



CONFERENCES AND BUSINESS EVENTS PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE SUPPORTING BUSINESSES IN DOWNTOWN VICTORIA

Victoria, B.C. (Nov. 21, 2024) – With six weeks left in an already successful tourism year, Destination Greater Victoria’s Business Events Victoria (BEV) team has secured a 28th city-wide conference for the region next year, putting 2025 on the board as one of the best years for city-wide conferences. This achievement is particularly significant for downtown Victoria businesses, as the shift to hybrid-work has meant fewer public-sector workers in the downtown core, and cruise ships are arriving later in the evening.

“This is one part of the downtown economy that is really driving new business and new money into small business. It is performing and delivering,” says Paul Nurse, CEO of Destination Greater Victoria. “Every conference and meeting we host brings new business, visitors, and much needed spending into the local economy, which is a welcome boost for local businesses, especially during off-peak times.”

The economic impact of the 28 city-wide conferences secured for Greater Victoria in 2025 is estimated at \$35 million and is expected to contribute almost \$6.5 million in taxes, while directly or indirectly supporting 8,400 jobs. On average, each city-wide conference generates \$1.17 million in business sales.

City-wide conferences are larger meetings, conventions, tradeshow, or special events with 400+ delegates that require the simultaneous use of the Victoria Conference Centre and many hotels, restaurants and other venues to host and support them. BEV is the division of Destination Greater Victoria that is on contract to manage the sales and marketing of the Victoria Conference Centre.

The foundation of a strong visitor economy is its business events sector. Conference and meeting delegates tend to stay longer, spend more than leisure travellers, use more services, are more likely to extend their stay or return for leisure purposes, and generate valuable revenue during off-peak seasons. In addition, attendees book in advance, which adds certainty.

Provincial government statistics suggest that on average in British Columbia, meetings and conference delegates spend 40-70% more than leisure travellers and international conference delegates spend up to four times more. According to Meetings Mean Business Canada, business events generate about 40% of overall tourism spending in Canada, which contributes approximately \$47 billion in direct revenues annually.

“By successfully attracting meetings to our region, especially during the off-peak between September and May, the Business Events team at Destination Greater Victoria is playing a critical role growing our visitor economy and supporting the downtown Victoria business community,” says Jeff Bray, CEO of the Downtown Victoria Business Association. “Downtown Victoria businesses and attractions are open year-round, so they and their employees depend on downtown being a busy, safe, and fun place to be 12 months of the year, with steady foot traffic and a large customer base to serve. Conferences and the thousands of visitors they bring to our region are helping fill the gaps.”

“While we are aware that many parts of the downtown economy have not recovered fully from the effects of the pandemic, this is one area of business that is delivering near-record results,” adds Nursey. “To keep downtown vital, and support small and medium sized enterprises, we need more of this type of business. Business events benefit everyone in Greater Victoria by generating valuable tax revenue, which funds the municipal and regional services on which we all rely.”

The overall value of Greater Victoria’s visitor economy cannot be overstated. According to the latest economic impact report by InterVISTAS released in October, Greater Victoria welcomed 4.9 million visitors in 2023, generating \$3.5 billion in economic outputs and contributing \$2 billion to the region’s gross domestic product (GDP). Over the past year Greater Victoria hosted 1.3 million same-day visitors, who spent an average of \$90 per person. In comparison, the 2.8 million overnight visitors who stayed here spent an average of \$610 per person generating \$1.7 billion in spending.

For more information on upcoming conferences coming to Greater Victoria, please visit [Upcoming Events | Destination Greater Victoria](#).

About Destination Greater Victoria: Destination Greater Victoria (Greater Victoria Visitors and Convention Bureau) has proudly served as our region's official, not-for-profit destination marketing and management organization for half a century. As we celebrate our 50th anniversary in 2024, we continue to work hand-in-hand with nearly 1,000 businesses and municipalities in Greater Victoria to promote, enhance, and manage our vibrant destination. We look forward to another 50 years of supporting the visitor economy that brings vitality to our region. For more information, visit the Destination Greater Victoria [website](#).

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