” Trail, recreational blueway, amenity and feature points, nodes and portals.

‘Canyon to Coast’ Trail

The “Canyon to Coast” Trail is the backbone of the project, linking together communities and points of interest along the river. Once complete, it will provide the glue, brand, and impetus enticing others to build on Experience the Fraser by adding additional businesses, recreational features and other points of interest. Over 550 kilometres of trail are a part of the project, spanning from Hope to the Salish Sea on both sides of the river.

Many participants in the planning process articulated that the Trail needs a brand that expresses the geography, themes or intent of the project more clearly than the Experience the Fraser Trail. The “Canyon to Coast” Trail seems to excite and resonate, since it clearly references the geography of the Lower Fraser River Corridor and begins to connect people to place.

In the short term, an Interim Route utilizes existing trails and roads and allows users to travel from end to end or portal to portal. This alignment is subject to agreement and participation by the agencies, organizations, and local governments along the route. There is also a Vision Route, which is the long-term objective of the project and is over 550 kilometres long. Although this length may sound daunting, 43% of the Vision Route is already in place coinciding with regional and municipal park and community trails. The Vision Route will be implemented over many years.

The primary objective when developing the Vision Route was to develop a continuous east /west connection from Hope to the Salish Sea. The intent was to follow and feature the Fraser River as closely as possible: however, the long-term route will be aligned to harmonize with working river industrial activities, sensitive natural features, private land and First Nation land interests. Most times it will mean going around these features, but creative ways of integrating the Trail into such landscapes and uses can produce the richest experiences. The preferred alignment also reflects the original partnership between the Province, the Fraser Valley Regional District and Metro Vancouver, therefore reflecting the desire to connect provincial and regional parks and facilities and to include sufficient amenities to facilitate multi-day travel (e.g. camping). It was also an objective to advance the Trans Canada Trail alignment through the Lower Fraser River Corridor.



The Trail's Vision Route status and needs in the eastern (Fraser Valley Regional District) and western (Metro Vancouver) parts of the Project Area are somewhat different. In the eastern part of the Project Area, the Vision Route is 244 kilometres long and 27% (or 66 kilometres) is in place. In the western part of the Project Area, the Vision Route is 308 kilometres long, and approximately 55% (or 173 kilometres) is in place. Of the remaining 313 kilometres required to complete the ETF Trail's Vision Route, approximately 79 kilometres are located on dyke structures, which require recreational access but do not have the same cost implications as a new trail. Therefore, about 234 kilometres of trail need to be built to fully realize the Vision Route.

Because the Trail is the linear connection linking points of interest along the river, it facilitates the telling of stories introduced in section 1.7 and other projects that lend themselves to being explored or introduced from end to end of the trail – for example, public art expressing Fraser River themes.

The non-motorized ETF Trail is intended to be shared-use and accommodate pedestrians and cyclists along its entire length. Equestrian and other active transportation modes will be possible in some locations. ETF advocates for the provision of universally accessible trails and facilities wherever feasible, however recognizes that different standards and challenging geography will limit this objective. As time, resources, land tenure and priorities permit, the gaps in the Vision Route will be filled.

Bridges across the Fraser River are key components of the ETF trail network (Figure 5). Designed to function almost exclusively as vehicle conveyances, sometimes with a nod to commuter cyclists, bridges are too often a lost opportunity. ETF advocates that bridges must provide safe and viable recreational connections for active transportation modes to communities, parks and trails on both sides of the river. Where appropriate, bridges should also function as features providing viewpoints, educational and interpretive opportunities, public art and signage.

FIGURE 5: BRIDGES ALONG THE LOWER FRASER RIVER



Recreational Blueway

The Blueway, or Water Trail, represents the recreational use of the river itself. In the Project Area, this includes the Fraser, Harrison and Lower Pitt Rivers and their main tributaries. Whether meandering through a number of Fraser River Islands for the day or taking part in a multi-day paddling adventure, the Blueway is best expressed through the supporting infrastructure that facilitates water access and Blueway use such as launching sites, signage, day use facilities, piers, view points and camping. It is this supporting infrastructure that is shown on the Concept Plan Map. The river connects the portals, the nodes and numerous water-based experiences. The Blueway links communities along the river and complements the coastal based BC Marine Trail Network.

To accommodate multi-day journeys, there needs to be supporting infrastructure appropriately spaced along the river including water access, day-use facilities and camping or fixed accommodation. Whether kayaking the islands of the Fraser delta for the day, taking a water taxi to cross from the north to the south shore, or setting out on a multi-day journey tracing a historical storyline, the possibilities are endless.

“VISITORS USING THESE WATER TRAILS CAN NAVIGATE FROM ONE COASTAL COMMUNITY TO ANOTHER, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE AMENITIES ... LEARN ABOUT LOCAL HISTORY ... EXPERIENCE THE FLORA, FAUNA, AND THE COASTAL ECO-SYSTEM ... EACH COMMUNITY MAY OFFER.”

