

# VANCOUVER

Your Business & Investment Guide



**VANCOUVER**  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION

Vancouver: globally recognised  
for innovative, creative and  
sustainable business.





## Contents

WELCOME TO VANCOUVER	2
Smart & Beautiful City	4
Place of Ideas	8
Greenest City	12
Global Gateway	16
Talent Magnet	20
Vancouver Lifestyle	24
BUSINESS CLIMATE	30
VANCOUVER FOCUS	38
<b>Key Sectors</b>	
Technology & ICT	41
Digital Entertainment & Interactive	49
Green Economy	57
<b>Snapshot: More Vancouver Sectors</b>	
Arts & Culture	64
Finance	66
Life Sciences	68
Natural Resources	70
Social Enterprise	72
Specialty Apparel	74
ASIA-PACIFIC CENTRE	76
NEIGHBOURHOOD PROFILES	82
WHY VANCOUVER	90
THE VANCOUVER ECONOMIC COMMISSION	96
NOTES & SOURCES	100
PARTNERS	102
FAST FACTS	104

An aerial night view of the Vancouver city skyline, showing numerous illuminated high-rise buildings and a dense urban area. In the background, the city is nestled at the foot of snow-capped mountains under a dark blue twilight sky. The image is overlaid with large, semi-transparent geometric shapes in shades of blue and green.

# Welcome to Vancouver

Of all the places in the world to invest, of all the cities in which to do business, only one offers all these competitive advantages.

# Smart & Beautiful City

An aerial photograph of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, taken at sunset. The sky is a vibrant mix of orange, pink, and purple. In the foreground, the Science World geodesic dome is illuminated with warm lights. The city skyline, including the Vancouver Convention Centre and the BC Place stadium, is visible in the background. The water of the False Creek is calm, reflecting the colors of the sky and the lights of the city.

A smart city with a fast-growing workforce in a majestic setting

Consistently ranked one of the most liveable cities in the world, Vancouver is celebrated for its striking natural beauty, ready access to beaches and the outdoors, mild year-round climate and steadfast commitment to public transit and other active transportation modes, including walking and cycling. Vancouver offers much more too: namely, a business climate that's innovative, progressive, green and approachable.



**Highline** is a startup accelerator that helps entrepreneurs build great companies through seed funding, mentorship, collaborative workspace and 3 months of intensive programming.

## Vancouver offers a business climate that's **innovative, progressive, green** and **approachable**.

With a thriving economy, top talent, renowned lifestyle and an enviable location, there are many reasons why Vancouver is the place to be. Its diverse economy includes exciting growth in the green and technology sectors, as well as a rapidly expanding creative sector. This is especially true in technology, digital entertainment and interactive, and the green economy, as well as more traditional industries including tourism, forestry, mining, transportation and logistics.

Among cities in North America, Vancouver offers exceptionally low corporate tax and hydro rates. Businesses also benefit from dedicated tax incentives from various levels of government.

Vancouver's location is a major asset. Its time zone offers same business-day access to major cities including Los Angeles, New York and London. As Canada's Asia-Pacific Gateway, Vancouver is readily connected to the region and its international business centres including Beijing, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Tokyo.

Over the years, Vancouver has earned an excellent reputation worldwide for hosting major international events including **TED**, **GLOBE**, **SIGGRAPH** and the **Vancouver 2010 Olympic** and **Paralympic Winter Games**.

Vancouver's business climate is about getting business done. It's also about doing business with a social conscience. The city is home to more than 750 social enterprises engaged in problem-solving across all facets of life.

In short, Vancouver is a modern, creative and green city – a 21st century city that is leading by example. Today, having a business with a Vancouver address offers incredible cachet, as global leaders such as **Microsoft**, **Sony Pictures Imageworks**, **Amazon** and many other companies are discovering.



# Place of Ideas

A hub where entrepreneurs,  
innovation and creativity intersect

“Progressive” and “forward-thinking” are words typically used to describe Vancouver. Local scientists, engineers, researchers and designers are dreaming up new ideas that are crossing industry lines. Entrepreneurs are transforming discoveries into valuable products and services. Meanwhile, new approaches are fuelling high-tech industries and bolstering the productivity of traditional industries. So it’s easy to understand why TED and other thought leaders choose Vancouver as their home.

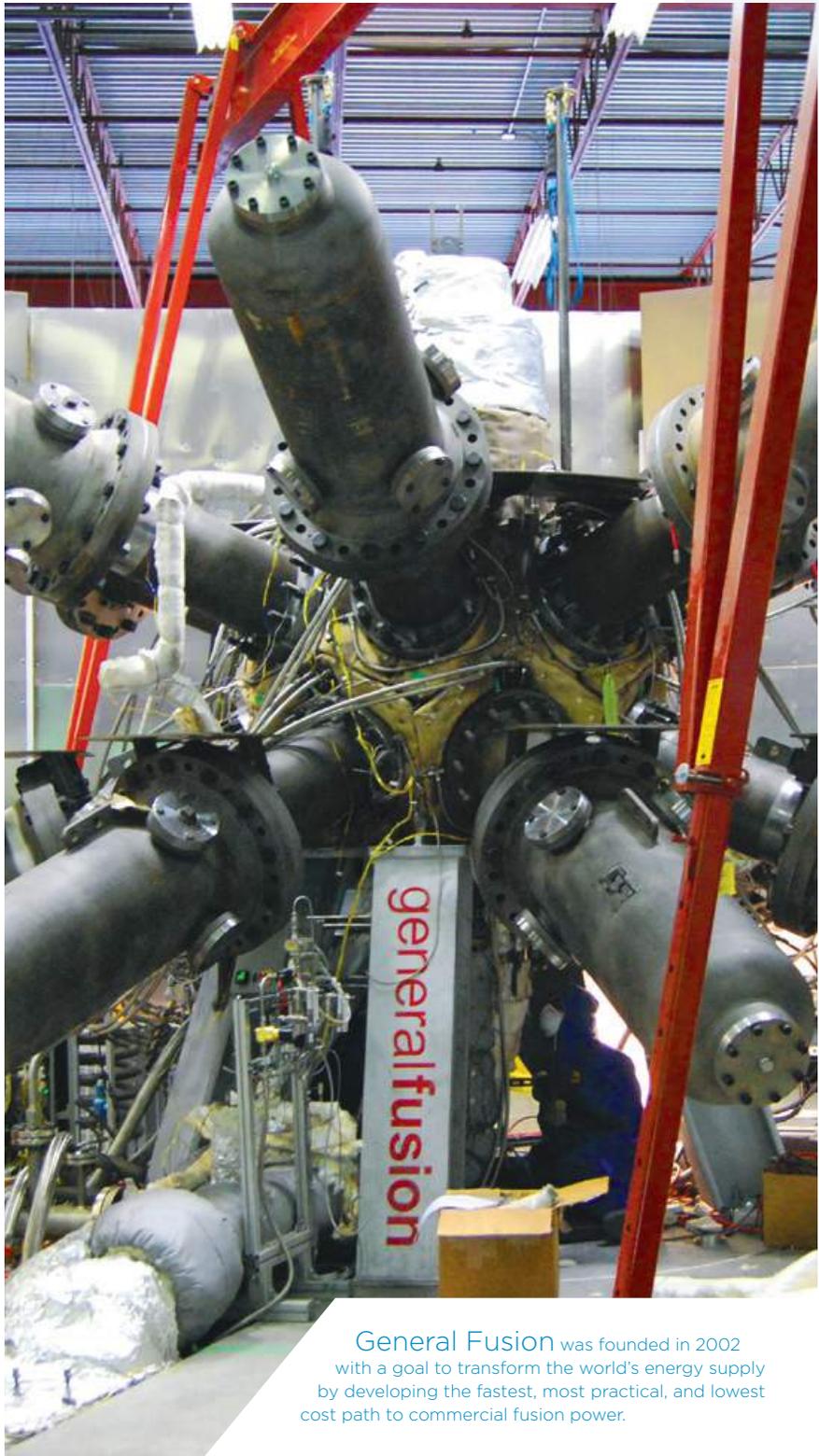


Photo: General Fusion

General Fusion was founded in 2002 with a goal to transform the world's energy supply by developing the fastest, most practical, and lowest cost path to commercial fusion power.

## Increasingly, Vancouver is becoming known across the globe as a place that **buzzes**.

While there are many factors that contribute to harnessing great ideas, Vancouver's stable business climate, first-class education system and close association with the natural environment are all driving forces behind visionary companies such as **D-Wave** (quantum computing), **General Fusion** (development of viable fusion energy) and **Aspect Biosystems** (3D bioprinting). So too are a strong professional services economy that caters to both local and international needs, and Vancouver's reputation for exporting expertise in engineering, sustainability, management, financial and technical services to companies and governments the world over.

While Canada is often seen as a safe and stable country, Vancouver builds on that foundation and adds a disruptive angle to the Canadian narrative. Here, entrepreneurs and innovators have the space and freedom to truly think "outside the box" in a way they might not do elsewhere. At the same time, the collaborative energy that lives here contributes greatly to helping Vancouver-based businesses push their boundaries, to see what's around the next corner and on the horizon – the newest ideas and latest innovations.

Increasingly, Vancouver is becoming known across the globe as an exciting place to do business – a place that buzzes. There's a reason why Startup Compass ranked Vancouver as one of the world's top startup ecosystems, and why companies big and small established and on-the-rise, are choosing to locate here.

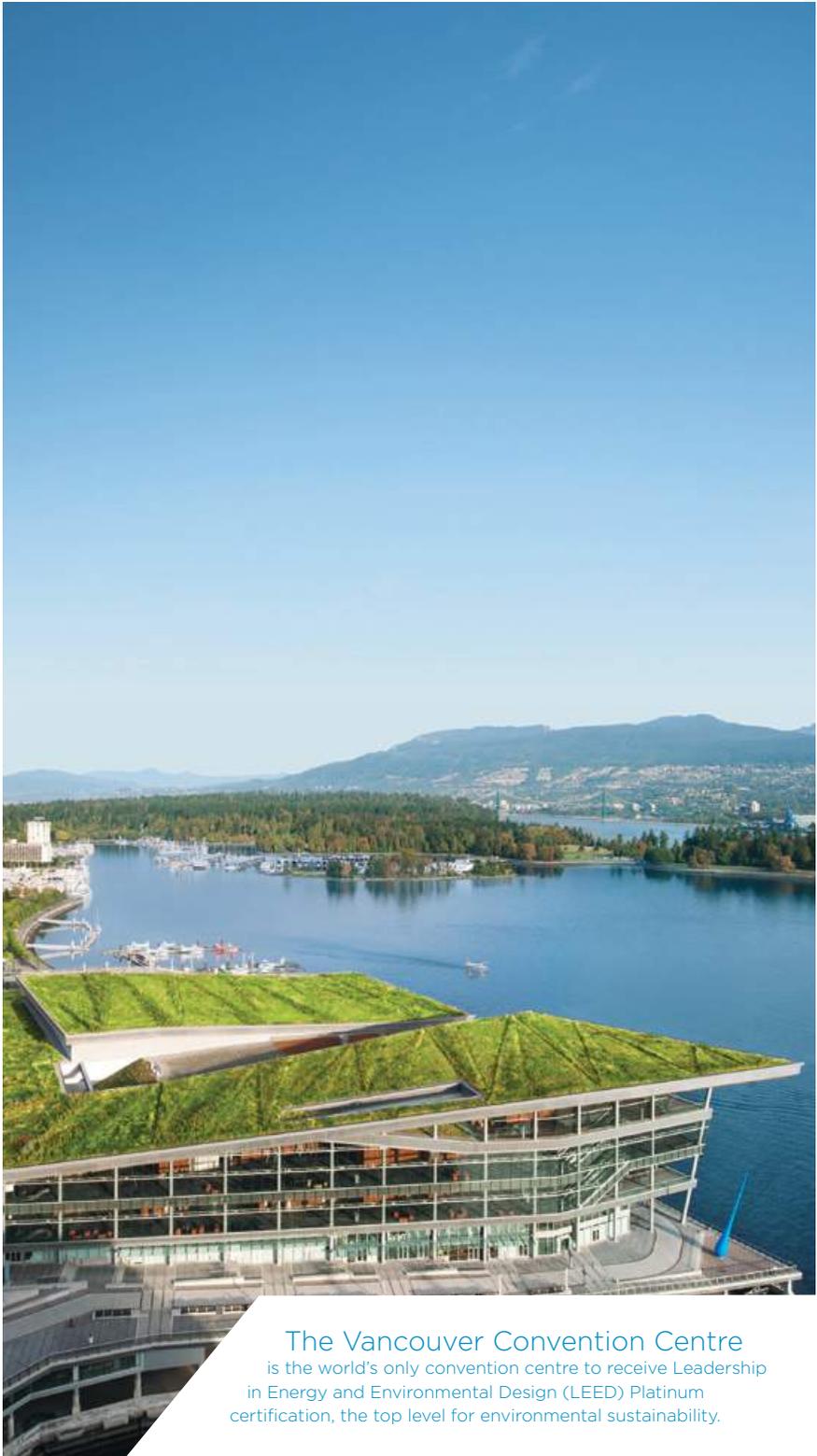
In the words of **Microsoft Canada** president Janet Kennedy, "...We could have gone anywhere in the world, and we picked Vancouver."



# Greenest City

A world-renowned city for  
green thinking and living

It's no coincidence that several globally prominent environmental groups have roots in BC, or that BC introduced North America's first revenue-neutral carbon tax. Not only is green thinking top of mind for Vancouver's businesses and residents, but green industries (and green jobs) are rapidly expanding. Today, clean technology, clean energy, green building, urban design, local food, and environmental services are sectors on the rise.



The Vancouver Convention Centre is the world's only convention centre to receive Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum certification, the top level for environmental sustainability.

## Already the **3rd greenest** city in the world, Vancouver will be **100% renewable** by **2050**.

Vancouverites' strong connection to the outdoors provides a unique competitive advantage in a world struggling to deal with environmental issues. That's one reason that Vancouver aspires to be the world's greenest city by 2020, as outlined in the City of Vancouver's Greenest City 2020 Action Plan. Vancouver has been moving forward and rapidly taking action while other cities are still talking. Concern for the environment is being transformed by the region's entrepreneurs into green business solutions – solutions with high worldwide demand. Companies such as **Westport Innovations** (clean-burning alternative fuels) and **Saltworks** (advanced water treatment solutions) are global leaders in their field. Up-and-coming companies with big commercial potential include **MineSense Technologies** (real-time 3D rock scanning), **Enterra** (sustainable animal feed and fertilizer) and **Endurance Wind Power** (distributed wind technology).

Today, sustainable urban planning, green building design and construction are broadening Vancouver's reach even further, led by companies including **DIALOG**, **Michael Green Architecture (MGA)**, **PWL Partnership**, **PFS Studio**, and **Bing Thom Architects**. Indeed, Vancouver's expertise in sustainable design, architecture, planning and engineering is guiding major developments across the globe as cities replicate the "Vancouver model." Today, in the world of architecture and urban planning, "Vancouverism" is shorthand for "sustainable urban development."

Being committed to green thinking extends to all facets of life, so it should come as no surprise that Vancouverites played an important role in growing the global local food movement and that the city's food businesses and innovators, including producers, processors, retailers, restaurants and non-profits, have wholeheartedly embraced the benefits of buying locally.

A large red gantry crane stands on a pier over the water. In the background, a city skyline is visible under a blue sky with light clouds. The crane is the central focus of the left side of the image. The right side of the image is a blue gradient overlay containing text.

