

## **DESTINATION SPOTLIGHT: VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA**



### **How do you communicate your city's sustainability commitment to meeting organizers?**

We communicate with meeting planners about Vancouver's "green city" initiatives, particularly the City's pledge that we will be the world's greenest city by 2020. For more resources on this, please refer to the [City of Vancouver's Action Plan](#).

Eco-awareness is part of our culture in Vancouver – the community embraces it and works towards being green in their homes and office environment. Our location encourages more walking, cycling and alternate transport rather than relying on cars.

Hotels and restaurants have also embraced this idea and are engaged through programs such as [Oceanwise](#) and the 100-mile diet (pioneered in Vancouver, this concept involves only using ingredients that have been grown within a 100-mile radius). Almost all of our hotels have some sort of recycling program in place for soap/shampoos, sheet/towel washing programs, etc.

Finally, the [Green Key Eco-Rating program](#) is popular in Vancouver, and we have more than 40 hotels participating.

### **How does this support your ability to attract meetings to the destination?**

It makes Vancouver a stronger draw for Green Meeting-related organizations that want to host their conference in a city that supports their ideas.

Vancouver's green focus inspires planners who want to make their meetings greener – in fact, many often apply our ideas and concepts to future meetings in other cities.

Tourism Vancouver offers clients customized bid book pages that identify "green initiatives" as a hot point in their decision making. For an example, see here:

<https://tourismvancouver.box.com/s/s0df5b9p2kebv9c7t3e4>

For an example of our "10 Green ways to Experience Vancouver" section in our bid book, please see here: <https://tourismvancouver.box.com/s/1zpycwva4qf9tzlg20il>

Tourism Vancouver offers electronic tools in lieu of paper materials that help planners with destination promotion and delegate materials, including virtual guides, map files, a microsite of our website, an electronic email blast template and images/videos.

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Tourism Vancouver's iPad app is another way we have been able to adapt and be more green with information.

### **What sustainable attribute are you most proud of within your city and sets your city apart from others?**

The Vancouver Convention Centre is the world's first LEED Platinum certified convention centre. A facility that is not only highly functional and exceptionally beautiful, it is also environmentally sustainable in every way—incorporating the very latest in green technologies, as well as unique and innovative features such as a marine habitat and six-acre 'living' roof. The convention centre's team is also committed to green operational practices, keeping environmental sustainability a priority in their day-to-day functions. They also work with clients to enhance the sustainability of their programs, and offer [Sustainable Events Guidelines](#) for meeting planners.

By selecting this facility, an event is automatically 'green' from the start. But more importantly, it becomes the perfect springboard to further enhance the sustainability profile of a meeting or convention.

### **How does your CVB support sustainable events (minimizing negative impacts and maximizing positive contributions in the local community) to help event organizers?**

#### **Describe sustainable transportation options.**

Vancouver is highly walkable, featuring a compact downtown core – just one mile across – and easily navigable grid street system. Public transportation options are plentiful, and include buses; the SkyTrain (an automated light rapid transit system, which operates between Vancouver and surrounding suburbs); the Canada Line (new addition to Skytrain running between Vancouver International Airport and downtown Vancouver); the SeaBus, connecting downtown Vancouver to North Vancouver; and the Aquabus and False Creek mini-ferries connecting downtown with Granville Island. Vancouver also features more than 400 km of bike lanes, making it easy to cycle around downtown and the seawall – peddlers can also take their bikes aboard Skytrains, SeaBuses and rack-fitted transit buses for free.

With the Vancouver Convention Centre's central downtown location, walking is an easy option for delegates. There are 13,000 hotel rooms within walking distance including three connecting hotel properties, restaurants from around the globe and endless shopping and entertainment options.

### **What solutions do you provide to help organizers with waste diversion (venue recycling, composting, donation programs)?**

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We offer support wherever possible, including resources such as the following:

<http://www.tourismvancouver.com/meetings/why-vancouver/5-ways-to-green-your-meeting/>

**How do you support local community organizations & facility CSR project support for organizers?**

Tourism Vancouver's website lists the various Corporate Social Responsibility and volunteerism opportunities available to convention delegates:

<http://www.tourismvancouver.com/meetings/volunteering/>

We also share information about these opportunities with our planners to help them source the right fit for their theme or CSR direction.