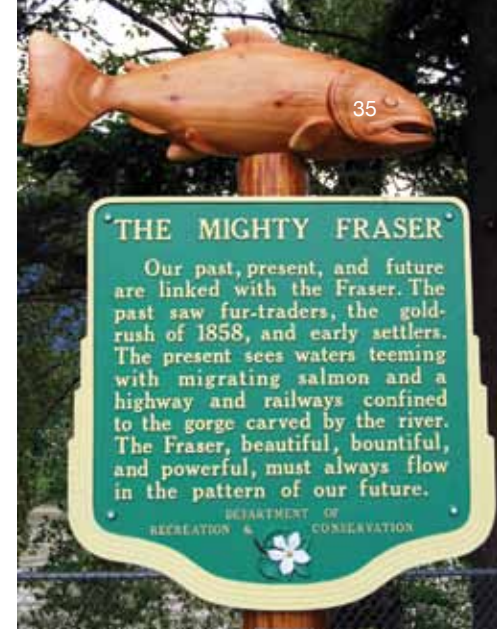
B.C. MARINE TRAILS NETWORK

Amenity and Feature Points

As part of the concept planning process, over 300 Amenity and Feature Points were identified as locations to experience the river. These points are all part of the ETF concept and represent discrete ‘projects’ that are either infrastructure (e.g. facilities or amenities), program-based (e.g. education or interpretive activities or events) or system-wide opportunities (to be applied across the entire Project Area). One way of better understanding the diversity of amenity and feature points and what they consist of is by reflecting on the demonstration projects. Each of these is part of the ETF Concept, and is a distinct point opportunity that helps create and solidify the ETF identity.

There are numerous existing amenities and features along the river, and for those that are not yet in place, many are already planned as part of municipal Official Community Plans or park and trail plans, ensuring that ETF is well integrated with other agencies’ existing plans. Other ‘points’ were contributed at community forums and other events.

The Planning Atlas captures all of the Amenity and Feature Points identified as well as both Interim and Vision Trail alignments. Within this tool, a set of evaluation criteria based on the ETF’s objectives and eight themes were used to test the fit with the project and readiness for implementation. This filtered set of opportunities, including Trails and Blueways, signage, and other highly ranked elements were consolidated to assist in the development of an Illustrative Foundational Program (Section 2.3).



“MY FAVOURITE MEMORIES OF THE LOWER FRASER ARE THE FAMILY OUTINGS ON THE RIVER AND MARSHES IN THE PORT GUICHON AREA WHERE I HAVE LIVED ALMOST ALL OF MY LIFE. OVER THE YEARS, I HAVE ENJOYED NATURE WALKS, BIRTHDAY PARTIES, BEACH PARTIES, BARBECUES, BIRD HUNTING AND COMMERCIAL FISHING IN MY “BACKYARD”.

- ETF IDEAS FORUM PARTICIPANT (OCTOBER 28, 2010)

Nodes

Nodes are destinations along the Trail and Blueway or locations where people can come to the project to ‘experience the Fraser’ without having to travel the Trail. They are characterized as having a cluster of amenities, features and experiences close together, are in a location where there is an existing or planned population density or community, are intersecting with the trail, and are providing an access point and amenities for the blueway. There are 26 nodes envisioned between Hope and the Salish Sea, some of which exist, and others that are planned in municipal Official Community Plans or as an integral part of ETF. They are intended to motivate and facilitate engagement with the Fraser River and will have a kiosk to act as a point of introduction, information and orientation to the Trail. Travelling downstream, these envisioned nodes are:

A. Hope

Hope is one of British Columbia’s oldest settlements. Before the municipality was established, the Stó:lō tribal village of Ts’qo:ls existed along the banks of the Fraser River. When visiting the local museum visitors can learn about explorer Simon Fraser’s arrival in 1808 and the establishment of Fort Hope trading post by the Hudson’s Bay Company forty years later. This destination also offers the opportunity for First Nations to share their culture and heritage with visitors. Today four major highways converge at Hope, enabling it to serve as a gateway to rest of the province. Combined with stunning geography, this hub provides a key stop for visitors to experience an abundance of recreational adventures from the Fraser River up to the peaks of the surrounding mountains.

B. Seabird Island

Seabird Island is located along the north shore of the Fraser River in the upper Fraser Valley, three kilometres northeast of the town of Agassiz and home to the Seabird Island Indian Band. This storied island derived its name from the June 1858 grounding of the transport paddle-wheeler ‘Sea Bird’. This destination could offer visitors authentic cultural and heritage tourism experiences, and already has as the annual Tulips of the Valley Festival and First Nation Festival. If the breathtaking backdrop does not give a true appreciation for the ecological importance of the area, then Maria Slough which surrounds the Island will certainly do so. It is known for its ecological importance for amphibians, fish, birds, and several species at risk.

Totem Pole, Hope

C. Harrison Hot Springs

Nestled against magnificent mountains and the sandy beaches of Harrison Lake, Harrison Hot Springs is a destination filled with history and natural wonders. Although the hot springs were not discovered until the Cariboo Gold Rush in the late 1850s, the village appeared on maps several years earlier. Harrison Lake is accessible for boaters via several launches and offers year round wildlife viewing with common sightings of eagles, herons, salmon, and seals. The natural beauty of Harrison Hot Springs is brought to life with several annual events and celebrations. This node provides a treat for visitors looking to relax and rejuvenate.