# Global Gateway

Overseas connections reinforce diverse, multicultural roots

Vancouver embodies multiculturalism in every sense. Cultural and family connections – including ties to local indigenous cultures, Europe and Asia – coupled with business-friendly immigration policies, make Vancouver a top choice for professionals, international entrepreneurs and companies delivering services crossing national and cultural boundaries. More than 80 countries maintain a consular presence in Vancouver, providing support for the many foreign-based firms doing business here.



Vancouver International Airport was named Best Airport in North America seven times in a row, and ranks in the top ten airports worldwide.

## From **geographical** location to **infrastructure**, Vancouver is a true nexus for **international** business.

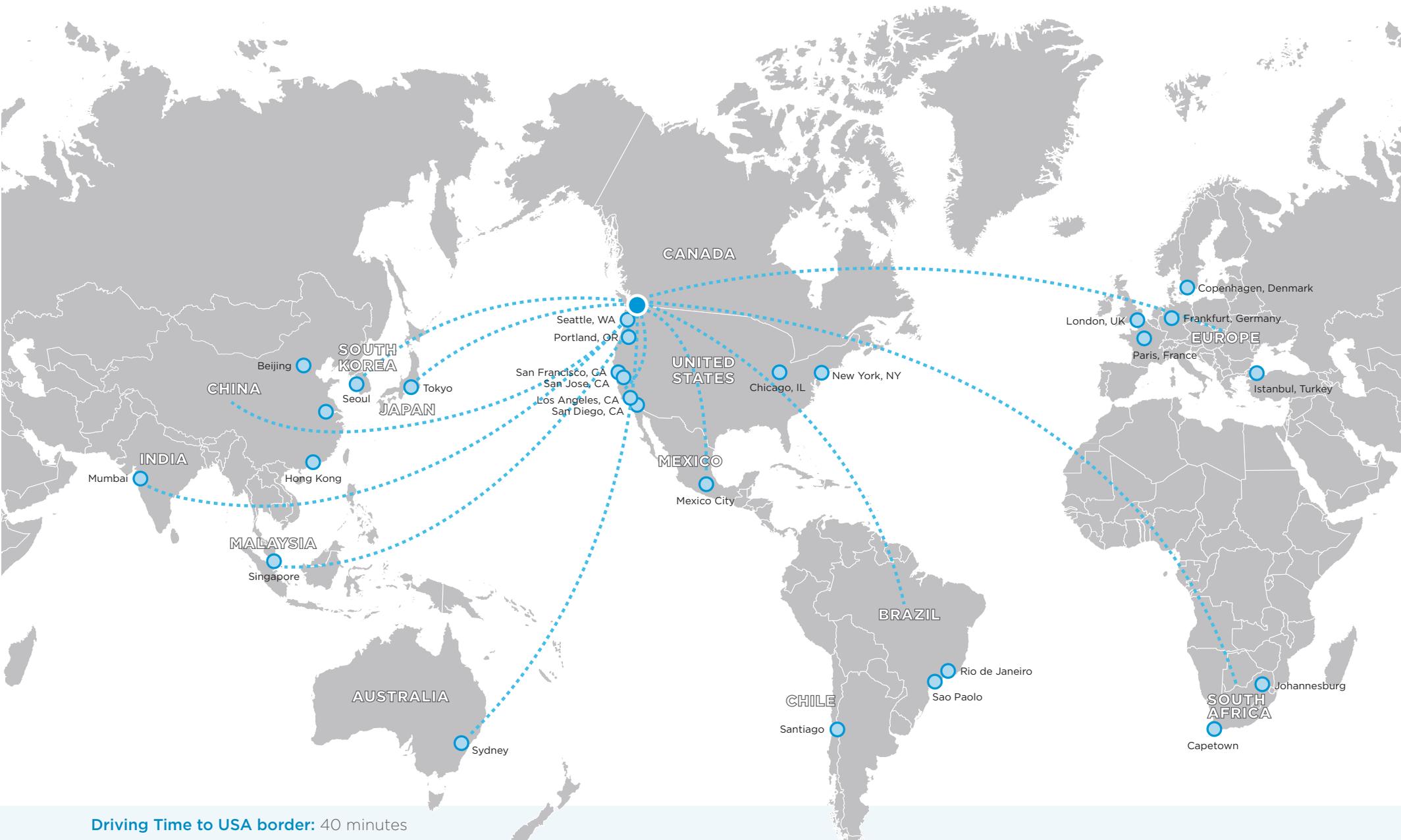
Vancouver's location offers a real edge for businesses, with the shortest distances to Asia from any major North American city and ready access to key US markets including Washington State and California. Vancouver's time zone is also a plus, offering same-day access to London, New York and Hong Kong.

As trans-Pacific traffic grows, governments and other partners are making significant investments to upgrade the capacity and efficiency of Vancouver's global gateway, with regional transportation-related investment commitments already totalling more than \$20 billion.

The **Vancouver Fraser Port Authority** includes three port authorities that are, together, delivering increased regional efficiency. Today, Vancouver is North America's leading port in export tonnage, with container flow expected to triple by 2020.

Vancouver's airport **YVR** is North America's best airport, with consecutive yearly wins, and is 26 minutes from downtown via the Canada Line, a direct rapid-transit link. Increasingly, YVR is becoming a multi-modal hub and distribution centre with companies such as **UPS** and **FedEx** opening major, innovative facilities, while its cargo-handling capacity is expected to double by 2020.

Global logistics planning and efficient delivery strategies are helping create a strong warehousing and distribution industry. This is critical as demand for just-in-time shipping grows, and increasingly streamlined customs procedures between Canada and the US increase cross-border business and trade.



**Driving Time to USA border:** 40 minutes

**Travel Time from Vancouver**

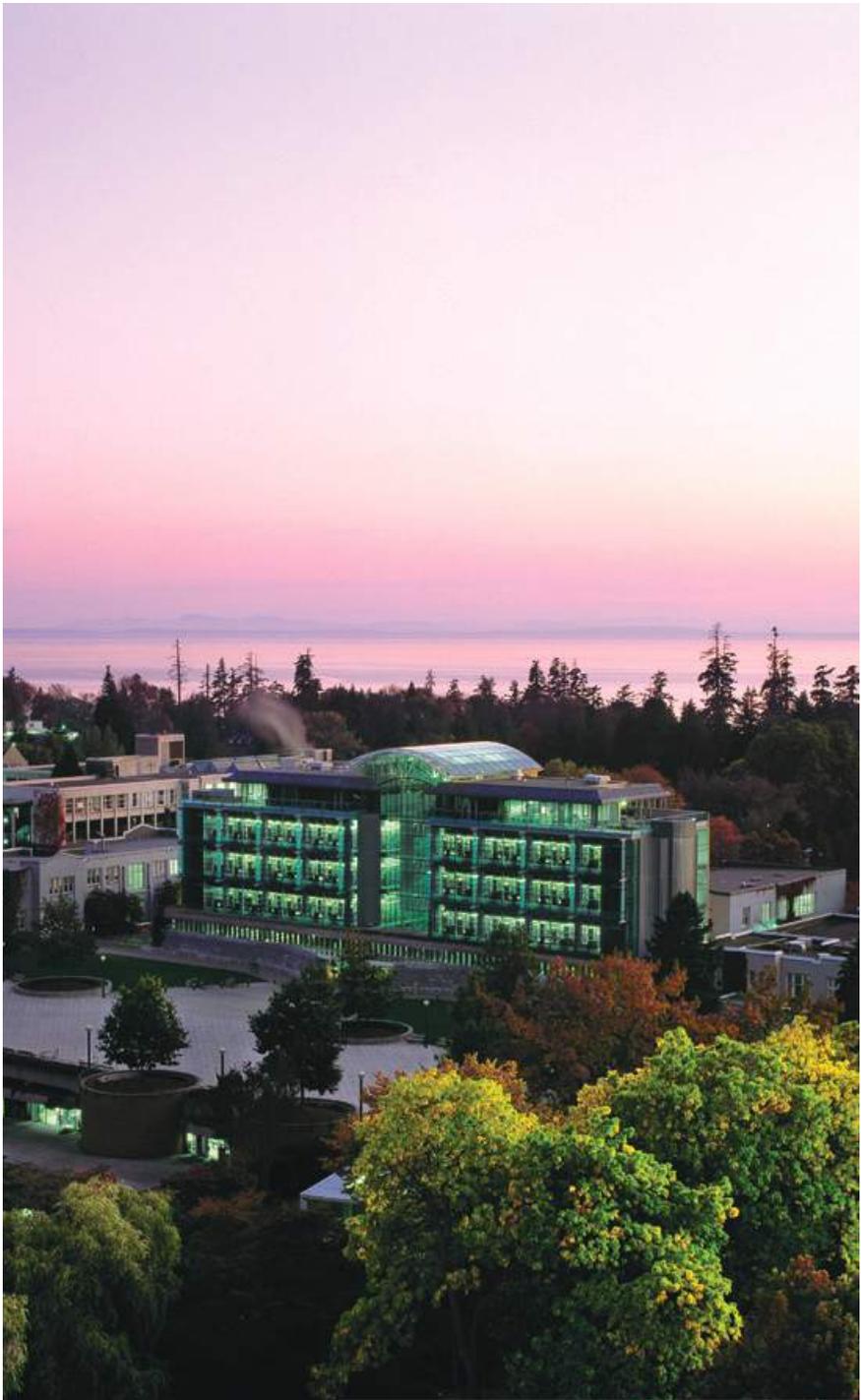
San Francisco, California	2.25 hrs	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	14 hrs	Sydney, Australia	15.5 hrs
San Jose, California	2 hrs	Sao Paulo, Brazil	14 hrs	London, United Kingdom	9 hrs
Los Angeles, California	3 hrs	Santiago, Chile	13.5 hrs	Paris, France	10.5 hrs
San Diego, California	3 hrs	Beijing, China	11 hrs	Frankfurt, Germany	10.5 hrs
Portland, Oregon	1 hrs	Shanghai, China	11.5 hrs	Copenhagen, Denmark	12.5 hrs
Seattle, Washington	50 mins	Hong Kong, China	13.25 hrs	Istanbul, Turkey	14 hrs
Chicago, Illinois	4 hrs	Seoul, South Korea	10.5 hrs	Johannesburg, South Africa	21 hrs
New York, New York	5.5 hrs	Tokyo, Japan	10 hrs	Cape Town, South Africa	21 hrs
Mexico City, Mexico	5.5 hrs	Singapore, Malaysia	16.5 hrs	Mumbai, India	20 hrs



# Talent Magnet

A city that constantly attracts global, high-quality talent

Entrepreneurs and businesses around the world are increasingly competing for talent that's educated, skilled in niche areas and globally minded. Many companies are drawn to Vancouver for this very reason. The city's outstanding career opportunities, exceptional brand, quality and affordability of education and immigration processes attract some of the world's best and brightest. This includes emerging business leaders and more than 100,000 international students who choose BC, recently ranked as having the third-best education system in the world, for their education.



**University of British Columbia**  
is consistently ranked globally among the 50 best universities, and the top 20 public universities.

## Our highly **educated, specialised** and **globally minded** talent draws leading companies to Vancouver.

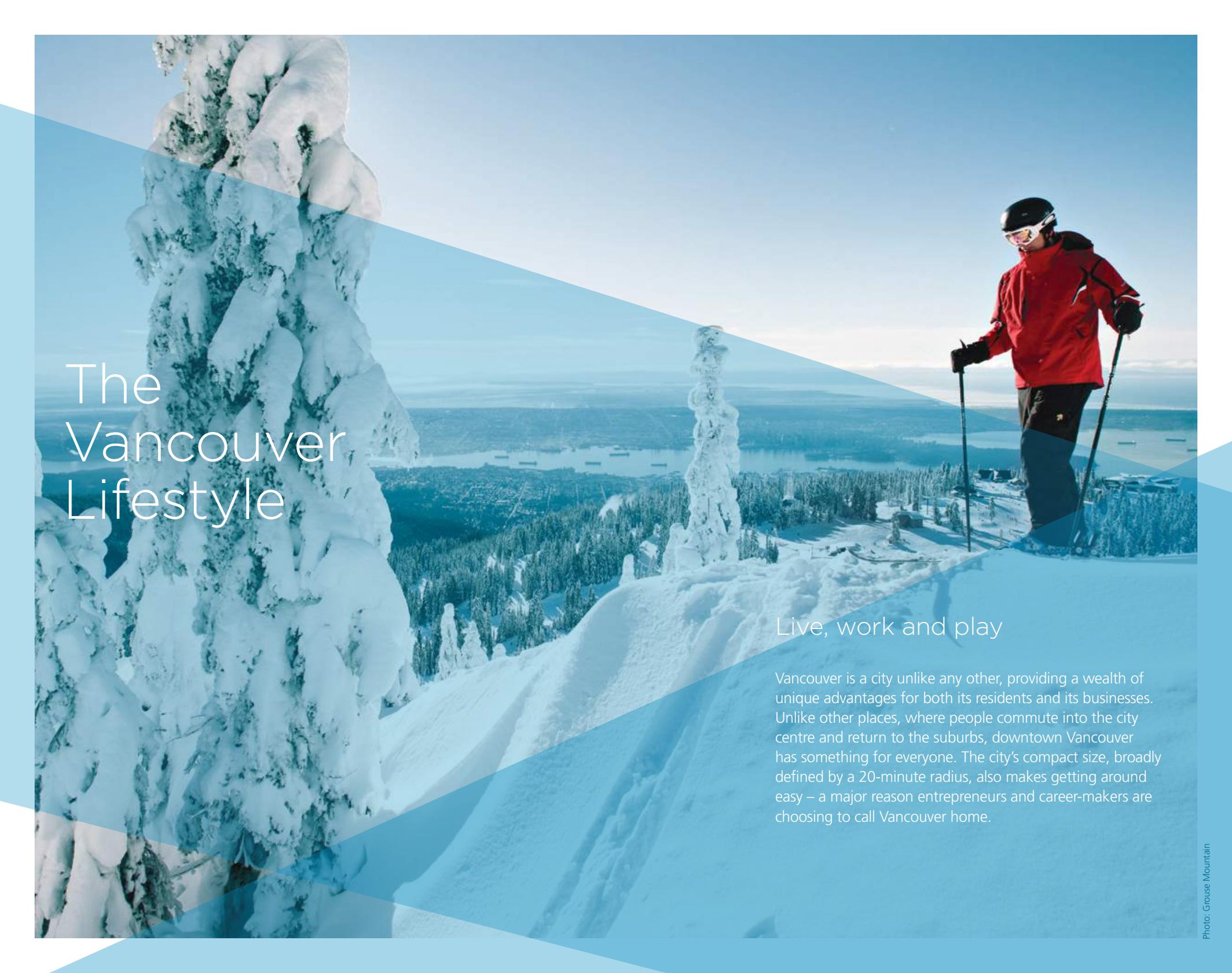
World-class universities and colleges that call Vancouver home include the **University of British Columbia (UBC)**, **Simon Fraser University (SFU)**, **Emily Carr University of Art + Design (ECU)**, **British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)**, **Vancouver Community College (VCC)**, and **Langara College**. The city also boasts specialty schools including the **Vancouver Film School (VFS)**, the **Centre for Digital Media (CDM)** and the **Visual College of Art and Design of Vancouver (VCAD)** and the **Art Institute of Vancouver**. The greater Vancouver region includes more than a dozen other outstanding institutions that collectively complement teaching and research expertise with strong international linkages and a willingness to collaborate with business. That dynamic fosters spinoff companies, startup incubation, technology licensing and commercialization.