**How do you support local food or other procurement sourcing options for event organizers?**

As stated above, local hotels and restaurants have embraced this idea and are actively engaged through programs such as Oceanwise and the 100-mile diet.

**Does your bureau or major convention centre have a green team?**

In May 2012, Tourism Vancouver hired what is believed to be one of the world's first tourism energy specialists, whose mandate is to guide member hotels, restaurants and attractions in energy efficiency and conservation initiatives. For more information, please refer to the following news release:

<http://www.tourismvancouver.com/articles/view/TOURISM-VANCOUVER-S-ENERGY-SPECIALIST-PROGRAM-EMBRACED-BY-INDUSTRY/618/541/>

**Do you provide educational training programs for your venues about sustainable best practices? Do you profile sustainable hospitality partners?**

Part of Tourism Vancouver's Energy Specialist Program involves profiling and celebrating partners who implement sustainability initiatives. The bureau also runs environmental workshops and engages with the community about eco initiatives.

**Describe the most impactful sustainable event experience/customer experience supported by your CVB.**

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We have seen some conferences initiate programs like the “Shoe Valet,” where delegates wear their runners for the walk from their hotel to the Convention Centre and drop off their shoes with the valet for the day. They then put on their work high heels or dress shoes and attend the convention. At the end of the sessions, they trade in their dress shoes for their runners to walk the return route to the hotel.

Bike Valets are also available at some conventions where there is a mixture of locals and international delegates. Locals are encouraged to ride their bikes to the conference and leave them with the secure valet for the day, free of charge.

Tourism Vancouver has created virtual visitor guides that can be promoted prior to and on-site of the convention.

**What advice would you provide other CVB professionals seeking to head down the sustainable event pathway?**

The key is partnerships and community connection. Industry and communities need to fully support the idea and program to make changes happen.

Small steps are best, as approaches that are too grand or quick often aren't fully supported.

**When an organizer comes to your city for a site inspection, what is your favourite sustainable activity, location or experience that you like to share?**

We always show the Vancouver Convention Centre, if applicable, to the client's program due to their LEED Platinum-certified building and extensive sustainability program.

We try to conduct most of our sites by walking between appointments in order to showcase the city's compactness and walkability.

If the client is very green-focused and we need a car, we try to arrange for a hybrid car.

Many of our taxi companies feature full fleets of hybrid taxis.

If appropriate, we show alternate modes of travel in the city, such as the Aquabus or False Creek Ferries, as well as the comprehensive Translink (public transportation) system.

**What value do you see being affiliated with the global GMIC community?**

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Claire Smith, Vice President of the Vancouver Convention Centre is Vancouver's representative with GMIC. It strengthens our cause with planners when they know we are affiliated with GMIC. GMIC is a valuable resource.

**What support/resource do you need to continue on your sustainable path?**

It is important that we continue to collaborate both informally and formally with other convention centres, meeting professionals, and industry associations like GMIC. For our entire industry to grow, we need to share case studies and best practices, and participate in industry discussions.

**Do you have testimonials or case studies that we can share with our community?**

The Vancouver Convention Centre's case study of its partnership with United We Can showcases how the Centre leveraged the success of its extensive facility-wide recycling program to create a social value for the community. In 2010, the Convention Centre partnered with United We Can, a local charity that creates self-sustaining, sustainable social enterprises in an economically-depressed neighbourhood in Vancouver. By re-directing 100 percent of the Centre's recyclables such as wine and liquor bottles and other beverage containers (which can be returned for money) to United We Can's Recycling Depot, the Centre helps to create income and job training opportunities for people with multiple barriers to traditional employment, many living in extreme poverty and often homeless. Video case study: <http://youtu.be/8CMg45CYt7k>

Other videos that may be of interest include:

[http://www.vancouverconventioncentre.com/video-gallery?u=2009/04/sustainability\\_std-720x480\\_a2](http://www.vancouverconventioncentre.com/video-gallery?u=2009/04/sustainability_std-720x480_a2)

[http://www.vancouverconventioncentre.com/video-gallery?u=2009/04/living\\_roof\\_std\\_720x480\\_a2](http://www.vancouverconventioncentre.com/video-gallery?u=2009/04/living_roof_std_720x480_a2)