D. Rosedale / Popkum

Located amidst Chilliwack's agricultural lands, Rosedale presents future opportunities to experience the area's plentiful agricultural operations and offerings along the dyke system. Nestled under Mount Cheam, the breathtaking Coastal Mountains offer awe-inspiring scenery. Underneath the Agassiz-Rosedale Bridge is Ferry Island Provincial Park which is used for day fishing and as a boat launch. Rosedale is also a place to tell stories of the past related to industry and transportation. Many of the earliest mill development took place here and before the bridge existed, travel crossing the river was done by boat and ferry.

E. Sts'ailes-Chehalis

The Chehalis River delta is known for its natural beauty and serves as a prominent environmental feature along the Harrison River Blueway. This node is embedded in the Sts'ailes Band (formerly Chehalis Indian Band)

traditional territory and is a place where culture, heritage, and the environment meld together into a truly powerful experience. Sts'ailes is actively promoting tourism initiatives through the Sasquatch Eco-Crossing Lodge, Sts'ailes Lhawathet Lalem (Chehalis Healing House), Heritage Trail, and, in the future, Sp'óq'es (Bald Eagle) Café, which could become the country's first major bald eagle orientated educational-tourist venture. This area is also proposed by the Province to become a Wildlife Management Area since the areas river and delta habitat support important staging and wintering habitat for bald eagles and trumpeter swans and significant spawning habitat for salmon and white sturgeon. This area is referred to as a "Salmon Stronghold" since all species of salmon return here. With chartered tours down the Harrison River Blueway visitors can fully immerse themselves in this node's historic features, abundant scenery, wildlife, and other natural features.

F. Harrison Mills

Located at the confluence of the Harrison and Fraser Rivers, the only reminder of the once thriving community of Harrison Mills is the Kilby Historic Site, which provides visitors with a realistic glimpse into early twentieth century pioneer history. Also tucked away in this rural pastoral setting is Kilby Provincial Park which offers beaching and boating on the Harrison River and easy access to the Fraser and Harrison Lake. With Canadian Pacific Railway's main transcontinental line passing right by, this is a place to tell the rural lifestyle story of industry and transportation.



Harrison Mills



G. Chilliwack Waterfront

Chilliwack Landing was first settled in the 1850's and consisted of a Paddle Wheeler dock, hotel and service buildings. As there was limited space in this location, the town of Chilliwack was established 'Five Corners'. This node presents an opportunity to reconnect the community with the Fraser River and to bring together First Nations' culture and history, early settlement, and outdoor recreation. Today, Chilliwack offers a variety of tourist attractions, world-class sports fishing, white water river rafting, beautiful lakes, hiking and biking trails, and great festivals. Adjacent to the node is a regional park that has the potential to be a flagship in the region.

H. Barrowtown

Tucked beside Sumas Mountain, Barrowtown offers a lush array of environmental surroundings and outdoor experiences (Bert Brink Wildlife Management Area, eastside of Sumas Mountain Regional Park, Barrowtown Pump Station Staging Area, and Sumas River Dyke Trail). When connected by way of spanning the Sumas River, visitors will be able to explore the Fraser River's floodplain all the way up to the peak of Sumas Mountain. Barrowtown is a location that could also show how best to integrate railways and crossings in close proximity to the river.

I. Mission Waterfront

Coastal mountains, sprawling farmland, and the imposing Fraser River give Mission instant visual appeal. Yet beyond the visual, this rural

Fraser Valley community also boasts a thriving cultural scene and numerous recreational activities. Mission's waterfront is undergoing redevelopment and is already a key destination for year-round fishing and experiencing the 'Mighty Fraser' during freshet at the Mission Demonstration Project. In the future visitors will be able to walk and cycle the entire foreshore as the dyke trail is developed.

J. Matsqui

Matsqui is a small historic village located on Matsqui Prairie slightly south of the Fraser River. Enjoy a stroll on the main street, pick some local blueberries at several surrounding farms, or head towards Matsqui Trail Regional Park for a walk along the bank of the Fraser River. With the eastern end of Matsqui Trail Regional Park abutting Sumas Mountain, a future connection to this magnificent regional park with sweeping vistas of the surrounding flat lands is foreseeable. The Mission Bridge was recently enhanced to improve pedestrian/cyclist access making connections to the Mission Waterfront node on the other side of the river an easy, safe ride or walk.

K. Stave

Located in a forested setting, Stave is a recreational paradise that is complimented by a rich industrial past. At the Stave Falls Powerhouse visitors can experience a historic perspective on hydroelectric power and in the surrounding mountains they can touch the huge cedar stumps that drew sawmilling and cedar shingle interests. Today and continuing into

the future this area will grow as a recreational hub with Rolley Lake Provincial Park, Mission Interpretive Forest, and BC Hydro's Stave Lake, Hayward Lake, and Ruskin recreational sites.