At the same time, local educational institutions have tapped into Vancouver's diversity — building strong multicultural and international programs and links. These ties benefit local businesses by improving access to foreign language skills, international business practices, overseas talent and potential business partners.

With more than 120 unique languages identified in Vancouver's school system, education in Vancouver is truly international. In addition, 60 per cent of K–12 students speak a language other than English at home.

Vancouver is an immensely walkable and bike-friendly city, with more than 265 kilometres of bikeways and plans for public bike share — highly popular options with the top global talent that is choosing to work, live and play here. The city is well-served by buses, rapid buses, light rail, sea and aqua buses; 85 per cent of Metro Vancouver residents have a bus stop within 400 metres of home. Though the reality is that a car isn't necessary to get around Vancouver, car-share options through companies including **car2go**, **Modo** and **Zipcar** make car travel easy.

In short, there's a reason why Vancouver is consistently ranked among the world's top for liveability and quality of life.



# The Vancouver Lifestyle

## Live, work and play

Vancouver is a city unlike any other, providing a wealth of unique advantages for both its residents and its businesses. Unlike other places, where people commute into the city centre and return to the suburbs, downtown Vancouver has something for everyone. The city's compact size, broadly defined by a 20-minute radius, also makes getting around easy – a major reason entrepreneurs and career-makers are choosing to call Vancouver home.



**Kitsilano Beach** is one of the most popular beaches in Vancouver, especially in the warm summer months and has the longest swimming pool in Canada.

Consistently ranked as one of the **top 3 cities** in the world to live, Vancouver is also an **unparalleled place to work and invest.**

**Whistler**, one of the world's top ski resorts, is just 90 mins away from downtown. In addition, three local mountains, **Cypress, Grouse** and **Seymour**, offer access to trails for hiking and biking in the summer and first-rate skiing and snowboarding in winter, while **Stanley Park** offers 22 kilometres (13 miles) of pathways for walking, cycling, running and rollerblading.

Arts and culture aficionados enjoy events such as the **Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF), Vancouver International Jazz Festival, Festival d'été francophone de Vancouver; FUSE at the Vancouver Art Gallery, Queer Arts Festival, Vancouver International Bhangra Celebration, PuSh International Performing Arts Festival, Vancouver Folk Music Festival**, and more. Signature performance spaces include the Arts Club, Chan Centre for the Performing Arts, Commodore Ballroom, Queen Elizabeth Theatre and The Orpheum.

Foodies flock to Vancouver's many local farmers' markets and **Granville Island Public Market** for its fresh ingredients – local and exotic. Vancouver has a globally renowned food and drink scene, with established and on-the-rise chefs, restaurants, food trucks and bars for all tastes. Foodies also delight in discovering our unique micro-breweries and distilleries, as well as the real ethnic flavour of Vancouver's diverse neighbourhoods (see Neighbourhoods Profiles).

“One of the **World's Best Food Cities.**”

*Condé Nast Traveller*

For families, favourite places include the **Museum of Vancouver** and **H.R. MacMillan Space Centre, Science World** and **Vancouver Aquarium**. Not to be left out, Vancouver shoppers find a paradise with local and international brands at malls and shopping destinations like Gastown, Robson Street, Yaletown and South Granville.



Vancouver has built a long-term legacy of investing in its **outstanding** community facilities.

Vancouver Dragon Boat Festival is North America's largest dragon boat festival – a true celebration of Vancouver's diverse and beautiful city.



#### SPOTLIGHT Vancouver's Community Centres & Facilities

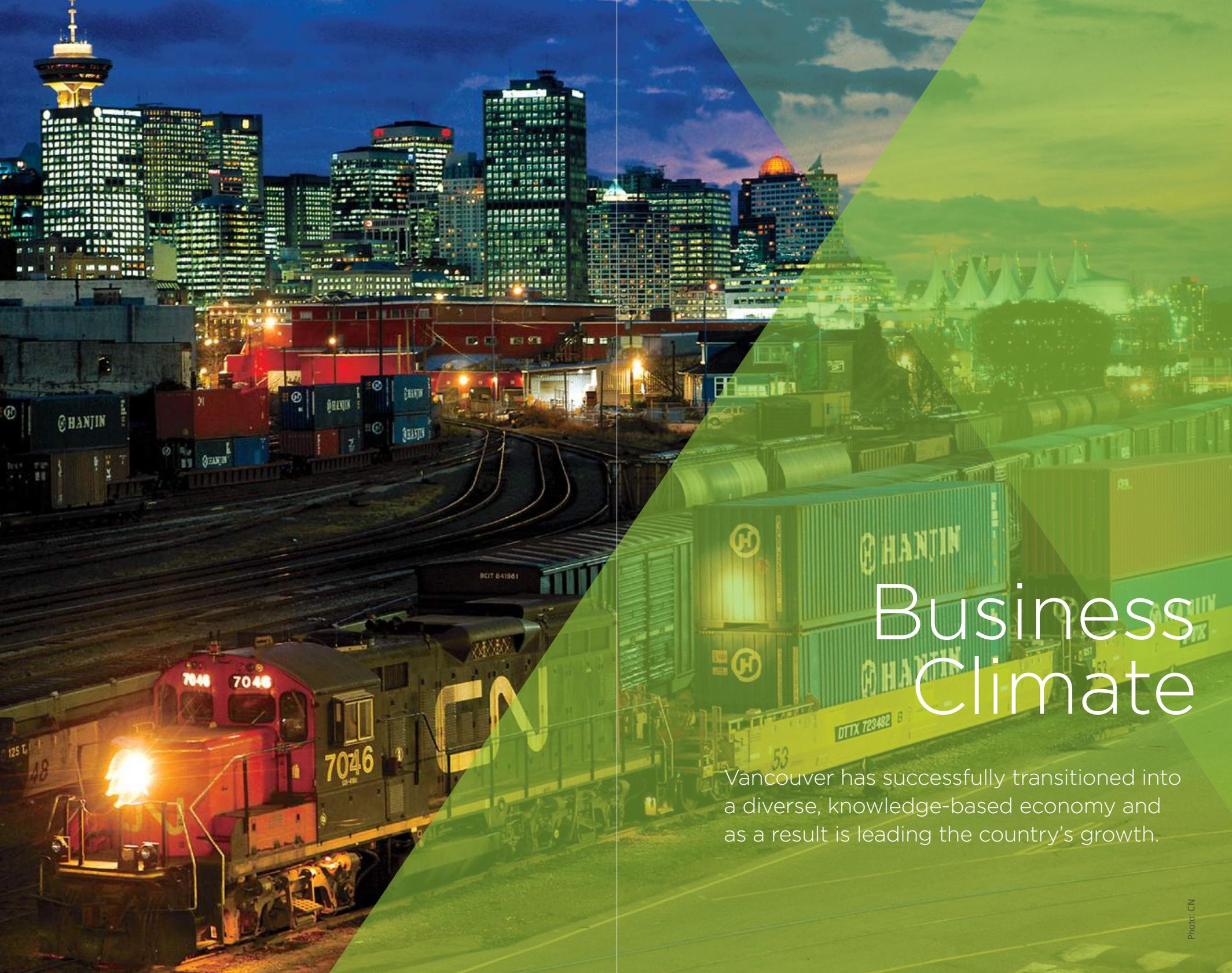
Vancouver is fortunate to benefit from a long-term legacy of investments into its community, and a great example of this is the way it has invested in its parks, facilities and Community Centres. These centres provide recreational, social and cultural activities for all residents such as swimming, arts & crafts, music, dancing and child care.

Vancouver has 24 Community Centres, as well as hundreds of other communal facilities such as swimming pools, tennis courts, football pitches, ice-hockey rinks, baseball diamonds and much more spread across the city and easily accessible in every neighbourhood. Some of the most beloved include Kitsilano's 137m long outdoor saltwater pool, Stanley Park's tennis courts, and the Hillcrest Centre – a legacy (and venue) of the 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

Sports fans will enjoy spectating at local teams, including the **Vancouver Canucks** (NHL), **Vancouver Whitecaps** (MLS) and **BC Lions** (CFL). Vancouver is also a regular host to blue-ribbon events such as the **Olympic Winter Games**, **Paralympic Games**, **FIFA Women's World Cup**, and **IRB World Rugby Sevens**.

The Vancouver lifestyle is all about work–life balance. Proof positive? Its countless yoga studios, sports clubs, spas and outstanding community centres, helping to make Vancouver one of the Healthiest Cities in the World according to Time Magazine.

Lastly, a word about the weather. Many expect Vancouver to have long, cold, snowy winters like the rest of Canada. However, our winter forecast generally consists of rain on the ground, snow on the mountains and bursts of brilliant sunshine. In fact, Vancouver has a mild, temperate climate with approximately 2,000 sunshine hours per year on average – more than London, Paris or Milan!



# Business Climate

Vancouver has successfully transitioned into a diverse, knowledge-based economy and as a result is leading the country's growth.

Vancouver has the **fastest growing** economy in Canada, averaging over **3% GDP growth**.



Vancouver is located in southwestern British Columbia (BC) – Canada’s westernmost province – and is the country’s third largest city. Vancouver offers ready access to markets in the US and Asia and is known as Canada’s Asia-Pacific Gateway, with the world at its doorstep. Looking eastward, Vancouver enjoys close connections with Calgary, Toronto and other major Canadian cities, including Ottawa and Montreal.

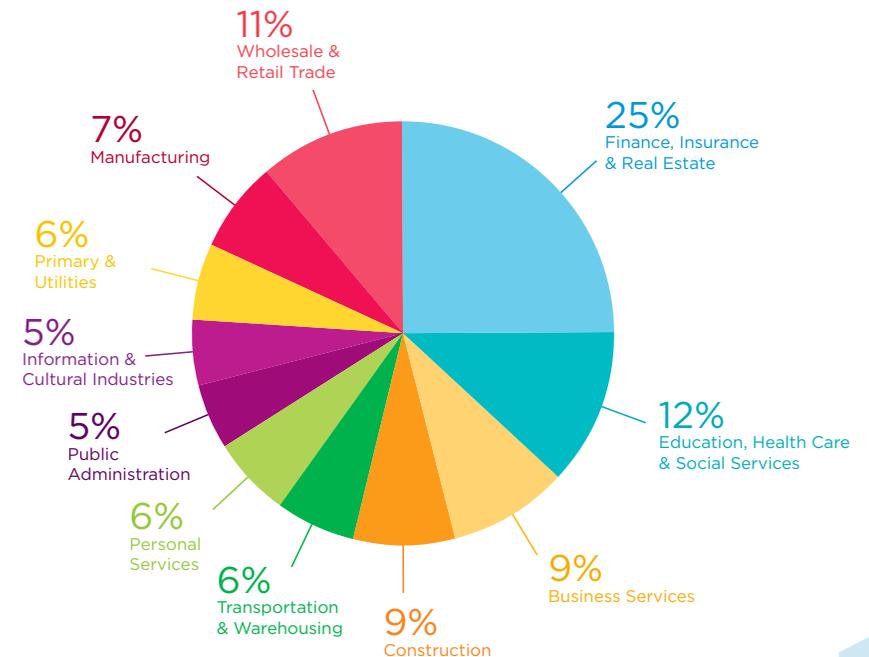
#### ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

Over the past 25 years, Vancouver’s economic role has evolved from a service centre for BC’s resource economy to a dynamic urban centre with a strong global reach.

Today, Vancouver’s economy is highly diversified, thanks to its strengths in new and exciting sectors – particularly the knowledge-based industries, and specifically the Tech, Digital Entertainment and Green sectors. At the same time, other sectors such as finance and manufacturing contribute to the diverse mix of industries that give Vancouver economic resilience and an edge over other cities.

Vancouver’s economy has grown by over 3% on average over the past 5 years, and is predicted by the Conference Board of Canada to be the fastest growing in Canada over the next 5 years.

Metro Vancouver GDP by Sector



More than 250,000 people work in the city's downtown, which includes approximately half of the region's commercial office space. Some 560,000 square metres (six million square feet) of that space has been recently completed or is under construction.

Businesses are attracted to Vancouver for the competitive advantages that set it apart, including:

- a competitive business and tax climate
- a highly diverse and talented workforce
- smart city infrastructure
- proximity to the West Coast US and Asia-Pacific region
- a first-class education system
- the city's leadership in green thinking
- global recognition thanks to hosting major international events, such as TED and the Vancouver 2010 Olympic/Paralympic Winter Games

A Vancouver-based business address brings a certain cachet, and thanks to its many advantages, Vancouver is now attracting close to a billion dollars in venture capital and foreign direct investment (FDI) each year.

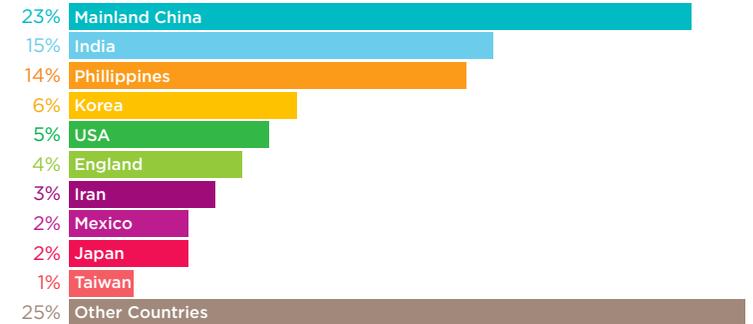
### COST COMPARISONS

Vancouver ranks highly among major cities in overall cost of doing business when compared, year after year, to other cities in North America and across the globe. In the most recent edition of KPMG's Competitive Alternatives report surveying 111 cities across the world for business costs and other competitiveness factors, key findings illustrate:

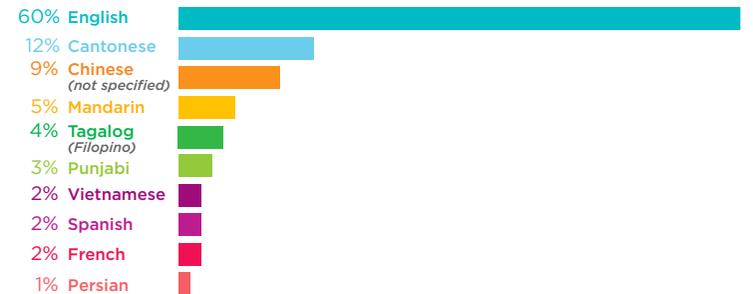
- Canada scored best on KPMG's Total Tax Index
- Among major international cities, Vancouver ranked:
  - #5 when comparing total tax costs across all 111 cities
  - #2 when comparing total tax costs across all West Coast cities, ahead of Seattle, Portland, San Francisco and LA

These and other considerations, such as Canada's world-class banking system and Vancouver's exceptionally clean and low-cost energy, make it clear why the city is consistently a top choice for businesses looking to start up operations or relocate.

