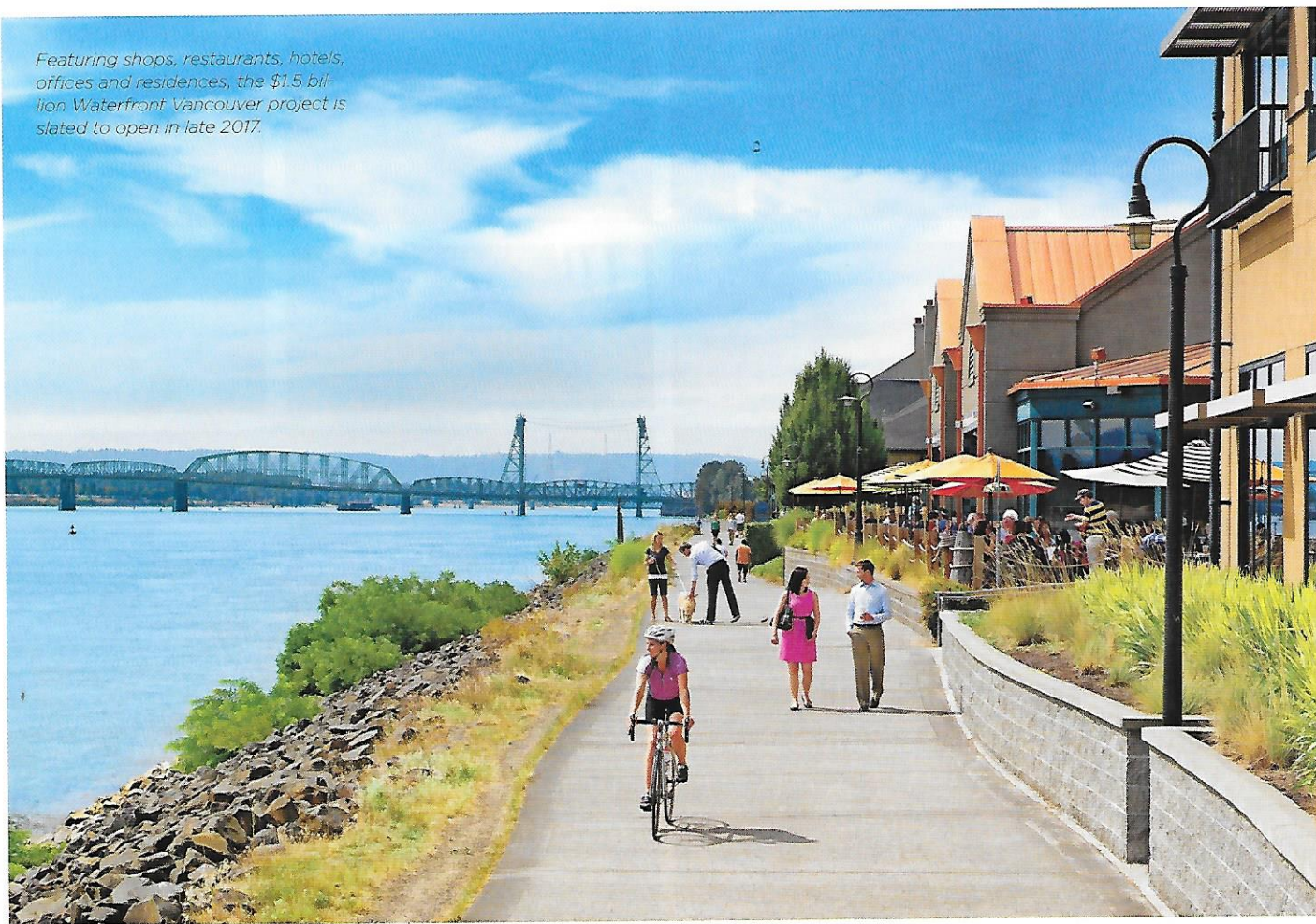


DISCOVER VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON

Vancouver's rich past and bright future make it an excellent meeting destination for today. BY LINDA HAGEN MILLER

IN 1806, EXPLORER MERIWETHER LEWIS wrote that the Vancouver, Washington, area was "the only desired situation for settlement west of the Rocky Mountains." Jacob Schmidt, director of marketing and communications for Visit Vancouver USA, adds that it's a desirable meeting destination, as well. "You won't find anywhere else in the Northwest where you can take a morning hike along the Columbia Waterfront, grab a bite to eat downtown and visit a national historic site, all within an hour's time frame," Schmidt says.

Featuring shops, restaurants, hotels, offices and residences, the \$1.5 billion Waterfront Vancouver project is slated to open in late 2017.



And while the past is honored here, the future is touted: Exciting changes are afoot in this vibrant Washington city located on the north bank of the Columbia River, 11 miles from Portland, Oregon. Slated to open in late 2017, the \$1.5 billion Waterfront

Vancouver project will give Vancouver—or "Couve," as it's called by locals—a stunning riverfront centerpiece with parks, offices, residential properties, hotels, restaurants and shops. Nearby, Port of Vancouver USA is working on a smaller development that

will include a public market, hotel and mixed-use buildings.