L. Fort Langley

One of the best known heritage sites in the Lower Fraser River Corridor, Fort Langley has many historic buildings, the Parks Canada Fort Langley National Historic Site, the BC Farm Machinery & Agricultural Museum, the Fort Langley Heritage CN Station, and the Langley Centennial Museum. Brae Island Regional Park is part of this node, offering connections to and from the river and Bedford Channel and Fort Camping offers sites and programming on the river. The eastern end of McMillan Island is home to the Kwantlen First Nation. The Fort to Fort Trail connects to Fort Langley to Derby Reach Regional Park.

M. Port Haney

Port Haney is a heritage waterfront community, historically important for its rail station and regular steamboat traffic as well as its brick works and farming. The community hosts the Haney Farmers Market and Music on the Wharf and residents enjoy Fraser River access at the historic Haney Wharf or along nature trails that weave through Kanaka Creek Regional Park to the riverfront.

N. Bonson

Bonson, a relatively new Fraser River community, is located in Pitt Meadows in close proximity to the Pitt Meadows Airport and the Golden Ears Bridge. The community waterfront incorporates the Pitt River Greenway, a riverfront trail along the dyke connecting

the Golden Ears and Pitt River Bridges. A new community centre, river viewing piers, and waterfront commons allow for direct connections to the river. There are many opportunities to learn and discover stories about the surrounding agricultural landscape, the log booms on the waterfront, the Katzie First Nation and long history of the Stó:lō people.

O. Surrey Bend

The Surrey Bend node is anchored by Surrey Bend Regional Park, a complex wetland home to a diversity of wildlife and one of the few remaining undyked floodplain areas on this stretch of the Fraser River. Visitors can wander through the park or hop on a ferry to Barnston Island, a quiet agricultural community which is home to fewer than 100 residents, the Katzie First Nation, and Metro Vancouver's parkland.

P. Citadel Landing

Citadel Landing is situated along Port Coquitlam's riverfront and includes a waterfront boardwalk, Peace Park and staging area. Adjacent to this node is the confluence of the Coquitlam, Pitt and Fraser rivers, the south Pitt River section of the Traboulay PoCo Trail, Colony Farm Regional Park, and the Coquitlam River Wildlife Management Area. These locations provide connections to the river and the area's rich biodiversity. The Wildlife Management Area is home to one of the largest Great Blue Heron colonies in BC, and provides habitat and feeding grounds for many other birds and animals. Colony Farm Regional Park provides dyke trails, a community garden and is the former site of the historic Essondale psychiatric asylum and provincial demonstration farm. The Kwikwetlem First Nation lands are



Citadel Landing

located on the Coquitlam River adjacent to the regional park and the First Nation operates a Colony Farm bike tour and rental business.

Q. Coquitlam Waterfront

Once the site of the largest sawmill in the British Empire, the Coquitlam Waterfront node is planned to become a town centre, mixing new residential, commercial and light industrial. This Village at Fraser Mills will be oriented towards the water, providing piers, a boardwalk and other recreational activities. Industry that is adjacent to the East and West could provide for educational opportunities about solid waste management, sustainable energies and the active industrial landscape.

R. New Westminster Quay

The City of New Westminster is an urban centre with a strong connection, both historic and present, to the Fraser River. It is the oldest city in western Canada – and the original capital of British Columbia. Queen Victoria named the city, thus it is also referred to as the ‘Royal City’. There is already an extensive waterfront trail system in place here, with interpretive signs that echo the themes and stories of the Fraser. There is also a public market, the Fraser River Discovery Centre, a historic downtown, a cultural and event presence and plans for further connections east to Sapperton Landing.

S. Brownsville

Located amidst Surrey’s industrial lands, Brownsville presents the opportunity to expand waterfront programming and recreational opportunities and to increase connectivity to the

Fraser River where public access is currently limited. This is a key location for interpreting different marine-dependent industrial uses and their reliance on the Fraser River. This node provides a venue for small events and enjoyment of a waterfront park and beach areas.

T. Queensborough

A quiet community developed on lands once set aside for a military reserve, Queensborough initially provided cheap housing for mill and cannery workers, leading to a mix of ethnicities. Recent investment and revitalization of this community helped provide a new waterfront trail, boat landing and piers. This is a place to enjoy a stroll along the river, imagine what life would be like on a houseboat, and interpret the many bridges crossing the Fraser River and how their placements have shaped the region.

U. Sunbury

A future eco-industrial development, Sunbury, located at the Zone ‘C’ Lands, is envisioned to include a public waterfront area with shops and restaurants to attract visitors. It will showcase sustainability principles through building design and operation as well as environmental stewardship, and will be a place to express and interpret the importance of industrial land preservation in our region. Sunbury is adjacent to the Burns Bog Ecological Conservancy Area.

V. Riverport

A recreation and entertainment hub, Riverport is a place where visitors can catch a movie, play hockey, go for a swim or grab a pint with friends. Nestled between industrial and agricultural lands, visitors and residents can also enjoy the waterfront trail, launch a kayak at the dock, or pick up some fresh produce at the local farm market.