### Sources of Immigration

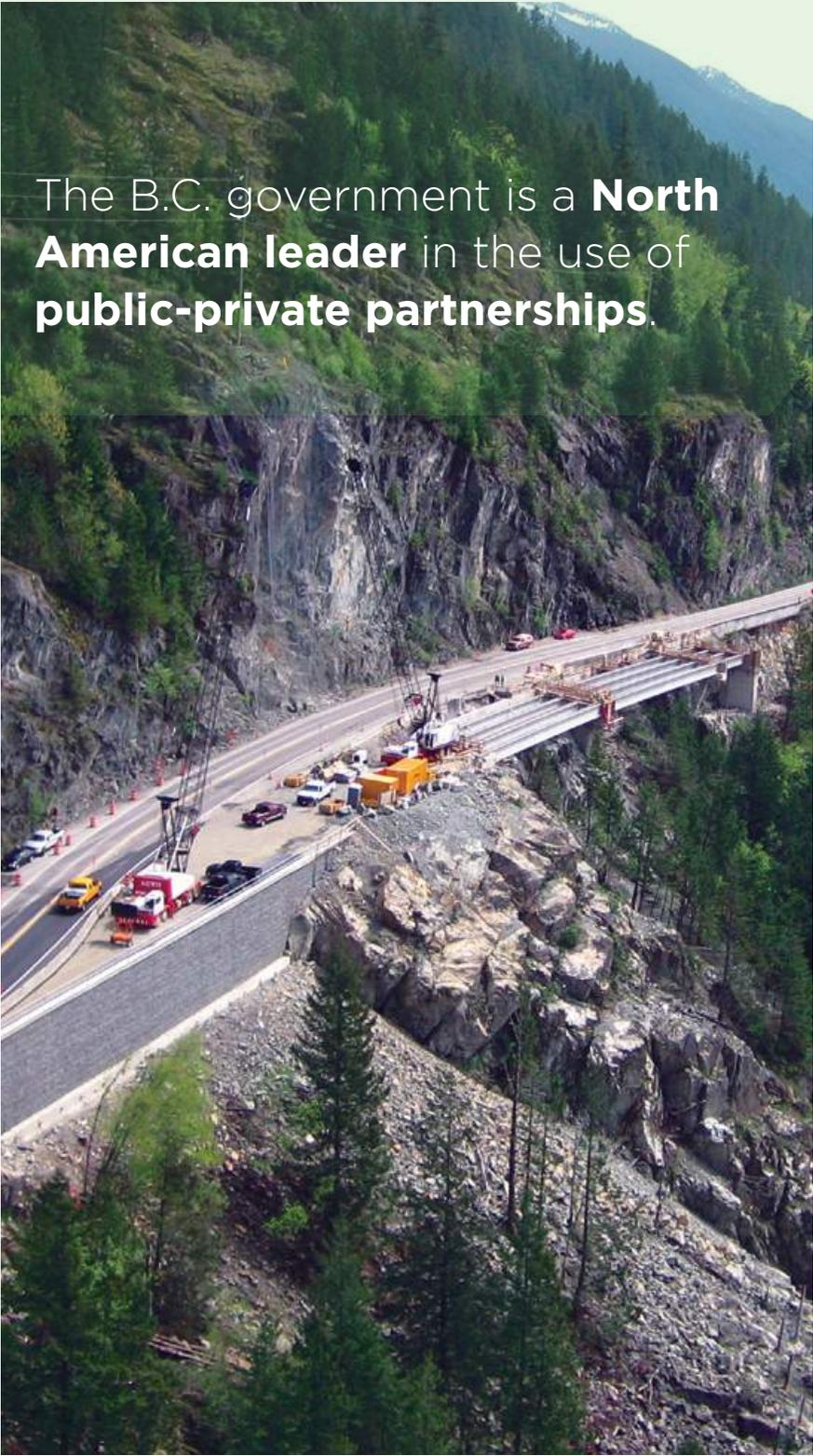


### Top 10 Mother Tongue Languages



### DEMOGRAPHICS

With a population of 2.5 million, Metro Vancouver has been growing at approximately 2 per cent annually and is expected to reach 3.4 million by 2041. In Vancouver and the region overall, today's population growth is largely driven by immigration. In fact, Vancouver has the fourth highest percentage of foreign-born residents in the world. Federal and provincial policies encourage immigrants with business- and employment-related skills to locate here. Approximately 40,000 skilled workers immigrate to BC every year; today, immigrants make up more than 40 per cent of BC's total population. This provides Vancouver-based companies with a talented and diverse labour pool, and a workforce with strong connections to the global marketplace.



The B.C. government is a **North American leader** in the use of **public-private partnerships**.

Photo: Courtesy of Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project

## GOVERNMENT

As a federation, Canada's political system includes three levels of government: a federal or national government, a provincial government (the equivalent of a state government) and municipal or local government. Naturally, Vancouver's business climate is a product of all three levels of government, respectively: the Government of Canada, Government of British Columbia and City of Vancouver. Each has certain areas of responsibility:

- **Government of Canada:** The federal government primarily has responsibility for areas of national scope including foreign affairs and international trade, national defence and security, health policy, taxation and more. It includes various agencies and Crown corporations under its umbrella. Learn more at [canada.ca](http://canada.ca).
- **Government of British Columbia:** The provincial government's purview includes education and health care, jobs, tourism and skills training and more. In addition to ministries with specific areas of responsibility, it also includes various central agencies and Crown corporations. Learn more at [gov.bc.ca](http://gov.bc.ca).
- **City of Vancouver:** The City is responsible for overseeing city and municipal operations, which also includes police, fire and rescue services, library services and the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation. Learn more at [vancouver.ca](http://vancouver.ca).

Beyond the city's immediate boundaries, the Vancouver region – better known as **Metro Vancouver** – includes Vancouver and 21 other municipalities, accounting for one-half of BC's total population and two-thirds its economic output. The City and the VEC collaborate closely with these other municipalities, such as **New Westminster**, **North Vancouver**, **Richmond** and **Surrey**. As the region's largest municipality, Vancouver has the greatest population and is the biggest economic generator.

Vancouver's **knowledge-based** and **low-carbon** economy makes it one of the most **diverse** and **resilient** economies in North America.



# Vancouver Focus

Over the next three sections of this guide, learn about the sectors attracting global talent, companies, investment and buzz to Vancouver. Beyond their rapid growth and ever-growing potential, they showcase the knowledge economy that is the new foundation of this cutting-edge city.



Technology  
& ICT

# Key Sectors

Vancouver's globally-recognized ecosystem for Tech & ICT and Digital Entertainment & Interactive are driving explosive growth. Our commitment to the Green Economy and deep connections with Asia, are accelerating this growth even further and ensuring it continues into the future.



Digital  
Entertainment  
& Interactive

Green  
Economy



Technology  
& ICT



Photo: Hootsuite

Hootsuite, one of Vancouver's most exciting startups with nine offices worldwide, is dedicated to revolutionizing social media marketing.

Today, companies of all shapes and sizes — including some of the industry's biggest players — are choosing Vancouver as the place to do technology business.

Indeed, Vancouver is now on the industry map such that Bloomberg Businessweek has called it “the new tech hub,” a place offering “world-class talent and few immigration headaches” as well as “great views in a convenient time zone.” These are just some of Vancouver's many benefits.

#### NOTABLE HIGHLIGHTS

- Vancouver has three of Canada's five tech unicorns (startups valued at more than \$1 billion), namely **Slack**, **Hootsuite** and **Avigilon**
- The industry includes:
  - nearly 101,000 tech professionals across British Columbia (BC), with some 75,000 working in Vancouver
  - more than 7,000 companies across BC
- The industry generates more than \$23 billion in revenue and \$15 billion in GDP
- The sector is well-covered and includes Service as a Software (SaaS), social media, business intelligence, security and financial tech, e-commerce, web technologies and other subsectors
- BC's tech hub is located in downtown Vancouver, a major draw and a proven factor in increasing overall productivity
- A Startup Visa, championed federally by passionate Vancouverites, dedicated solely to attracting the sector's top global entrepreneurial talent has helped the city become a true talent magnet
- The sector boasts some major global and homegrown players, including **Microsoft**, **Amazon**, **Cisco Systems**, **Samsung**, **SAP**, **Salesforce.com** and **Zenefits**, as well as **Absolute Software**, **ACL Service**, **TELUS**, **BuildDirect** and **Vision Critical**.

## COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

Technology companies choose to do business in Vancouver for many reasons:

### Outstanding talent

Not only is Vancouver attracting global talent, but its first-class education system is graduating tomorrow's tech leaders and innovators from top-calibre institutions, including the **University of British Columbia (UBC)**, **Simon Fraser University (SFU)**, **Emily Carr University of Art + Design (ECU)**, **British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)**, **Vancouver Community College (VCC)**, **Langara College** and specialty schools such as the **Vancouver Film School (VFS)**, the **Centre for Digital Media (CDM)**, the **Visual College of Art and Design of Vancouver (VCAD)** and the **Art Institute of Vancouver**.

Furthermore, Vancouver is home to several developer 'bootcamps' such as **Lighthouse Labs**, **BrainStation**, **CodeCore Bootcamp** and **RED Academy** which offer specific technical and design skills that are now essential to meet the demands of the fast-growing tech companies on the scene. Collectively these complement teaching and research expertise with strong international linkages and a willingness to collaborate with business – a dynamic that fosters spinoff companies, startup incubation, technology licensing and commercialization. An additional bridge to the sector is found in proven sector-specific R&D capacity, including facilities, specialized equipment and a large cadre of researchers and scientists.

### A low cost of doing business

This includes dedicated tax incentives, deep support from all levels of government (federal, provincial, municipal), highly competitive labour costs, low federal payroll taxes, optional and affordable health care for employers, among the lowest corporate tax rates of G8 countries, capital gains benefits for non-residents, low utility costs, and favourable taxation rates for companies and individuals.

“Vancouver’s tech ecosystem will become a **juggernaut.**”

*OMERS Ventures*

Vancouver has one of the **top startup ecosystems** in the world.



Photo: A Thinking Ape

**A Thinking Ape** creates engaging mobile games specializing in scalable real-time platforms and captivating animations.



Vancouver is “one of the world’s **hottest innovation zones** and a **thriving startup scene.**”

Miklos Dietz  
Managing Director | McKinsey

Code is one of Vancouver’s many languages, spoken everywhere from coffee shops to collaborative workspaces.

#### Business efficiency and infrastructure

Businesses in Tech & ICT benefit from Vancouver’s Pacific time zone, which helps foster closer collaboration with US-based companies in Seattle, San Francisco and the rest of the west coast. Equally, companies that locate here are well-served by YVR – Vancouver International Airport – offering direct links to major business centres in North America and beyond. This includes more than 750 weekly direct flights to destinations outside Canada; more than 500 direct to the US, 120 direct to Asia and 80 direct to Europe. (Flying time from Vancouver to San Francisco: 2 hours 20 minutes.) Vancouver is also well-served by excellent public transportation infrastructure and low energy costs. More than 90 per cent of electric power in BC originates from hydroelectric generation, while alternate energy technologies (hydrogen and fuel cells, solar, wind, tidal, geothermal, bio-fuels and more) are growing.

#### A collaborative eco-system

Being a compact city fosters a true spirit of collaboration. In a close-knit industry where companies of all shapes and sizes are growing, evolving, innovating and updating, being able to speak in the street, at a coffee shop or on a hiking trail, is the reality here. So too is the mix of industry thought leaders who are here, including seasoned professionals, CEOs, angel investors and others. Important partners such as **Highline**, **Wavefront**, **Vancouver Enterprise Forum (VEF)**, and **Launch Academy** truly contribute to making the tech sector unique and supportive of entrepreneurs.

#### Vancouver’s liveability factor

Consistently ranked among the world’s most livable cities, Vancouver is known for its striking natural beauty. Today, however, those who choose to build their careers here are drawn by much more, including the live/work/play dynamic in Vancouver’s downtown core. This is fostering a happier, more creative and more productive workforce.

Less commute time also means more time for recreation, which matters when there's ready access to mountains, ocean, green space, yoga and fitness centres. In short, Vancouver's leading the way – showing other cities across Canada and the globe that downtown living and working offers the best of all worlds.

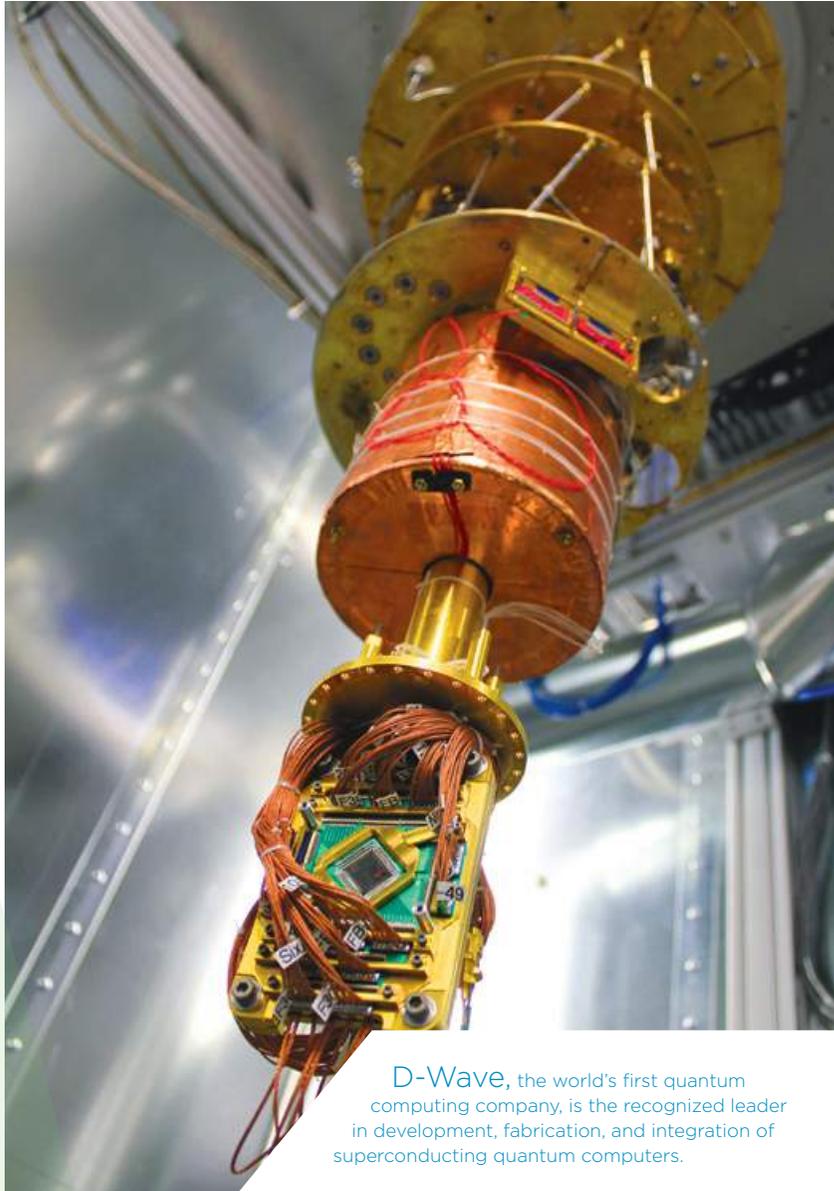


Photo: DWave

D-Wave, the world's first quantum computing company, is the recognized leader in development, fabrication, and integration of superconducting quantum computers.

# Digital Entertainment & Interactive



Photo: Joe Lederer



Vancouver Film School offers one of the most immersive and comprehensive animation and VFX programs in the world.

When it comes to Digital Entertainment & Interactive (DE&I), these days the buzz is all Vancouver. Why? It's recognized for its wide talent pool, proximity to other global creative hubs, solid industry infrastructure, competitive tax credits, and ability to attract and cultivate top tier talent.

So what is DE&I anyways? It is a term used to describe one collective, impactful industry that includes various screen-based sectors such as, Visual Effects (VFX) & Animation, Film & TV Production, Digital Media, Video Games Development and other Interactive Media who rely on similar infrastructure, talent and technology to create quality content.

