

## BC Real Estate Convention E-Newsletter

Located on a large island the approximate size of Holland, the community of Nanaimo (na-NYE-mo) is 15 minutes by plane from Vancouver, BC's largest city. With a population of 86,000, the city's size offers quality of life and diverse economic strengths. New businesses and residents alike are continuing to locate in Nanaimo because of the desirable mix of modern infrastructure, an affordable cost of living, the 'island lifestyle', as well as all of the services which are essential for a business to operate successfully.

Nanaimo's downtown continues to grow and thrive thanks to the ongoing revitalization efforts of its stakeholders. Today you will see attractive high-rise condo buildings, a 5 km oceanfront walkway, community events and festivals in public spaces, a varied arts district, and a range of culinary and retail establishments. Commercial, residential and heritage restoration projects continue to occur. To help spur these new developments, the City of Nanaimo offers incentives including the elimination of development cost charges, and a tax incentive for the residential conversion of heritage buildings.

Since June 2008, the downtown has enjoyed the addition of the state-of-the-art Port of Nanaimo Centre which includes the Nanaimo Museum, Shaw Auditorium and Vancouver Island Conference Centre (VICC). The VICC ([www.viconference.com](http://www.viconference.com)) is one of Canada's newest offerings to the convention and conference industry, and can accommodate groups of up to 1,300 who wish to enjoy the beautiful downtown and harbour while having access to a modern, functional meeting and convention space.

The City of Nanaimo ([www.nanaimo.ca](http://www.nanaimo.ca)) is working diligently to secure a hotel developer for a 170-room facility on an adjacent site, so that the VICC can recognize its full capacity. Meanwhile the conference centre continues to attract national and international conferences such as the 7<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Sturgeon conference, which will be held in 2013 and will showcase Nanaimo to 700 international delegates.

By fall of 2010, another noticeable improvement in the city's downtown will be the Nanaimo Port Authority's ([www.npa.ca](http://www.npa.ca)) new \$18.5 million cruise ship dock. Visiting cruise ships currently anchor in the harbour and tender their passengers ashore. 22,000 passengers were welcomed in 2009; the Nanaimo Port Authority plans to double that number in 3-5 years.

Also planning for the future is Vancouver Island University [(VIU) [www.viu.ca](http://www.viu.ca)], which has a significant role to play in an economy transitioning from that of a traditional resources base to a more knowledge-base. "VIU is developing individuals with the knowledge-base to provide the human resources and the talent to become engaged in the evolution of our economy," said Ralph Nilson, President and Vice Chancellor of VIU.

Through the vision of its new 50-year campus master plan, VIU will remain relevant, responsive and innovative in a community of growth and change. Management of coastal resources, natural and technological, is key to the economic future of the region. "VIU will provide the applied research that local industries need to evolve and grow and meet consumer demand around the world."

Major developments are also occurring outside of the downtown core, including in South Nanaimo where Island Wolf Properties, a partnership between Northwest Properties and the Snuneymuxw First Nation, plans to develop over 700 acres over the next 15 years. The buildout will include a range of land uses from a variety of residential neighbourhoods, retail and commercial, light industrial, as well as a generous open space and parks network. In addition, an Eco Industrial Park that takes advantage of the waste energy from the adjacent regional landfill will be explored.

To meet current and future demand and support the continued growth of the city, the Nanaimo Airport ([www.nanaimoairport.com](http://www.nanaimoairport.com)) is undertaking an improvement project, with the \$27 million Phase 1 having been completed in November. This included a 2,400 foot taxiway extension for a total runway length of 6,600 feet, high intensity lighting, lead-in lights and an instrument landing system. Phase 2 is scheduled for completion by March 2011 and will include a terminal building expansion, parking lot expansion, and wastewater treatment plant. The completion of Phase 1 means that the Nanaimo Airport can now accommodate 737-700W aircraft which will allow for service across North America, with the capacity for service to sun destinations in the US and Mexico.

“The airport improvements will look after the air transportation requirements of this growing community for the next 50 years,” says Mike Hooper, President and CEO of the Nanaimo Airport Commission. “As well, it will continue to be an economic generator for the central island region, with an increase of 1,025 direct and indirect jobs by 2025.”

The vision of a prosperous future and a community of social and economic opportunity is shared by residents, businesses and organizations alike and ensures that Nanaimo remains one of the most desirable, livable small cities in North America.

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