W. Steveston

The Steveston waterfront once lined by canneries and still home to Canada's largest commercial fishing harbour, is now a pedestrian-oriented mix of boardwalks, piers, park areas and homes. A bustling tourist destination with bike rentals, whale watching and plethora of cafés, restaurants and shops, it charms visitors and residents with its historic feel and offers cannery and shipyard tours. There are many celebrations and events including the Farmers and Artisans Market, the Tall Ships Festival and the Salmon Festival.

X. Ladner

Ladner, a historic fishing and farming village, has plenty to experience including farmers markets, shops, restaurants, and adjacent environmental and agricultural areas including the George C. Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary and South Arm Wildlife Management Area. A redevelopment strategy for the waterfront area is complete, with planned public access and amenity improvements. This is a key stop to or from the Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal where visitors can learn about the area's history, explore the marshlands or check into a Bed and Breakfast.

Y. Tsawwassen

For the Tsawwassen people, the Fraser River is their lifeblood. They are a proud, seafaring Coast Salish people who have inhabited this part of the river for thousands of years. The Tsawwassen First Nation completed a Land Use Plan in 2009, and is presently exploring a variety of sustainable developments on TFN lands, including residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial projects. This node is surrounded by agricultural land and is strongly connected to the Salish Sea. It borders on Roberts Bank and Sturgeon Banks, intertidal and marsh areas that are critical habitat for migrating waterfowl.

Z. Ferry

The Ferry node includes the BC Ferries' Tsawwassen Terminal and its Causeway and is an entrance to the Lower Fraser River Corridor. The Causeway itself has been used for many years as an informal recreation site, and the surrounding tidal marshes make it an important place for many birds, including the Great Blue Heron, the Trumpeter and Tundra Swans, and the Western Sandpiper.



Steveston

Portals

Portals are the entry points to Experience the Fraser. There are three portals envisioned that anchor the project and that serve as points of welcome: in Hope, New Westminster and at the Salish Sea. Portals are more than trailheads – they are gateways to ETF where a number of amenities, features and experiences exist in close proximity. Each portal is characterized by an ETF Pavilion, a place of information, interpretation and orientation, and of sufficient scale and presence to excite users and to introduce them into their first ETF experience. There is also a staging area with amenities and services. Finally, portals are places of connection to other regional and provincial trail systems: to the east, New Pathways to Gold Society and the 2010 Spirit Trails, and to the west, via BC Ferries, the Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, and the Capital Regional District’s Lochside and Galloping Goose Trails.

East Portal

As you travel south down the Fraser Canyon or west from the interior of the province, all routes converge at Hope. This corridor connects the Lower Mainland to the rest of the province and therefore is a critical hub. At this eastern portal, there are opportunities to partner with the District of Hope, Chawathil First Nation, BC Parks and others. Chawathil First Nation’s Telte Yet campsite and Xwelqamex (Greenwood Island) connect to the Fraser River. At these locations there is a vision to create an authentic tourism interpretation destination. The District of Hope is surrounded by towering peaks, mature forests, and quality trails waiting for visitors to explore. The municipality has several parks which allow for outdoor recreation opportunities such as boat launching, fishing, picnicking and birding. The Centennial Park in downtown Hope offers visitors one of the most easily accessible and best views of the Fraser River anywhere. In addition, this portal already has a thriving community network that will only be strengthened with ETF. This portal is envisioned to be a place of greeting and orienting visitors by way of wayfinding and interpretation features.

Urban Portal

The portal at the New Westminster Quay is an important ETF point of entry for the urban population of the Burrard Peninsula, Richmond and the North Shore. It is also a transit and trail hub with connections to SkyTrain, the BC Parkway and the Central Valley Greenway. The Fraser River Discovery Centre facilitates this portal's function as a significant point of entry, introduction and orientation and is an exciting location to learn about the river's history and present. The New Westminster waterfront is also home to Hyack's Fraserfest, Paddlewheeler Riverboat Tours, the Quay marketplace, bicycle tours and rentals, museums and theatre, and the waterfront boardwalk.

West Portal

The western portal is where the Fraser River flows into the ocean, creating rich marsh and intertidal habitat along Sturgeon and Roberts Banks. The Tsawwassen First Nation is located at the ocean's edge - a growing community with a strong history and dynamic future vision. The Corporation of Delta and the community of Tsawwassen are also located in close proximity to the western waterfront. This area is further enlivened by BC Ferries' Tsawwassen Terminal and causeway, a vibrant and busy transportation hub for the province and recreation amenity. The extensive Port Metro Vancouver and rail infrastructure at Deltaport is a major terminal operation for Canada. Nearby there are numerous parks and community trails connecting to a myriad of historic, cultural, environmental and agricultural experiences. At the western portal, there are opportunities to partner with the Corporation of Delta, BC Ferries, Port Metro Vancouver, the Tsawwassen First Nation, the BC Ministry of Transportation and others.