#### NOTABLE HIGHLIGHTS

- Vancouver's DE&I industry includes close to 1,000 businesses. The industry generates more than 40,000 jobs in Vancouver, contributing billions in direct GDP to the city's economy.
- Vancouver is the third largest Film & TV production centre in North America.
- Vancouver has the largest cluster of VFX and Animation studios in the world, including **Sony Pictures Imageworks**, **Industrial Light & Magic (ILM)**, **MPC**, **Double Negative**, **DHX Media**, **Animal Logic** and **Bardel Entertainment**.
- Vancouver has one of the top Video Game clusters in the world – one that includes major publishers such as, **Electronic Arts (EA)**, **Microsoft**, **Capcom** and **Nintendo**.
- The city's reputation as a DE&I powerhouse has made way for prestigious conferences to call Vancouver their host city. **SIGGRAPH**, the premiere international event on computer graphics and interactive techniques that attracts close to 15,000 attendees, held their conference here on two occasions (2011, 2014) and have confirmed they'll be back for the 2018 edition.
- Homegrown conferences and festivals from the DE&I sector continue to emerge and gather impressive crowds year after year. The **Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF)**, **SPARK FX**, **External Development Summit (XDS)** are a few examples of local events that attract a global audience.

- With close proximity to Los Angeles and Silicon Valley, longstanding, stable and generous/competitive tax incentives, and a community that nurtures creativity, Vancouver makes the ideal locale for any DE&I project.
- Vancouver is developing an exciting niche in the fast emerging **Virtual Reality (VR)** and **Augmented Reality (AR)** industries. Well supported by an active meetup community, and the synergies of the city's powerhouse VFX and Video Games sector, local companies pioneering in this field include **Archiact Interactive**, **Ngrain**, **The Sawmill** and **Ideas Rebel**.



Elysium image © 2013 CTMG

**Image Engine** is one of a growing number of visual effects companies that have made Vancouver the VFX capital of the world.

## COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

Being part of Vancouver's Digital Entertainment & Interactive hub means:

### Tapping into a home of creativity

Vancouver's creative talent pool runs deep, cited by many Vancouver studios as one of the top reasons for doing business here. The city offers producers the ideal place to work: a friendly, networked community with an outstanding quality of life as well as access to homegrown and international talent.

### Drawing on its educational institutions and industry know-how

Vancouver's major post-secondary institutions are all engaged in the industry providing outstanding facilities, training and research that support the sector. An example of such a facility is the **Centre for Digital Media (CDM)**. Jointly owned by the **University of British Columbia (UBC)**, **Simon Fraser University (SFU)**, **British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)**, and **Emily Carr University of Art + Design**, the Centre offers a unique Master's degree that prepares digital media professionals with advanced skills and critical management training.

### Being part of the city's digital districts

Vancouver, renowned for its unique blend of residential, commercial, arts and cultural space, is the perfect environment for DE&I – where science, technology and art meet. Most DE&I studios and facilities are located within one of the six digital districts: Gastown, Railtown, Yaletown, Mount Pleasant, Downtown and Kitsilano. Here, cross-collaboration and strategic relationships develop through the day to day activities of the tight knit community as well as through industry association events and social gatherings.

### Capitalizing on its geographic benefits

Vancouver is ideally situated near other key industry-related locales, namely the Los Angeles entertainment industry, the tech centres of Seattle and San Francisco, and the strong markets for DE&I in the Asia-Pacific region.



Archiact, a Vancouver-based company, is a team of leading virtual reality developers on a mission to create the most seamless VR experiences possible.



Photo: Joe Lederer

Deadpool, filmed in Vancouver, is an example of a major DE&I project that leveraged Vancouver's first-rate talent and infrastructure.



### SPOTLIGHT DE&I in Vancouver: Over 30 Years of Excellence

The legacy of Vancouver's Digital Entertainment and Interactive industry solidified in the 1980's. Film, animation and video games in the city all gained international recognition, with the simultaneous emergence of important productions like Henry Winkler's *MacGyver*, animation legends like Marv Newland and local game pioneers like Don Mattrick.

Since then, DE&I's sectors - Film & TV production, Visual Effects (VFX), Animation and Video games - have grown enormously in Vancouver. With each sector cross pollinating the others, the city has become the third largest Film and TV production centre in North America, and home to the world's largest clusters of top VFX and Animation, and top Video Game studios.



Image: Electronic Arts

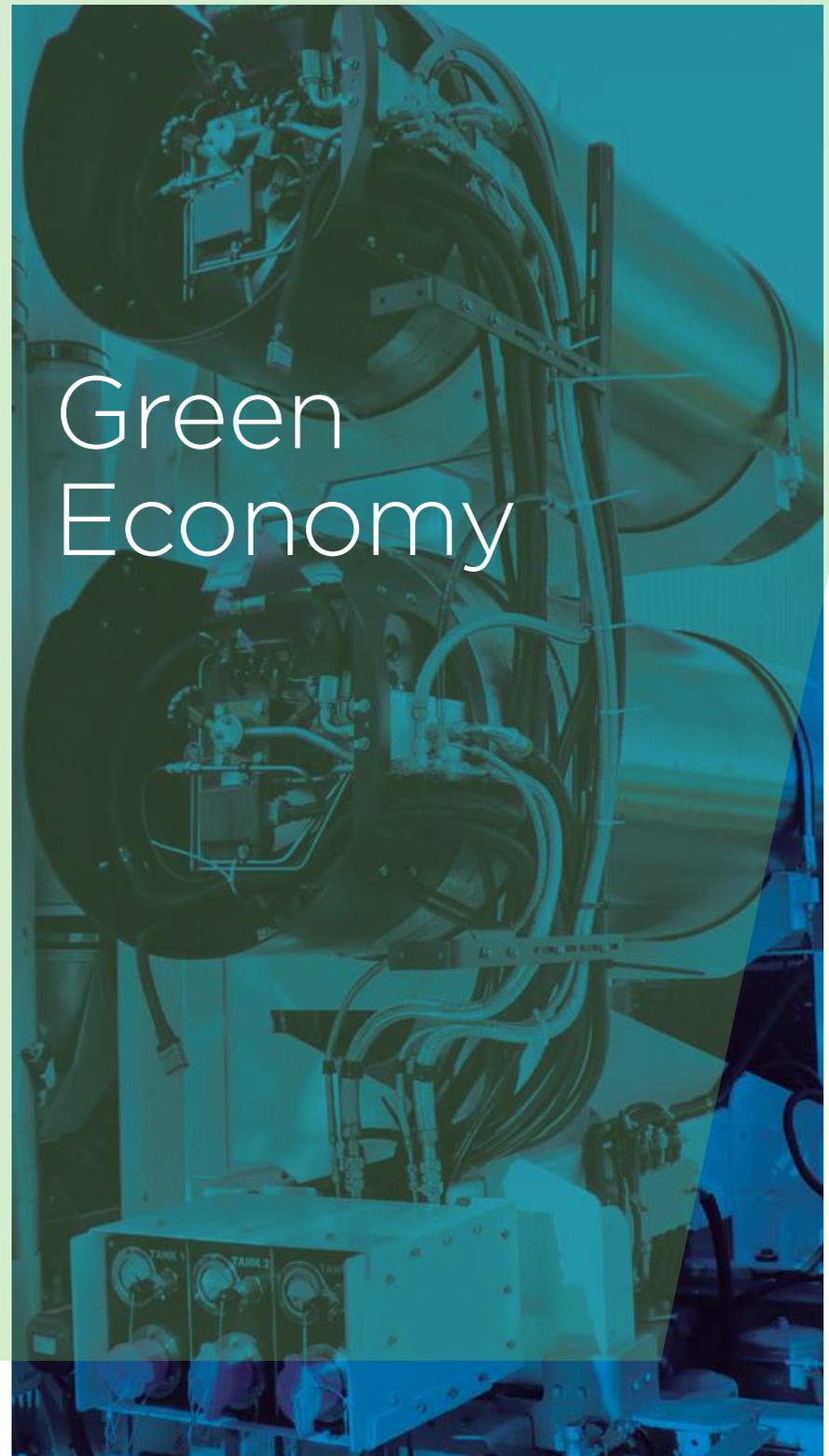
Electronic Arts Inc.'s Vancouver studio produces some of its most popular titles: NHL, FIFA, and Medal of Honor.



#### SPOTLIGHT (continued) DE&I in Vancouver: Over 30 Years of Excellence

The rise today of innovative technologies like Virtual Reality (VR), coupled with renowned educational institutions that cater to the industry's needs, have made Vancouver a global destination for talent, expertise, education and technology. The city continues to be a force to be reckoned – one known for its excellence in servicing the global industry and creating its own IP.

Vancouver's global DE&I **leadership** builds on over **30 years** of **quality, creativity,** and **innovation.**



# Green Economy



**Green transportation** in Vancouver means the majority of trips (over 50%) are by foot, bicycle, or public transit.

There's no better example to illustrate Vancouver's reputation as a forward-looking and sustainable city than the success of the Green Economy.

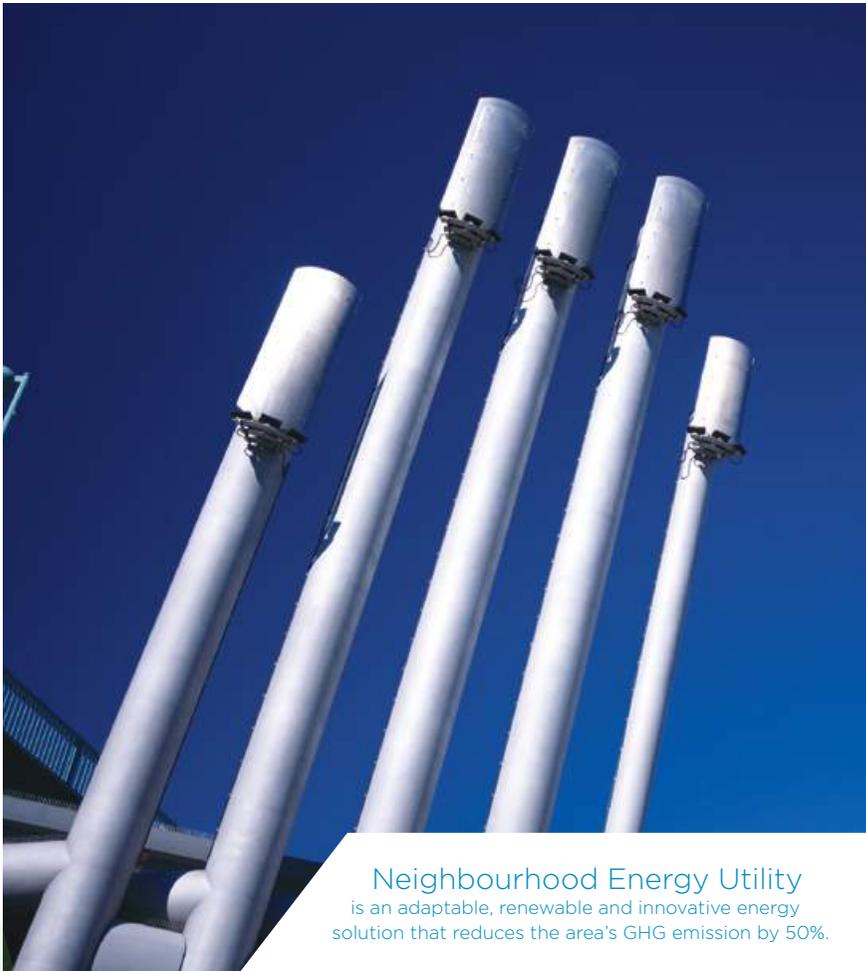
A sector that has grown exponentially in less than a decade, Vancouver's Green Economy includes seven subsectors:

- 1 Local food
- 2 Green building design and construction
- 3 Clean technology, alternative energy and green building products
- 4 Green infrastructure, transportation and planning
- 5 Sustainability services and education
- 6 Land and water remediation and environmental consulting
- 7 Materials management and recycling

Vancouver's burgeoning success across these diverse areas ties directly into a City of Vancouver initiative, the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan. It calls for doubling the number of green and local food jobs, part of an overall vision to see Vancouver become the greenest city in the world by 2020. Since 2010, the Vancouver Economic Commission (VEC) has been evaluating the size and scale of the green economy and its overall potential, as well as taking concerted steps to foster its growth.

#### NOTABLE HIGHLIGHTS

- In total, green and local food jobs in Vancouver increased from 16,700 jobs in 2010 to 20,000 jobs in 2013, an increase of 19 per cent over the three-year period (6 per cent CAGR).
- Based on employment estimates for Vancouver, green and local food jobs represent roughly 4.9 per cent of all jobs in Vancouver, increasing from 4.2 per cent of jobs in 2010.
- Local food is the largest subsector of Vancouver's green economy. Success has been driven by strong demand from consumers, public sector procurement policies and new supply sources. By way of example, today's greatly expanded network of local farmers' markets now provides a \$15 million benefit to the local economy, a significant jump over sales in 1994, the first year of operation, when markets earned \$40,000 over 11 weeks.



**Neighbourhood Energy Utility**  
is an adaptable, renewable and innovative energy solution that reduces the area's GHG emission by 50%.

#### NOTABLE HIGHLIGHTS *(continued)*

- Green building design and construction is the second-largest sector. Influences on this sector include green building policy and international demand for local expertise, as well as new technology. Rezoning regulations that went into effect in 2010 led to a 56 per cent increase in LEED-certified projects in the period 18 months before and after the regulation came online.
- 20% of Canada's cleantech companies are based in Vancouver. Many of these cleantech companies are active in export markets, including wastewater treatment specialist BioteQ Environmental Technologies, renewable biofuel leader Nexterra Systems Corp., and advanced natural gas engine-maker Westport Innovations.

#### COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES

Doing green business in Vancouver is all about being plugged into:

##### Vancouver's first-rate reputation

A city that is consistently ranked among the greenest international cities in the world, driven largely by its progressive thinking around sustainability, Vancouver is renowned for innovations in green building design and urban development.

##### Vancouver's green business ecosystem

One that's well-established and includes seasoned professionals, CEOs, angel investors, engineers, academics, and researchers. Vancouver also regularly hosts global conferences attracting the sector's top world experts, including the annual GLOBE conference – one of the world's top conferences devoted to sustainability.

##### Sophisticated infrastructure

Vancouver is home to industry and university research labs, testing centres, industry associations and non-profit organizations that develop sustainable technologies.

##### A location with a distinct geographic edge

Direct access to the US market is a distinct advantage for Vancouver-based green companies, while links to major centres and emerging markets in Asia and beyond are critical. Vancouver-based businesses leverage these strategic geographic and economic ties, readily moving people and products to key destinations.

Beyond these benefits, there's also the work/live/play downtown effect. Having all three lifestyle elements in Vancouver's vibrant downtown core lends itself to a happier, more creative and more productive workforce. Less commute time means more time for work – and recreation, which matters when there's ready access to mountains, ocean, green space, fitness centres, yoga and more. It's something we like to call the Vancouver lifestyle benefit.

By 2050, Vancouver will be **powered by 100% renewable energy**, including buildings and transportation.



Recycling Alternative provides economic recycling options for businesses with trucks that run on 100% recycled biodiesel.

#### INCENTIVES

According to PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), British Columbia leads the way in Canada for “go green” incentives, helping businesses put sustainability into action. Specific federal and provincial incentives like North America’s first carbon tax have all helped contribute to growing this green ethos – and have been critical to the sector’s success.

Today, the world is looking to Vancouver as a true pioneer in all things green. For those interested in harnessing the power of business to advance green thinking and effect environmental change, there’s no better place to be these days.