Where to Stay. Where to Meet.

In the heart of downtown and across the street from Esther Short Park, the 226-room

VANCOUVER, WA BY THE NUMBERS

172,860 IN POPULATION

12 MILES FROM PORTLAND INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

4th LARGEST CITY IN WASHINGTON

FUN FACTS

» ORIGINALLY THE FUR-TRADING OUTPOST, FORT VANCOUVER

» LARGEST INDUSTRIES ARE MEDICINE AND EDUCATION

Hilton Vancouver Washington is an unbeatable venue for large groups. A \$5 million renovation completed last year modernized its lobby, ballrooms, meeting spaces and guest rooms. The hotel was designed to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, and in 2007, was the first hotel in the world to achieve both LEED and Green Seal certifications. A total of 30,000 square feet of meeting space includes nine small meeting rooms and two ballrooms. In green-scene Pacific Northwest fashion, hybrid cars park free at the Hilton (all others are charged \$18 per day).

From the cast bronze statue of a Chinook chieftain to a 24-foot-tall cedar totem pole to Pendleton wool blankets draped over balcony railings, **The Heathman Lodge** showcases the beauty, history and spirit of the Pacific Northwest. The lodge atmosphere extends throughout its 10,000 square feet of meeting space, showcasing wood-trimmed walls and Northwest art. The lodge's 3,811-square-foot Fort Vancouver Ballroom and 3,139-square-foot Lewis & Clark Ballroom can both accommodate 375 for receptions or 280 for banquets. A 10-minute drive from downtown Vancouver, The Heathman has 20 suites and 182 guest rooms.

Space and flexibility are the watchwords of the **Clark County Event Center**. Located in Ridgefield, 10 miles north of downtown Vancouver, the 170-acre event center campus



The 170-acre Clark County Event Center offers more than 97,000 square feet of column-free space.

offers 97,200 square feet of column-free space, several multiuse buildings, an indoor equestrian arena and an outdoor grandstand.

For a unique meeting venue, consider the **Artillery Barracks at the Fort Vancouver Historic Site**. With painstakingly restored oak hardwood floors, tin ceilings and turn-of-the-20th-century architecture, the Artillery Barracks is a far cry from its original use as a

military barracks housing two separate battalions. Located 3 miles from downtown, the venue can accommodate meetings from 10 to 250 people.

The expansive **Pearson Air Museum** is an equally unique meeting venue. The 5,000-square-foot Historic Hangar can host events for up to 300 guests, or 400 theater-style. Its Tex Rankin Theater, equipped with



Head to Source Climbing Center for challenging team-building or post-meeting activities.

A/V, can accommodate 30–80.

The **AC Hotel by Marriott** and **Hotel Indigo** are both anticipated to open in 2018 as part of the downtown waterfront development projects. The AC Hotel will have 5,000 square feet of meeting space and 150 rooms. Boutique Hotel Indigo will have about 125 rooms, a 700-square-foot boardroom and a ballroom that will be approximately 3,000 square feet in size, all set above a ground floor of retail space. There will also be a 10-story condominium tower on the west side of the building.

What to Do. Where to Go.

Great for a brisk walk between meetings, downtown Esther Short Park is a 5-acre treasure anchored by the stunning 69-foot Salmon Run Bell Tower, which depicts the story of native Chinook Indians. Events held here include the Recycled Arts Festival, Vancouver Wine and Jazz Festival and the Vancouver Farmers Market.

Vancouver's microbrew scene is exploding

with at least 30 pubs, breweries and taprooms.

The best way to tour them and leave the driving to someone else is via **Couve Cycle's** 14-passenger, people-powered party cycle. "Don't worry if you're not up for the challenge," says Couve's owner Michael Palensky. "We have electronic assist and even provide a driver." Rent the entire bike for \$375.

Take team-building to new heights at **Source Climbing Center**, where groups work together to set goals and succeed at action-based challenges. Or, if your group is filled with foodies, **Class Cooking** offers small group, hands-on gourmet cooking classes for up to 12 participants. Located adjacent to the **Burnt Bridge Cellars**, classes can also be paired with wine tastings. The winery offers sit-down winemaker dinners for up to 16 people or wine tasting and appetizers for up to 75.

Vancouver, Washington, is a city rich in Pacific Northwest beauty and history, and with its emerging brew scene and soon-to-be booming waterfront, it's also a great place to meet. ☎

Get Connected

ARTILLERY BARRACKS AT THE FORT VANCOUVER HISTORIC SITE
fortvan.org | 360.737.7785

BURNT BRIDGE CELLARS
burntbridgecellars.com | 360.695.3363

CLARK COUNTY EVENT CENTER
clarkcoeventcenter.com | 360.397.2083

CLASS COOKING
class-cooking.com | 360.600.8006

COUVE CYCLE
couvecycle.com | 360.831.8687

THE HEATHMAN LODGE
heathmanlodge.com | 360.254.3100

HILTON VANCOUVER WASHINGTON
vancouverwashington.hilton.com | 360.993.4500

PEARSON AIR MUSEUM
nps.gov | 360.816.6241

SOURCE CLIMBING CENTER
sourceclimbing.com | 360.694.9096

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