West Portal



Kettle Valley Railway Bridge

2.3 ILLUSTRATIVE FOUNDATIONAL PROGRAM

The Illustrative Foundational Program consists of 63 actions and projects essential to building a strong and recognizable ETF identity. It is a recommended set of priority actions and is intended to have the flexibility to be guided by the various partners choosing to participate in delivery. As funding is secured, the program can advance. However, if resources or priorities change, the Foundational Program can adapt and projects of similar impact may be substituted. The Illustrative Foundational Program includes the top 20% of the over 300 amenity and feature opportunities identified for the Concept Plan which were evaluated for ‘fit’ and ‘readiness’ with ETF or alignment with existing plans and resources. It also includes a number of recommended projects that are already planned but which demonstrate how association with and connection to ETF will amplify tourism, economic development, recreation and other benefits. The Illustrative Foundational Program is laid out to align with the five concept elements, but also includes some actions that are either not geographically based, or that span the entire project area. The Illustrative Foundational Program will:

- result in sufficient on the ground presence that ETF has a recognizable, well branded identity that reflects project goals;
- ensure that the “Canyon to Coast” Trail is navigable from Portal to Portal;
- have Recreational Blueway support infrastructure for a daily paddling distance (approximately every fifteen kilometers);
and
- fill 50% of the gap in the “Canyon to Coast” Trail’s Vision Route, (completing over 70% of the total Vision Route).



Pegleg Bar

'Canyon to Coast' Trail

- Phase I of the "Canyon to Coast Trail" (from Fort Langley to Colony Farm Regional Park in Metro Vancouver and route to be determined in the Fraser Valley Regional District) will be designated, in place and signed.
- Seven trail segments will fill priority gaps in the "Canyon to Coast" Trail's Vision Route:
 - Hope to Agassiz along the north side of the river (waterfront) – improves connectivity for an alternate Trans-Canada cycling route (~34 km);
 - Mission along the north side of the river (waterfront) from Silvermere Lake east to Hatzic Lake (~ 16 km);
 - Matsqui Trail west to Fort Langley (~18 km);
 - Derby Reach Regional Park west to the Golden Ears Bridge (~2 km)– will improve connectivity for the Trans-Canada Trail;
 - Pitt River Greenway east to the Maple Ridge waterfront at Port Hammond (~2 km);
 - Surrey waterfront between the Port Mann Bridge and Surrey Bend Regional Park (~6 km); and
 - New Westminster Pier Park to Coquitlam (~3km).
- Recreational access will be secured through agreements with the Province, First Nations and others along six dyke structures to fill priority gaps in the 'Canyon to Coast' Trail's Vision Route:
 - Chilliwack from the Agassiz Bridge west to Sumas Mountain (~20 km);
 - Kent-Agassiz dyke system (16km);
 - Part of the Nicomen Island dyke system (~20km);
 - Part of the Dewdney dyke system (~9km);
 - Delta between the Tsawwassen First Nation and Ladner (~8 km); and
 - Tsawwassen First Nation between the BC Ferry Causeway and Corporation of Delta Dyke Trail (~4 km)
- Five pedestrian/cycling water crossings to advance connectivity over the river:
 - Upgrade the Mission Railway Bridge to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists;
 - Upgrade the Kettle Valley Railway Bridge underneath the Fraser Bridge (Trans-Canada Highway) in Hope to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists;
 - -Harrison River between Harrison Knob and Harrison Mills;



- - Sumas River Crossing between Sumas Mountain and Chilliwack; and
- - New Westminster Railway Bridge: between the Quay and Queensborough – acknowledged as a potential and desired connection in the City of New Westminster's Official Community Plan.

- The points of intersection with the Trans Canada Trail (e.g. west side of the Pitt River Bridge, the Vedder Canal and at the two Portals) are acknowledged and highlighted on the ground to facilitate users' experiences.
- Existing bridges are for more than just vehicles - they have been upgraded or modified to include a dedicated trail (pedestrian and cycling access), viewpoints, theme interpretation, public art, and ETF branding.
- Improved pedestrian and cycling access on the Agassiz Bridge or replacement bridge.
- Improved recreational access to and on the new Port Mann bridge for pedestrians and cyclists, ensuring dedicated ramps and improved access to communities, parks, trails and the river on both sides of the bridge.
- Improved pedestrian and cycling access on the Pattullo Bridge or replacement bridge.
- If a new Fraser River bridge is built near the George Massey Tunnel, good pedestrian and cycling access is ensured, or at the very least there is improved functionality through the tunnel.
- All bridges are signed as crossings of the Fraser River.

Recreational Blueway – Supporting Infrastructure

There are currently fifteen sanctioned, motorized boat launches in the Project Area. To facilitate recreational boating and use of the Blueway for day and multi-day trips, eight new or enhanced boat launches between the Alex Fraser Bridge and Hope are proposed in the following locations:

- Hope;
 - Dewdney / Deroche;
 - Island 22 Regional Park;
 - Chilliwack – Rosedale area;
 - the Mission Bridge area;
 - Pitt Meadows at Ferry Slip Landing – under consideration by Metro Vancouver Regional Parks and Pitt Meadows;
 - Langley waterfront between Fort Langley and Glen Valley Regional Park – under consideration by the Township of Langley; and
 - Surrey at Brownsville Node.
- A Blueway Signage & Wayfinding System is in place.
 - All regional parks on the river will provide water access and some amenities to support Blueway use.
 - In addition, the following locations will provide clear access to the Blueway and sufficient amenities to facilitate Blueway use:

- -Hope (Chawathil First Nation - Telte-Yet Campsite);
- -Laidlaw (FH Barber Provincial Park);
- -Rosedale (Ferry Island Provincial Park); and
- -Harrison Mills (Kilby Provincial Park).