# SNAPSHOT

## More Vancouver Sectors



# Arts & Culture

With a thriving arts and culture scene, Vancouver is home to world-renowned artists, writers, dancers and musicians, and home to the highest proportion of “creatives” in Canada. The city is known as a community that warmly embraces the arts and culture – not only through its enthusiasm but via direct and ongoing public and private investments.

Vancouverites spent an average of \$1,000 per person on arts and culture annually. Overall, British Columbians are the most likely in Canada to give to arts and culture.

Vancouver's inspiring venues, diversity of events and more than 100 arts and culture organisations and societies foster a culture-rich and vibrant city.

Attracting new artists and productions is vital to creating Vancouver's vibrant creative communities, which is why the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation award a combined \$10.1 million each year to non-profit arts and cultural organizations. Among the City's many granting programs are the **Artist Live/Work Studio Award** program, the **Community & Neighbourhood Arts Development Grant** program, the **Cultural Infrastructure Program**, and the **Neighbourhood Matching Fund**. According to the Canadian Arts Database, in return for every dollar invested by the City another \$17.10 is raised from other sources.

Three important competitive advantages that play a significant role in fostering a culture-rich and vibrant Vancouver are its inspiring venues, diversity of events and more than 100 arts and culture organizations and societies that contribute to this overall success.

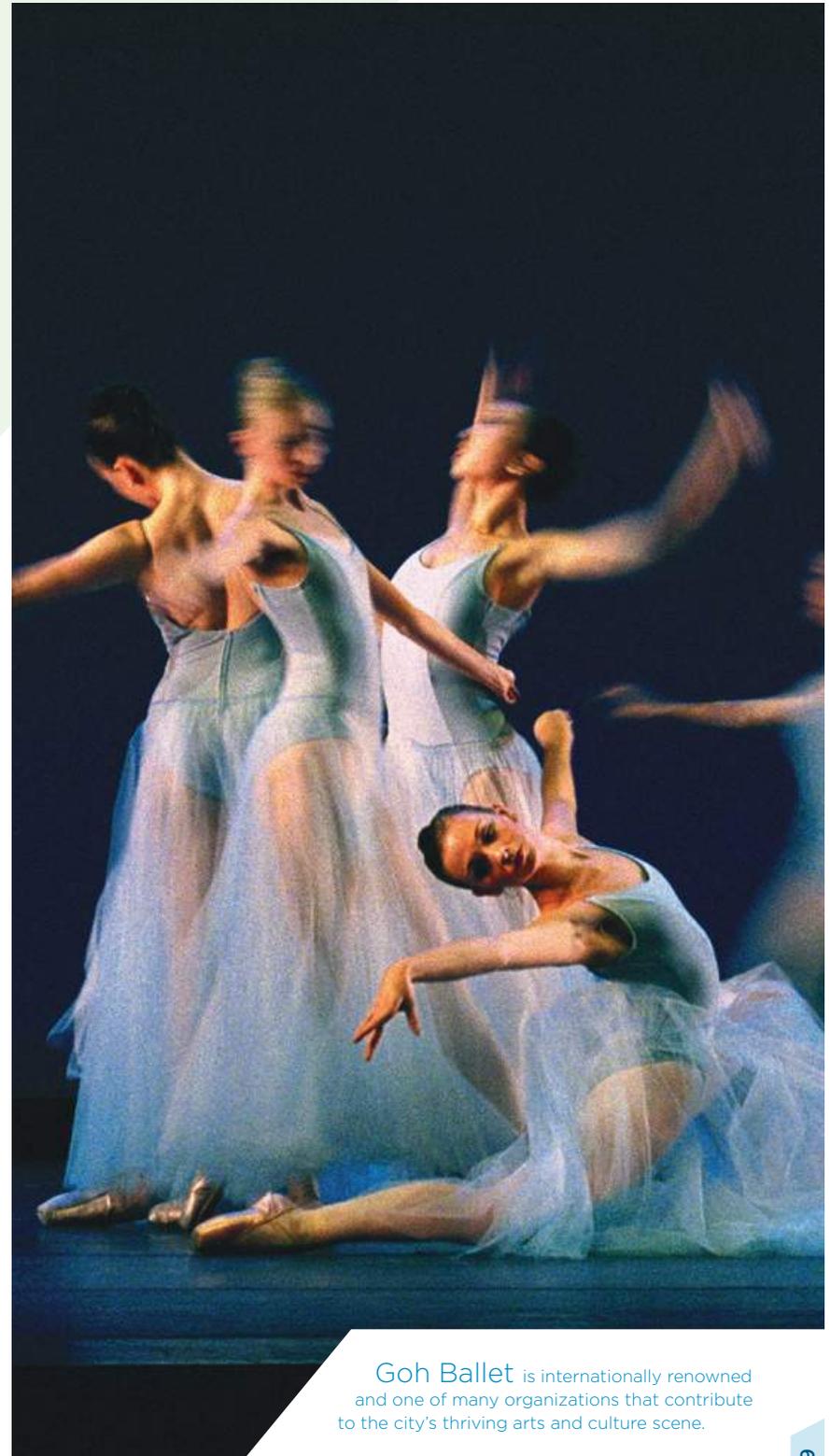


Photo: James Yip

Goh Ballet is internationally renowned and one of many organizations that contribute to the city's thriving arts and culture scene.

# Finance

Financial services started here as a critical business support function for mining and forestry. Today, local financial services companies operate in global markets, leveraging and facilitating Vancouver's position as a global commercial gateway.

The **highly-educated, stable** workforce, and shared US language and customs, are critical assets. The city also has a **robust, diversified** economy, favourable tax environment and **strong** cultural ties to emerging Asian economies.

In fact, BC was the first foreign government to sell bonds into China's domestic market, and in 2015 Vancouver became a Reminbi (RMB) clearance centre.

Vancouver performs particularly well in four financial services subsectors: **banking, credit unions, international financial transactions** and **venture capital investment**. All of Canada's largest banks have significant operations in Vancouver, as do several international banks, including the **Agricultural Bank of China** and the Canadian headquarters of London's **HSBC** – one of the world's largest banks.

Cooperative banking is a cornerstone of Vancouver's banking system, and includes such respected institutions as **Vancity** and **Coast Capital Savings**. The credit union system in BC is the largest among Canada's English-speaking provinces.

Vancouver is also developing an important niche in fintech international treasury and financial functions, including factoring, import/export financing, foreign exchange and back-office support.

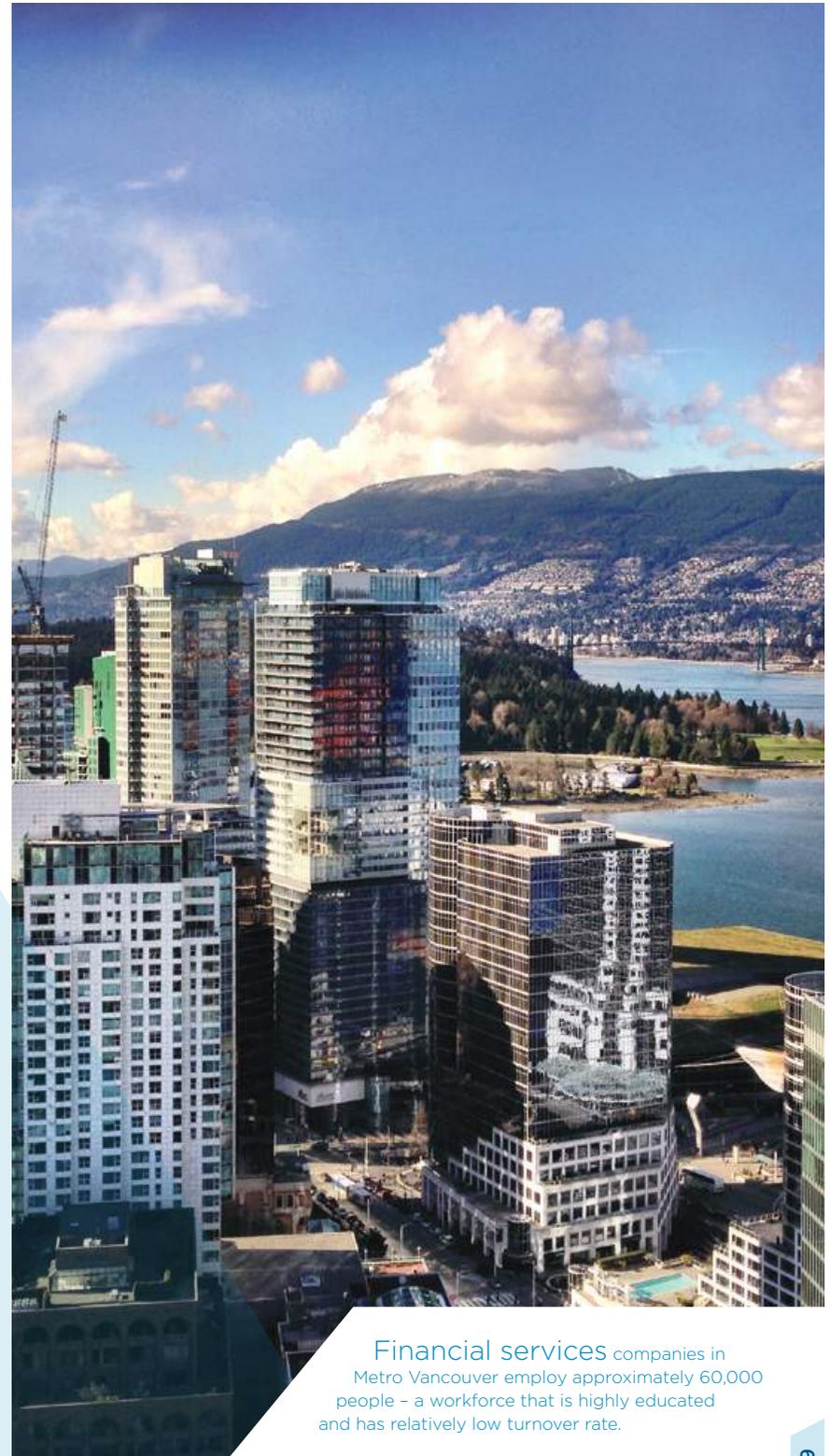


Photo: Karim Ulmann

Financial services companies in Metro Vancouver employ approximately 60,000 people – a workforce that is highly educated and has relatively low turnover rate.

# Life Sciences

In BC, the life sciences industry includes over 300 companies involved in biopharmaceuticals, medical devices, bioproducts and bioenergy, and the greater life sciences. The sector employs about 14,000 people, generating more than \$800 million per year in revenues and with a total estimated \$4 billion impact on the province's GDP. The industry has proven especially successful in translating commercially promising health research into new treatments that are improving patient outcomes and saving lives.

Metro Vancouver is home to about 70 per cent of British Columbia's life sciences industry – and highly regarded as a centre of excellence in biopharmaceuticals. Vancouver's UBC–Broadway Corridor is fast becoming a world-class life sciences cluster thanks to a growing concentration of industry facilities.

The industry has proven especially successful in translating commercially **promising** health research into new treatments that are **improving** patient outcomes and **saving** lives.

The industry includes a strong complement of established and next-generation firms such as **STEMCELL Technologies**, **Zymeworks** and **Amgen's** BC-based subsidiary.

Vancouver's competitive advantage is found in a talented and multilingual workforce, government investments and high-quality university and research and development (R&D) programs – a mix that also includes researchers, research chairs, multidisciplinary research centres and more than 100 research agreements with major global pharmaceutical companies.

The sector has attracted billions in research funding and continues attracting new investments for product development. Vancouver's location – within easy reach of life sciences collaborators and venture capital sources in Washington State and California – is another undisputed advantage.

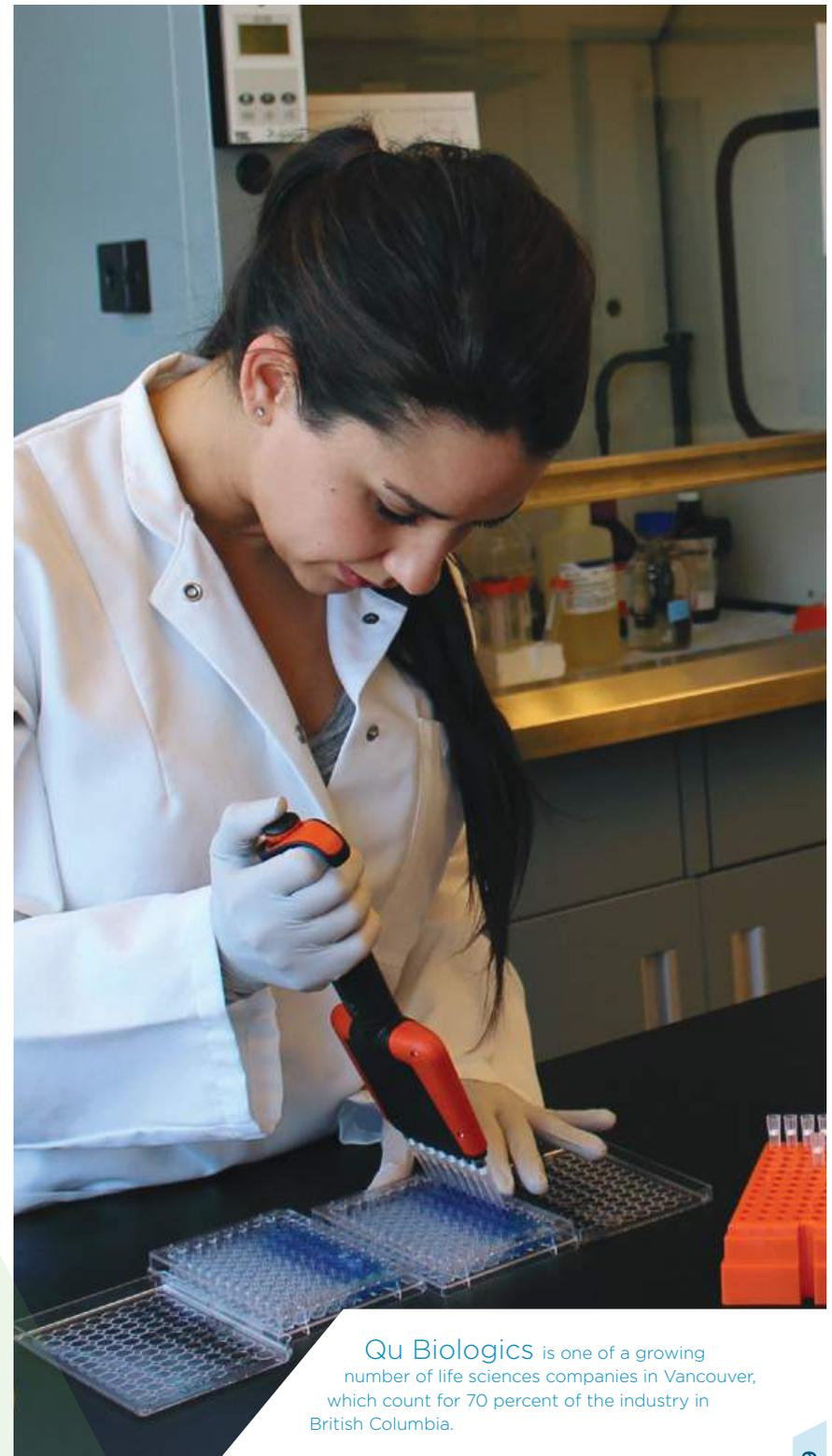


Photo: Qu Biologics

Qu Biologics is one of a growing number of life sciences companies in Vancouver, which count for 70 percent of the industry in British Columbia.

