



August 19, 2025

### Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site Fee Study

**Project Purpose:** to provide options and costing related to charging fees at Britannia Shipyards

#### Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site Background



#### Site Description

Britannia Shipyards is a 3.2 hectare historic cannery and shipyard site located on the South Arm of the Fraser River in the community of Steveston in Richmond BC. The site is part of 3km stretch of shoreline known collectively as Cannery Channel, which was once the most prolific salmon canning centre in British Columbia. The site was declared a National Historic Site in 1992 and opened to public as a heritage park in 1995.

The site consists of 13 historic wooden buildings related to early canning, fishing, and boatbuilding operations and open park spaces arranged along a wooden boardwalk. Nine of these buildings are open to the public with exhibits and activities related to their previous use. A feature of the site is its dock providing moorage for historic boats. Additionally, at the site's centre is a picnic area where public can enjoy viewing river wildlife and ecology.

When Britannia Shipyards was acquired in the 1990s, the original vision was for it to be a heritage attraction similar to the nearby Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site owned by Parks Canada. Since this time, the City has undertaken extensive capital work to restore buildings and develop exhibits on site. Currently, the City has plans underway to complete the restoration of the final two heritage buildings on site with one intended to serve as a new visitor welcome center with a retail space and the other providing interpretation of Indigenous stories. It is anticipated that the restoration of these buildings will be complete by the end of 2027.

The site is bounded by the Fraser River to the south, Westwater Drive and residential development to the north and west, and the Steveston Harbour Authority to the east. The popular Steveston Dyke Trail runs through the site, providing pedestrian and bike access. It is a 10-minute walk from Steveston Village. Transportation to the site is primarily by car. Two parking lots and some street parking are available. There is public transportation nearby with the closest stop a 15 minute walk away.

### Current Operations

Britannia Shipyards is open to public year-round with daily open hours during the high season (May to Sept). Heritage programming includes, guided tours and demonstrations, self-guided activities, and special event programming such as concerts, workshops, etc. A feature program of the site is the live heritage boat restoration work that happens in the Richmond Boat Builders. Additionally, the docks are home to a few significant heritage boats with other visiting boats being showcased from time to time.

Visitors who chose to enter the site's buildings, has averaged just over 60,000 individuals for the past few years (not including 2020 and 2021). In 2025, a people counter was installed along the popular boardwalk pathway through the site. Between January and June, 237,000 visitors passed through the site. Many of these are locals who walk through daily or weekly without entering buildings.

In addition to daily visitation, the annual Richmond Maritime Festival is a highlight for the site. This free weekend-long event celebrates local maritime heritage with cultural programming for all ages. This event generally draws 30,000-40,000 people to the site.

Visitor amenities at the site are minimal, with food service limited to food trucks who may be onsite occasionally during the summer season. There are plans for a visitor Welcome Centre including a front desk and small retail space in the future in the Japanese Duplex.

More information about the site and the programs offered can be found at [britanniashipyards.ca](http://britanniashipyards.ca).

### **Project Description**

Since its opening until today, the site has been operated as a heritage park. As the site nears completion, there is a desire to identify potential new revenue streams. The purpose of this study is to explore a range of options for charging admission or fees at the site, ranging from the current operations as a free and open heritage park serving primarily locals, to a full-scale heritage attraction serving primarily tourists.

### Scope of Work

This study will explore options for charging admission or similar fees at the site. Using market analysis and information from other similar sites, the study should include the following components for various admission options:

- Recommended admission/program rates;
- Visitor/participant projections;
- A description of the key elements required to successfully implement and support the site's operation (e.g. staffing, POS system, security, wayfinding, and infrastructure);
- Estimates for annual operating costs and revenue for each admission option;
- Estimates for minor capital costs related to operational changes required to charge admission (not to include costs for significant infrastructure changes);

- Reference examples of similar sites in Canada/North America; and
- An analysis of the key benefits and challenges related to each option, including estimated direct and indirect economic benefits to the area.

Engagement - Phase 1 Engagement would include an internal staff workshop and workshops/presentations to key stakeholder groups. The findings of Phase 1 will inform a report to Council targeted for January 2026. Depending on Council's direction, the project may move to Phase 2, public engagement. Should public engagement take place, the proponent will be expected to provide the necessary content for a public engagement process and a written report on what was heard. This information would inform a final report with recommended options for Council consideration. The scope of work for this project includes both phases of engagement.

To support this project, the City will provide:

- Access to buildings and space for meetings and public engagement sessions;
- Contact information for stakeholders;
- Relevant available information or data on visitation and operations; and
- Wage rates for staff positions; and
- Access to the Let's Talk Richmond public engagement platform.

Please note all contracts with the City of Richmond are subject to the Terms and Conditions found here: <https://www.richmond.ca/shared/assets/GTC-supply61420.PDF>.

#### Project Timeline

|                                  |                             |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Draft revenue options            | Oct. 10, 2025               |
| Stakeholder engagement completed | Nov. 14, 2025               |
| Phase 1 report                   | Dec. 15, 2025               |
| Phase 2 engagement               | start date in February 2026 |
| Phase 2 report                   | Q2 2026                     |

#### **To submit an application for this project, please provide a proposal that includes:**

- A high-level engagement plan;
- A timeline identifying key dates and activities;
- An estimate of costs to complete the project;
- Biographies/resumes of the principle people involved; and
- Examples of similar projects you have worked on.

#### Project contact:

Rebecca Clarke, Manager, Museum and Heritage at [rclarke@richmond.ca](mailto:rclarke@richmond.ca)

For more information, please call Rebecca at 604-841-2608.

#### **Deadline to express interest:**

September 14, 2025