Amenity and Feature Points

Infrastructure

- Improved access, trails and natural and cultural interpretation in Sumas Mountain Regional Park.
- One enhanced and one proposed new FVRD regional park (Island 22, and Landstrom Ridge).
- Enhanced camping for paddling groups at Matsqui Trail Regional Park and three downstream regional parks (recommended at Barnston, Glen Valley and Deas Island) and new camping facilities at Chilliwack .
- Improvements to Ferry Island Provincial Park including: boat launch, camping, and day-use amenities.

Programming

- ETF information is provided on BC Ferries traveling to and from the Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal.
- Parks Canada will work with ETF to nominate the Fraser River Dyking System as a national historic event and develop associated programming at Parks Canada properties along the river.
- Advance the Chawathil First Nation's proposed "Living Village Experience" – at the Telte-Yet Campground in Hope. Through this experience,

Chawathil First Nation's culture and heritage would be shared through both land and river based tourism services and products.

- The Sts'ailes Band's Sp'óq'es - Bald Eagle Café will be developed. This café would be a paid viewing site for people to come and observe, appreciate, and photograph thousands of bald eagles who are feasting upon surplus spawned out salmon carcasses – a natural occurrence that could be promoted as a world class tourism experience through this café.
- Xá:ytem Longhouse Interpretive Centre is located at BC's oldest known settlement and contains over 9,000 years of Stó:lō First Nation's history, spirituality, and culture. It is a National Historic Site - one of the first Native spiritual sites in Canada to be formally recognized in this manner. A heritage centre at Xá:ytem reflecting the values and the spiritual, cultural and archaeological traditions of the Stó:lō Nation will be developed that does not compromise the natural or spiritual integrity of this very special place.

Nodes

- Kiosks will act as a point of introduction, information and orientation to the Trail and will be in place in existing nodes where the Interim Route and Vision Route coincide. This occurs in 18 locations: Seabird Island, Harrison Hot Springs, Rosedale-Popkum, Harrison Mills, Chilliwack Waterfront, Barrowtown, Mission Waterfront, Stave, Matsqui, Fort Langley, Port Haney, Bonson, Citadel Landing, New Westminster Quay, Queensborough, Steveston, Ladner, and Ferry nodes.



Portals

- A pavilion will be in place at each portal to mark the beginning of the ETF Trail and Recreational Blueway. These will be of sufficient scale to denote this as an entry point to ETF and to provide information, orientation, and interpretive opportunities.
- There will be a staging area with services and amenities at each portal.
- The Urban Portal at New Westminster will be an important point of entry from the Burrard Peninsula, Richmond, and the North Shore. The Fraser River Discovery Centre will facilitate this portal's function as a significant point of entry, introduction, and orientation to ETF with a film and a small exhibit dedicated to promoting ETF. In addition, the Fraser River Discovery Centre will be enhanced through the completion of its fixed exhibits featuring the bold landscapes of the Fraser River from Mount Robson to the Pacific Ocean.

System-wide Initiatives

- ETF is well branded including logo, tag line, and marketing strategy.
- ETF website.
- ETF smart phone "app".
- Five Fraser River stories will be developed and programmed along the "Canyon to Coast" Trail.
- Two annual events in different parts of the corridor will be held where ETF can be celebrated.
- A full scale Way-Finding System will be in place from Hope to the Salish Sea.
- Add the North Arm of the Fraser River to the Project Area and undertake the planning for this addition in the early phases of implementation.



Trans Canada Trail Pavilion, North Vancouver



Hong Kong, Ocean Park



Port Mann Bridge

2.4 ASPIRATIONS... More BIG Ideas

Whereas the Foundational Program is focused on practicality and priorities, the project can stretch further. There are a multitude of creative, big ideas that could help define Experience the Fraser and set it apart as a world class outdoor recreation, cultural and heritage destination. This list is illustrative and is intended to inspire potential partners to see themselves in the Project.

Cable Car Crossings:

Self propelled cable cars speed visitors across watercourses as part of the trail experience.

DeltaPort Overpass at the entrance to DeltaPort:

The waterfront dyke trail is discontinuous at this location. A trail overpass will provide connectivity and interpret port and rail activities.

Experiential Tourism:

Based on the Italian ‘agriturismo’ concept where people vacation on a working farm and participate in its daily activities, imagine participating in a First Nations’ longhouse and village, working on a pioneer heritage farm, becoming a Royal Engineer for the day, or living at a working Fort.

ETF Bus Tour from Hope to the Salish Sea.