# Natural Resources

Vancouver has deep ties to the natural resource industries. Some 1,200 mineral exploration companies are located in resource-abundant British Columbia, with approximately 800 headquartered in Vancouver. They include **Teck Resources Limited** and **Goldcorp Inc.**, two of the world's largest mining companies. Most mining employment in Vancouver is connected to executive office and mining support services such as geological research, business administration, finance, management, engineering and environmental consulting.

Vancouver has a long-standing history in resource-based industries such as forestry, mining, and oil & gas.

Similarly, two-thirds of the province's largest forestry companies are headquartered here. BC is one of the world's largest exporters of wood products, with investment opportunities in mills, forestry operations, value-added wood products and biofuels. Almost 60 per cent of the province's land base is productive forest land, providing rich, diverse, and abundant wood fibre. The forest industry represents 3 per cent of the province's GDP, and contributes 150,000 jobs in direct and indirect employment.

A smaller coterie of companies in the oil and gas sector also call Vancouver home, including **Royal Dutch Shell plc** and **Pacific NorthWest LNG** which is owned by **Petronas**, Malaysia's largest energy company.

Yet today, Vancouver is much more than a place where resource companies locate. Green ideas, creativity and innovators are increasingly helping traditional industries transition to more sustainable business practices, thanks to the city's reputation as a global leader in environmental technologies and best practices.



Two-thirds of British Columbia's largest forestry companies are headquartered in Vancouver, taking advantage of the city's status as an environmental leader to transform their businesses.

# Social Enterprise

Increasingly, Vancouver is growing its reputation as a major global hub for social purpose businesses, ideas and innovations. A broad, dynamic sector that's experiencing tremendous growth, it's also a sector still unfamiliar to many, especially since there are as many different missions as there are social enterprises.

Vancouver is a world leader in blending enterprise and social values through various business models. This includes for-profit social purpose businesses, non-profit social enterprises and co-operatives. Canada's first hybrid business model, the Community Contribution Company, or C3, was launched in BC. The number of social enterprises in Vancouver is rapidly growing and now includes more than 750 social enterprises engaged in addressing local and globally relevant social issues.

Vancouver's fastest-growing social enterprise subsector is for-profit ventures in **environmentally conscious** areas. Many are owned and operated by **impact-conscious** millennials, Vancouver's next generation of entrepreneurs.

Vancouver is attracting international attention as a social enterprise hub. This recognition is helping draw high-profile events such as TED, which committed to relocating its annual conference to Vancouver, beginning with its 30th anniversary conference in 2014. TED and other organizations relocating here have realised that Vancouver is a place to generate and foster world-changing ideas.

According to the most recent Canadian Social Enterprise Sector Survey, 104 BC social enterprises surveyed generated at least \$60 million in revenues, trained 6,250 people, provided services to more than 695,000 community members, and provided opportunities for 5,520 volunteers.



**Vancouver** is a growing global hub for social purpose businesses, ideas and innovations, with for-profit ventures in environmentally-conscious areas taking the lead on the growth curve.

# Specialty Apparel

Vancouver has a young and thriving apparel industry with a growing list of homegrown brands internationally recognized as global leaders for their design, technological innovation and sustainability. More than 200 apparel companies have design operations in Vancouver, earning over \$2 billion a year.

The industry ranges from a complement of established firms with global reach, to a group of emerging firms and startups with a more local focus. Companies such as **Lululemon Athletica Inc.** (yogawear) and **Arc'teryx Equipment Inc.** (performance outerwear) are recognized as global benchmarks, while **John Fluevog Shoes** has been called one of the world's top-10 most innovative fashion companies and 21st-century custom suit-maker **Indochino Apparel** is making big waves in the fashion world. Though womenswear is the largest category, featuring industry leaders such as **Aritizia**, **Herschel**, **Oak+Fort** and **d a c e**, Vancouver is best known internationally as a leader in performance and sustainable apparel.

With nature's outdoors only steps away, the perfect grounds for **research** and **product development**, the city's apparel industry has leveraged regional expertise in **technological** and **environmental** innovation to create a global hub for performance apparel and eco-fashion.

The industry is supported by a number of local education institutions, generating talented design professionals. Respected programs include **VCAD's** Fashion Design Diploma, **LaSalle College** Fashion Design Diploma, and **Kwantlen University's Chip and Shannon Wilson School of Design** which is known for a host of specialized courses.

Beyond attracting the top creative minds with its active lifestyle and cosmopolitan outlook, Vancouver's location is ideally situated for apparel companies seeking access to key US and Asian markets.

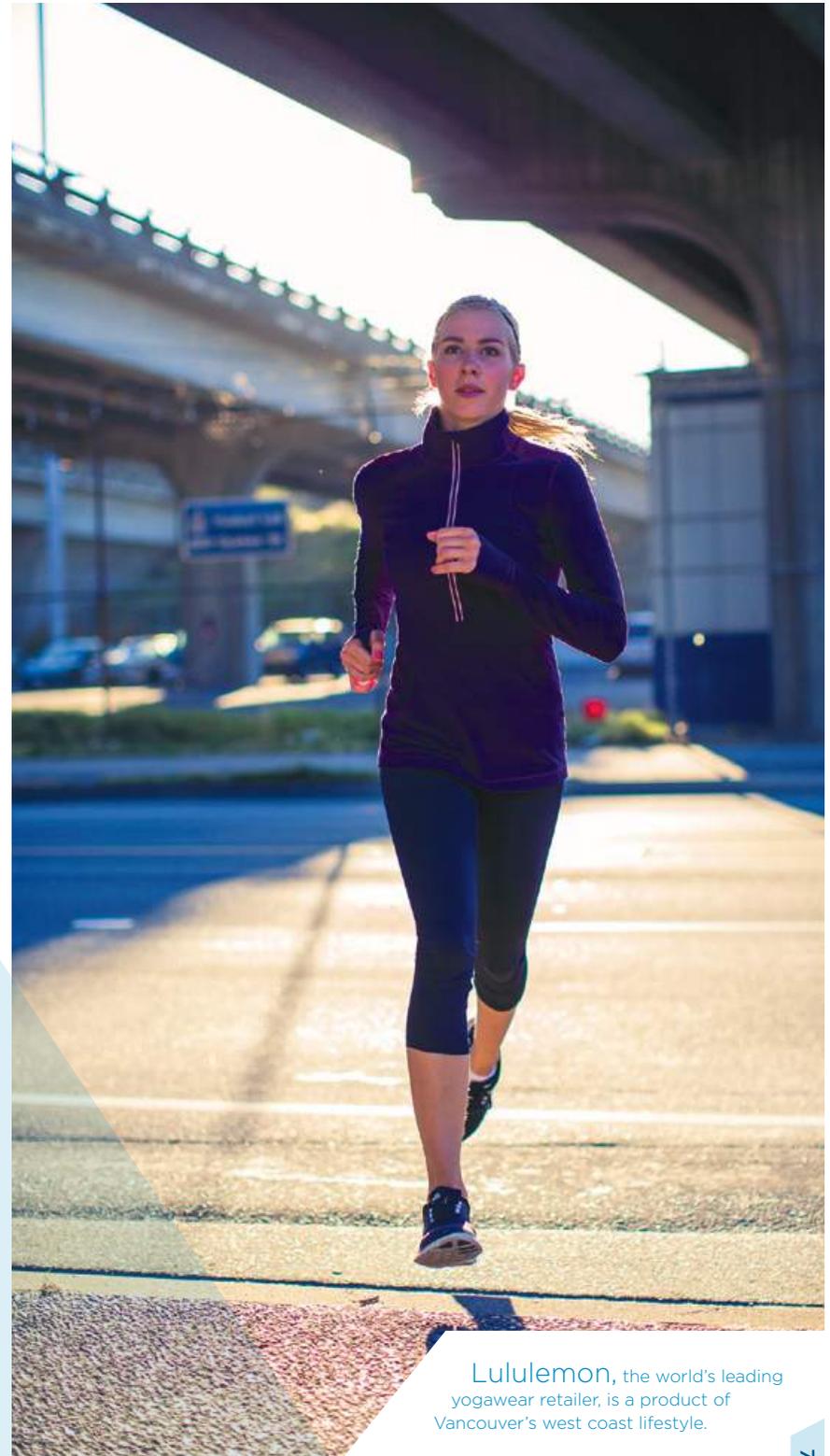


Photo: Lululemon

Lululemon, the world's leading yogawear retailer, is a product of Vancouver's west coast lifestyle.



# Asia-Pacific Centre

The Vancouver Economic Commission established a centre dedicated to connecting entrepreneurs, on both sides of the Pacific, with opportunities. The strategic geographic location and shared cultural ties that bind Vancouver to Asia creates huge potential for both regions.



Vancouver's deep, longstanding relationships with two sister cities in the Asia-Pacific - Yokohama, Japan (1965) and Guangzhou, China (1985) - reflect its many ties with the region.

The VEC views the Asia Pacific through a unique lens, and has adopted a dedicated approach to fostering business ties with the region. The difference in the VEC's approach to leveraging the opportunities presented through Canada's Asia Pacific Gateway is the belief that relationships and trust must come first. Only then can successful business ventures follow. Reflecting the region's importance to Vancouver and its economic future, we have established a team that is fully dedicated to building these critical relationships within the region.

The VEC views the Asia Pacific through a unique lens, and has adopted a dedicated approach to **fostering** business **ties** with the region.

Established in January 2014, the VEC's Asia Pacific Centre (also known as the APC) is the "go-to" resource for building and strengthening ties with the region's businesses, markets, customers and investors. Its mandate is to:

- **Build effective support networks in destination markets.** This is achieved, first and foremost, by leveraging existing infrastructure and resources such as governments, industry associations, technology parks and trade shows, and then filling gaps where necessary.
- **Identify and build relationships with Asian investors already doing business in Vancouver.** Only by fostering these connections can the VEC better understand their investment interests and make appropriate introductions to local companies.
- **Build local company profiles.** Here, the objective is to connect companies and investors or potential business partners on both sides of the Pacific, which also involves understanding the specific export and capital needs of each company.

Beyond bridging any gaps between the region's investment interests and Vancouver-based opportunities, the Asia Pacific Centre's activities align closely with the VEC's work in growing key sectors of Vancouver's knowledge economy – namely, Technology, Digital Entertainment & Interactive (DE&I), and the Green economy.

The Asia-Pacific Centre and its team regularly **help** companies in innovative, creative and sustainable sectors that are interested in **locating here** or doing **business** with Vancouver-based companies.



The Centre **connects** the right people to one another, **facilitating** conversations that lead to **ideas, collaboration** and **partnerships**.

The Centre's work also involves:

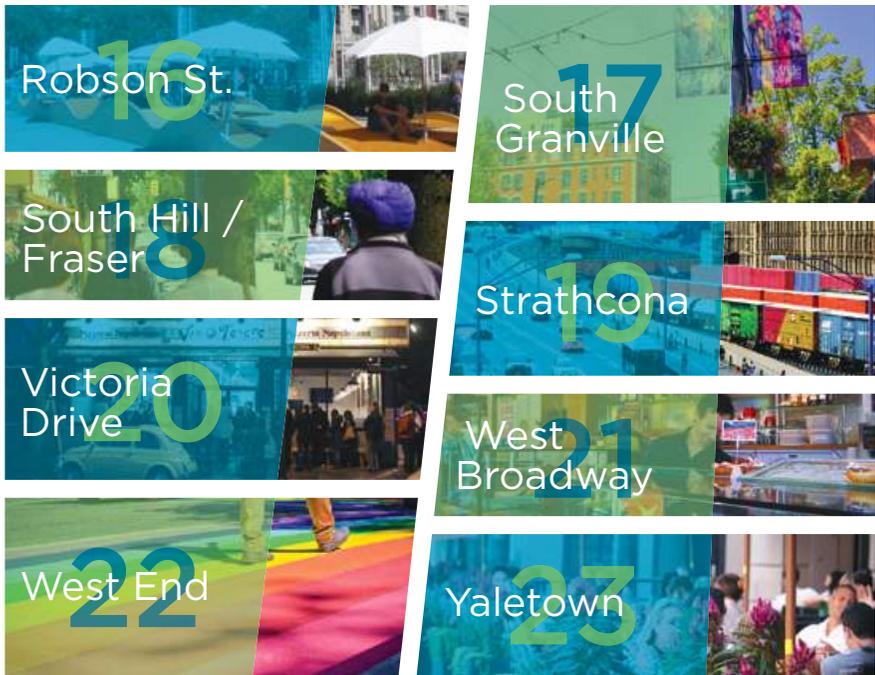
- **Providing** local startups with opportunities to pitch their investment needs to Asia-Pacific investors
- **Bringing** investors and strategic partners together through incoming and outgoing business delegations and personalized on-the-ground business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-government (B2G) programs connecting businesses and entrepreneurs
- **Leading or participating** in trade missions to the region dedicated to introducing businesses and entrepreneurs
- **Facilitating** the signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)
- **Showcasing** Vancouver as an attractive place to invest and do business

In its work, the Centre connects the right people to one another, facilitating conversations that lead to ideas, collaboration and partnerships – linking entrepreneurs, companies and talent. This dialogue happens in many ways, including incoming and outgoing

trade missions, one-on-one conversations and various initiatives involving VEC personnel, city and business officials. Ultimately, by shining a spotlight on Vancouver's potential, we succeed in developing a deeper understanding of where our shared business needs and commonalities lie.

In addition to the many ties Vancouver already shares with the Asia Pacific, the city enjoys longstanding connections to two sister cities in the region: Yokohama, Japan (1965) and Guangzhou, China (1985).

The Asia-Pacific region represents a major focus for the Vancouver Economic Commission, and our unique approach in creating the Asia Pacific Centre is winning praise. In late 2014, the VEC was recognized by the **Canada China Business Council (CCBC)** with a silver award as an organization that plays a leading role in growing and expanding business relationships between Canada and China.



# Vancouver by Neighbourhood



### 1 Cambie Village

This neighbourhood, home to City Hall, has made dramatic changes in recent years and is now among Vancouver's busiest retail and office districts. While mixed-use, mid-rise developments have contributed to the neighbourhood's rapid growth – built up around one of the region's most critical transit hubs – careful attention has been paid to ensure the area maintains its walkable, neighbourhood charm.

### 2 Chinatown

This historic neighbourhood – North America's third-largest Chinatown – mixes the best of old and new Vancouver and is a top tourist destination. Delightful heritage buildings are home to boutiques, restaurants, produce markets, tech startups and third-generation Chinese merchants. Adjacent to downtown, Chinatown is a favourite locale for many of the city's new, cutting-edge, independent businesses, restaurants and more.

### 3 Collingwood

A thriving multicultural community, Collingwood is known for its small-town feel. Many of its long-term family businesses have comfortably served local residents and visitors for generations alongside major retailers. Located at the crossroads of Vancouver and neighbouring Burnaby, rapid transit and road connections readily connect Collingwood to other parts of the city and beyond.

### 4 Commercial Drive

More commonly known as "The Drive," this neighbourhood is an eclectic, multi-ethnic gem. Italian immigrants who arrived in the 1950s made this Vancouver's "Little Italy." Today the area still boasts the city's best gelato, cappuccino and pasta but is also home to Chinese and Portuguese communities, and many other nationalities – reflected in the rich mosaic of restaurants, cafés, shops and bohemian boutiques that contribute to the neighbourhood's multicultural richness.

### 5 Downtown

Vancouver's economic engine, Downtown Vancouver is home to major industry-leading companies including **Sony Pictures Imageworks** and **Microsoft**. The city's population and job count have doubled since 1965; today, more than 100,000 people work here in many different sectors. To meet this demand, more than

465,000 square metres (five million square feet) of office space has been recently completed or is under construction. Unlike other major cities where people might commute into the city and live elsewhere, Downtown Vancouver is home for many – illustrating the work/live/play approach that's readily attracting companies and talent. Easily accessible by all means of transportation, the downtown core features signature shopping and dining, many of the city's top tourist attractions, arts and culture, robust convention/meeting facilities and much more.

### 6 Dunbar Village

This neighbourhood is known for its large houses, leafy streets and family atmosphere. Businesses here reflect the neighbourhood's charm, and include a healthy mix of new and older stores with deep ties to the Dunbar community. Some of the city's top private schools are located in the area, which is also home to Vancouver's leading riding stables.

### 7 East Village

This family-oriented neighbourhood has long drawn successive waves of immigrants from around the world, and its bustling produce markets, bakeries and delis offer authentic flavours from across Europe and Asia. Today, young entrepreneurs are lending fresh ideas and creativity to a neighbourhood that remains true to its blue-collar roots.

### 8 False Creek Flats

Once a low-lying industrial neighbourhood near the city's core, the False Creek Flats is rapidly evolving thanks to dedicated initiatives to grow green enterprise and the sustainable economy; the neighbourhood's goal is to become "the greenest place to work in the world." While textile, food, and automobile-related sectors continue to remain a strong presence here, growth in the digital entertainment, education, professional services, arts and culture sectors is bringing new energy, attention and investment to "The Flats."

### 9 Gastown

Established in 1867, Gastown is Vancouver's oldest neighbourhood. While maintaining all its historic charm, in recent years this downtown district has transformed itself into an über-hip destination – named fourth-most stylish neighbourhood in the world by New York-based

Complex Magazine. Known for its thriving startup culture, it's a place where entrepreneurs of all stripes from many different sectors are choosing to locate thanks to the strength of the ideas, talent, collaboration and buzz that's here.

#### 10 Hastings Crossing

Hastings Crossing is a hotbed of creative startups and home to some of the city's most exciting new food/culinary and beverage ventures, as well as iconic commercial heritage architecture. This dynamic downtown neighbourhood boasts a young and vibrant community of creative entrepreneurs and nationally renowned social enterprises, non-profits and charities.

#### 11 Kerrisdale

This neighbourhood, primarily a residential neighbourhood, is popular with retirees. Though it features a quaint and dignified charm that seems to reflect another era, its commercial heart of Kerrisdale Village has all the latest upscale fashions, a wealth of dining and shopping options and amenities. Kerrisdale's central location offers easy access to other neighbourhoods, Vancouver's downtown, YVR – Vancouver International Airport and more.

#### 12 Kitsilano and West 4th Avenue

Voted "Neighbourhood That Best Represents Vancouver," easygoing Kitsilano or "Kits" is popular with students, families, couples and retirees alike. Home to Vancouver's hippie community in an earlier era, today the neighbourhood reflects a lifestyle that's genuinely Vancouver – home to Kits Beach, countless yoga studios and the very first lululemon store. With the neighbourhood's largest concentration of shops, West 4th Avenue or "West 4th" boasts unique fashion stores, award-winning restaurants and the largest selection of outdoor and active lifestyle retailers in Western Canada, as well as luxury day spas, salons and leading-edge home decor shops.

#### 13 Main Street/Mount Pleasant

Voted by locals as Vancouver's "Favourite Shopping Destination" and "Coolest Street," this neighbourhood features an eclectic mix of lively cafes and eateries, great local shopping, late-night bars and a growing cluster of award-winning microbreweries. It's a fun, pedestrian-friendly streetscape located only 10 minutes from Vancouver's downtown.

#### 14 Marpole

Vancouver's southern gateway, Marpole is the first neighbourhood most visitors see when arriving from YVR – Vancouver International Airport. The area is undergoing a major transformation thanks to a major, mixed-use, transit-oriented development project known as Marine Gateway. Once completed, the 88,300-square-metre development (950,000 square feet) will boast the tallest tower outside Vancouver's downtown core.

#### 15 Point Grey

Boasting stunning views of the city, affluent Point Grey is one of Vancouver's most scenic residential neighbourhoods. A favourite with faculty, staff and students from nearby University of British Columbia (UBC), it includes the always-popular Jericho and Spanish Banks beaches, and Pacific Spirit Regional Park. Point Grey Village, the neighbourhood's commercial heart, includes an eclectic mix of shops, dining options, fresh food markets and more. It's where old-town character intersects with modern and sophisticated style.

#### 16 Robson Street

Robson Street is a thriving shopping district in the heart of downtown Vancouver. Its three-block stretch between Burrard and Jervis streets boasts high-end shopping, well-known international fashion labels, great dining and more. This premiere outdoor shopping experience is a favourite destination of locals and visitors alike. Robson Street also connects downtown to the West End and Stanley Park, hailed top urban park in the world by Trip Advisor.

#### 17 South Granville

Since 1907, South Granville has established itself as one of Vancouver's most prestigious shopping districts. Its 11 blocks host exclusive shops, award-winning restaurants, classic and contemporary theatre, some of the West Coast's best art galleries and finest antique stores, as well as a collection of Metro Vancouver's most exclusive furniture and lifestyle stores.

#### 18 South Hill / Fraser Street

This neighbourhood has its own special charm thanks to the distinctly Asian and South Asian flavour that's such an important part of this multi-ethnic community. Its shops burst with textiles, produce and ethnic foods that complement the many health services, cafés and

tea shops on offer. Today, the neighbourhood is also a hub for new, up-and-coming restaurants and retail thanks to low rents and lease rates that are helping new entrepreneurs realize their business dreams.

### 19 Strathcona

Strathcona is Vancouver's first residential neighbourhood and the heart of Vancouver's artistic community. Today, it continues to showcase much of its early character as home to hundreds of historical buildings. The area also has a strong industrial base with a mix of warehousing, distribution and manufacturing.

### 20 Victoria Drive

This vibrant, multicultural neighbourhood is a magnet for food lovers, locals and visitors alike, with exotic fruits, vegetables and much more. Chinese, Punjabi and Tagalog voices are part of the everyday fabric here, while dozens of restaurants serve up regional cuisines from across the globe including Cambodia, the Honduras, Indonesia, Vietnam, and almost every corner of China.

### 21 West Broadway

Located in the heart of Kitsilano, West Broadway is a major corridor connecting Vancouver to the University of British Columbia (UBC). This area is home to students, families, retirees and many more. It also includes Vancouver's Greektown. Here, Hellenic supermarkets, restaurants and businesses thrive alongside a vibrant mix of shops, restaurants and services – all with ready access to nearby local beaches.

### 22 West End

A much-frequented destination for locals and visitors alike, the West End includes English Bay and Stanley Park. This neighbourhood is also an important contributor to Vancouver's gay tourism industry thanks to its bustling Davie Village – Davie Street is the very heart of Vancouver's gay community and this gaybourhood. Outstanding liveability, views, shops, dining, amenities and ready beach access are also signature features of this neighbourhood.

### 23 Yaletown

Epitomizing the "live, work and play here" attitude that characterizes the Vancouver lifestyle, Yaletown's converted heritage buildings house a dense and unique mix of condominium and loft residences. The neighbourhood also serves as a hub for technology, gaming

and animation studios – highlighting the city's burgeoning digital entertainment and tech sectors. Boutique shopping, waterfront patios, amenities, a bustling restaurant scene and more also feature prominently in this trend-setting neighbourhood.



**Global Relay** Gastown Grand Prix transforms the cobblestone streets of Gastown into one of the fastest cycling race courses in North America.



# Why Vancouver

An unparalleled city providing a unique business climate that's innovative, progressive, green and approachable, Vancouver is also celebrated for its striking natural beauty, ready outdoor access, mild year-round climate and commitment to active transportation.

Here are just a few reasons why choosing Vancouver makes smart business sense:

#### Location

Situated on the Pacific coast of British Columbia (BC), Vancouver has the global economy at its doorstep. As Canada's Pacific Gateway, Vancouver has ready access to markets in Asia and the United States.

#### Diversified

Vancouver's multi-faceted economy includes exciting growth in the Green and Technology sectors, as well as a rapidly expanding Digital Entertainment & Interactive (DE&I) sector – especially in film production, gaming, VFX and animation. Vancouver's economy also includes a unique mix of other knowledge industries such as life sciences and more traditional industries such as tourism, forestry, mining, transportation and logistics.

#### Innovative workforce

Vancouver boasts a highly educated, multicultural workforce that reflects the city's population and diverse cultures, as well as Canada's history as a welcoming home for skilled immigrants and their families.

#### Entrepreneurial spirit

Vancouver offers a vibrant environment for R&D and business development. Creative, entrepreneurial thought leaders make Vancouver an innovation incubator – a place where new ideas, products and services are born and meetings are conducted in coffee shops as frequently as boardrooms.

#### Green ethos

Vancouver's commitment to green thinking and living is world-renowned, and it aspires to be even greener, with its goal of becoming the world's greenest city by 2020. Not only is sustainability top of mind for Vancouver's businesses and residents, but green industries (and jobs) are rapidly expanding. Today, clean technology, clean energy, green buildings, urban design, local food and environmental services are all on the rise.



Photo: Matt Jacques

**StartUp City Vancouver** is just one example of how Vancouver provides a supportive network to launch tomorrow's game-changing business ideas.



Vancouver's **scientists, engineers, researchers, designers, and entrepreneurs** are dreaming up new ideas that will **transform** the world.

For businesses and entrepreneurs alike, Vancouver offers many advantages including:

#### The ability to leverage Vancouver's global profile

Vancouver has a global reputation as a modern, creative city. Having a business with a Vancouver address offers incredible cachet.

#### Tax and business incentives

Companies doing business in Vancouver enjoy one of the lowest corporate tax rates in North America, as well as long-term stable tax incentives from various levels of government.

#### World-class educational and research facilities

Vancouver's educational institutions have global recognition and an outstanding reputation.

#### The benefit of doing business in Canada

In addition to offering the world's soundest banking system to support new investment, Canada's global trade network is extensive, thanks to a growing list of signed trade agreements.

Beyond these advantages, there's also the live/work/play downtown effect, which deserves special mention. Being able to do it all in Vancouver's downtown core lends itself to a happier, more creative and more productive workforce. Less commute time also means more time for recreation, which matters when there's ready access to mountains, ocean, green space, yoga and fitness centres. There's also Vancouver's vibrant arts and culture scene, with something for everyone. All this to say: Vancouver is leading the way, showing other cities in Canada and across the globe that downtown living and working offers the best of all worlds.

Consistently ranked one of the world's most liveable cities, Vancouver is known for its striking natural beauty. But these days, the world's top talent and investment dollars are being attracted to Vancouver's doorstep by much more. You can find an exciting, innovative and collaborative business culture driven by creativity – where social conscience and sustainability meet. Be part of Canada's fastest growing economy.

*See yourself here!*



# The Vancouver Economic Commission

The Vancouver Economic Commission (VEC) work to position Vancouver as a globally recognised city for innovative, creative and sustainable business.



The VEC enhances Vancouver's ability to attract and retain the best talent from around the world.

VEC **strengthens** Vancouver's economy by **growing** existing businesses, **attracting** smart capital and talent, **researching** market opportunities, and **promoting** Vancouver as a global destination for business.

As the leading economic development platform in Vancouver, we work with Tech, Digital Entertainment & Interactive and Green Economy companies by connecting them with the talent, capital, data and market access they need, all in a start-up ecosystem that is recognized as one of the world's best.

The VEC:

**ADVISES** business leaders on:

- Key growth sectors (Tech, Digital Entertainment & Interactive and Green Economy)
- Vancouver's investment climate
- Living and working in Vancouver

**CONNECTS** businesses to:

- Talent
- Capital
- Local and international markets

**CELEBRATES** the Vancouver business story through:

- Storytelling about business and Vancouver successes
- Strategic local and international events
- Hosting and leading delegations

The VEC's Strategic Initiatives & Sector Development, Marketing & Research and Asia Pacific Centre teams achieve these objectives through their direct work with entrepreneurs, and the wide range of stakeholders with whom they interact – from elected officials and departments of all levels of government to peer organizations, industry associations and educational institutions. This on-the-ground approach allows the VEC to understand fundamental talent and capital dynamics in the city, address and identify gaps to allow existing businesses to grow, and inspire others around the world to call Vancouver their home.

# Notes & Sources

The name “Vancouver” can mean the City of Vancouver or the 21 municipality region that surrounds and includes the city (“Metro Vancouver”). In this Guide, where the context does not make clear whether “Vancouver” refers to the city or the region, please assume the reference is to the region, not to the city.

Information and data used to compile this guide was drawn from a variety of sources including:

*Advantage BC. AMEBC. Analytica Advisors. BC Hydro Bloomberg Businessweek. Canadian Arts Database. City of Vancouver. Conde Nast. Conference Board of Canada. Economist Intelligence Unit. Enterprising Non-Profits BC. Environment Canada. FDI Intelligence. Global Affairs Canada. Government of BC. Government of Canada. Grosvenor. Hill Strategies. Hydro Quebec. ICTC. Invest BC. KPMG. LifeSciences BC. Metro Vancouver. Ministry of Advanced Education. MMK Consulting. Monocle Magazine. Nordicity. OECD. Port Metro Vancouver. PWC. Skytrax. Social Enterprise Sector Survey. Startup Compass. Statistics Canada. The Times Higher Education Rankings. Translink. Vancouver Airport Authority (YVR). Vancouver BIAs. Vancouver Convention Centre. Vancouver School Board.*

---

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this document is accurate and current to Spring 2016. If you discover an error in this Guide, please email us at [info@vancouvereconomic.com](mailto:info@vancouvereconomic.com) so we can correct future editions. The Vancouver Economic Commission accepts no liability for actions based on this material.

“We looked at many different Canadian cities and chose Vancouver because of its impressive technology sector and focus on innovation and the environment.”

**Hanging Wang**

*Chairman, Hanhai Zhiye Group*



# Partners

The Vancouver Economic Commission is the nexus of the city's business community. We work to connect the fastest-growing, knowledge economy businesses with the investors, talent, industry groups, government and media they need to succeed. To do this, we have built partnerships with a wide range of diverse stakeholders.

## GOVERNMENT



## GOVERNMENT AGENCIES



## BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS



## POST SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS



# Fast Facts

**#1**

Head Office Growth in Canada

Source: Financial Post

**AA+**  
(S&P)  
**AAA**  
(Moody's)  
**City Credit Ratings**  
(the highest possible ratings)

**2nd**  
Most Resilient City for Investment

Source: Grosvenor

**#1**  
VFX & Animation Cluster in the World

Source: Variety Magazine

**5th**  
Most Competitive City Globally for Business Taxes

Source: KPMG

Consistently Ranked  
**Top 3**  
Most Liveable City

Source: Economist/Monocle/Mercer

**#1**

Vancouver's Economy Predicted to Grow Faster Than Anywhere Else In Canada

Source: Conference Board of Canada

**Top**  
Global Startup Ecosystem

Source: Startup Genome

**3rd**  
Greenest City in the World

Source: Siemens/EIU

**3rd**  
Largest Film Production Centre in North America

Source: Creative BC

# Notes





**VANCOUVER**  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION

Tel 1.866.632.9668 | [vancouvereconomic.com](http://vancouvereconomic.com)