‘Floatels’: Imagine waking to the sound of the water lapping at your door in a floating Fraser River hotel or Bed and Breakfast.

Floating Event Venue:

An ETF barge that is used as a stage or venue moves along the river for various celebrations, festivals and events.

Fraser Ghost Ships Park:

A new park highlighting the various boats used on the Fraser through history, including First Nations’ canoes, a paddle wheeler, steamboat, tugboat, and fishing boats. With their hulls partially buried, visitors can come on board and explore the boats and the river’s history.

**Fraser River Island Hopping:**

Paddling and camping tours through the Fraser River Islands (e.g. Bristol, Island 22, Greenwood, Croft, Vasasus, Herrling group or others with expanded First Nation partnerships). A water taxi or water bus provides transportation and regulates visits.

Pocket Picnic Riverside Parks:

Small, riverfront parks, possibly linear, with a high level of accessibility, contain enclosed picnic shelters and tables for all-season use. In urban areas, food carts or vendors are located in close proximity.

Port Park:

A new waterfront 'Port Park' where the industrial working river is showcased and interpreted. Proposed location is in Richmond at the Riverport Node.

Railway Park:

A linear 'Railway Park' where historic and present railway stories are interpreted. The proposed location is in Surrey at Thornton Railyards.



River Rail tour:

Travel along the Fraser River by rail and experience the Lower Fraser River Corridor from end to end in one day!

Snorkeling with the Salmon:

Guided snorkeling tour on Harrison River gets people into the river swimming or floating down the river in the midst of a salmon run.

Underwater Viewing Cavern:

Located on the Harrison River, this facility would provide people with a window into river life – they will see spawning salmon and other types of freshwater fish in their natural habitat.

A suite of visitor or presentation centres that are multi-experiential and partnership driven (either building from existing locations or new) that interpret Fraser River themes and support Experience the Fraser.

“THE FRASER RIVER BELONGS TO ALL OF US, BRINGING PEOPLE DOWN TO THE RIVER ON A TRAIL OF CONNECTIVITY IS JUST THE RIGHT THING TO DO, FROM AN ENVIRONMENTAL... HEALTH ... RECREATIONAL STANDPOINT, THERE IS NO LOSE HERE, THIS IS A WIN FOR EVERYONE!

RANDY HAWES, MEMBER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF BC.



3.0 NEXT STEPS

“A RIVER SEEMS A MAGIC THING. A MAGIC, MOVING, LIVING PART OF THE VERY EARTH ITSELF.”

LAURA GILPIN

3.1 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Experience the Fraser was initiated by the Fraser Valley Regional District, Metro Vancouver, and the Province: however, it has always been recognized that ETF is much bigger than these three parties. Growing and implementing the vision must to be a collaborative venture that involves many stakeholders including First Nations, municipalities, other agencies, the private sector and motivated community groups and citizens, with ongoing support and participation from the regional districts and the Province. It has already been stated that this project’s success is contingent on strong partnerships where a common vision is shared, where partners recognize the multiple benefits of participation and are committed to seeing the project come to fruition. As a result, there are a number of strategies that need further discussion and development to help guide the Concept from Plan to Implementation.

Ongoing partnership development must be the first priority. This Concept Plan illustrates what can be achieved and attempts to entice potential partners with a compelling vision, but these relationships need to be cultivated and it remains to be determined who key implementers will be and who will administer the project over time.



A related strategy is developing a sustainable governance and financing model. As the project moves toward implementation, there is an opportunity to open up the dialogue about governance and invite others to participate in the project in different and more direct ways. ETF crosses a number of administrative boundaries and has a large number of stakeholders, all of whom could be involved in realizing or facilitating implementation of the ETF Vision. Once it is known who is interested in participating in implementation, a sustainable governance model will define the roles and responsibilities including decision-making, accountability, project management and administration, strategic planning and priority development, and the flow of information and resources. Strongly connected to governance is a financing model that determines the longevity of the project and resourcing for administration, branding and marketing, outreach and public involvement and capital development.

“COMING TOGETHER IS A BEGINNING. KEEPING TOGETHER IS PROGRESS.
WORKING TOGETHER IS SUCCESS.~

HENRY FORD

There are a number of issues that challenge linear corridor and trail projects, including the fact that trails cross administrative boundaries and the challenges of land use conflicts or the geography of a region. A key ETF implementation strategy is to look at some of these cross-jurisdictional and other barriers from a regional perspective, to develop best practices and to facilitate partnerships and consistently applied solutions. Examples include securing recreational dyke access through a dyke protocol, addressing recreational interfaces with agriculture and industrial land uses, and developing an effective and consistent ways of dealing with regulatory aspects of implementing the plan.

As the ETF Implementation Strategies evolve with input from stakeholders and interested parties they will be incorporated into an Implementation Plan along with identified partners and actions. This process will be influenced by the wisdom of those who are Fraser River passionates who feel strongly that: “it’s time to focus this kind of attention on the value of the river in our daily lives and as an environmental, recreation and tourism resource and source of inspiration.”

Harrison River



Acknowledgements

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NOTES

