

BRIEFING NOTE

TO:	Mayor and Members of City of Nanaimo Council
FROM:	Carly Pereboom, CEO, Tourism Nanaimo
DATE:	April 2026
SUBJECT:	Q1 2026 Quarterly Report — Tourism Nanaimo Performance Update (January–March 2026)
CLASSIFICATION:	For Council Information

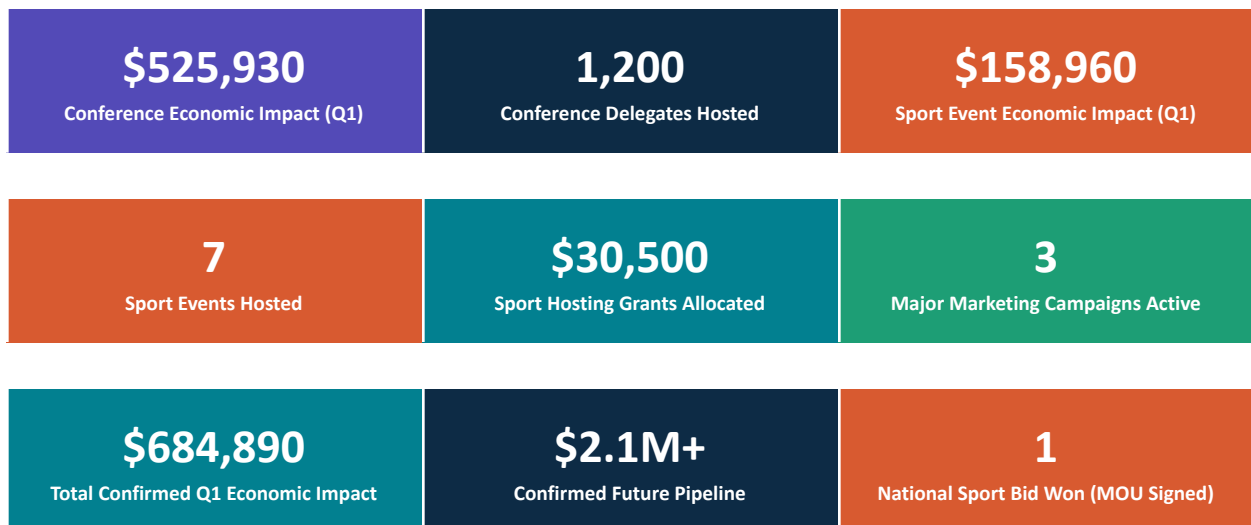
Executive Summary

Tourism Nanaimo is pleased to present its Q1 2026 report to City Council, covering January through March 2026. This report captures confirmed results across all three program pillars — Meetings and Conferences, Sport Tourism, and Marketing — and demonstrates the organization's continued role as an economic driver and strategic partner in Nanaimo's growth.

The central message of this report is straightforward: the City's core investment in Tourism Nanaimo is the mechanism through which Nanaimo accesses two significant non-tax revenue streams. Tourism Nanaimo's operations underpin the Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) program, which returned \$1.3 million to the sector directly in 2025, revenue generated entirely from visitors, not residents. The same program drives the Overnight Accommodation Program (OAP), which collected \$240,000 in 2025 to support affordable housing in Nanaimo. Together, these two programs returned \$1.54 million to the City, and drove an injection of \$371.5 million in visitor spending into the City's economy. The City's investment in Tourism Nanaimo is, an investment in a revenue model that does not touch the property tax base.

In Q1 2026, Tourism Nanaimo delivered \$684,890 in confirmed, tracked economic impact through four hosted conferences and seven supported sport events — with over \$2.1 million in additional confirmed future conference business already in the pipeline.

Q1 2026 — Key Results at a Glance



Section 1 — 2025 Destination Health

The following accommodation performance indicators provide the baseline context for Tourism Nanaimo's 2026 program planning. These figures reflect the health of Nanaimo's tourism economy heading into the current year.

Indicator	2025 Result	Year-over-Year
Hotel Occupancy	67.2%	Up from 62.8% in 2024 (+4.4 percentage points)
Average Daily Rate (ADR)	\$180	Increased year over year
Revenue per Available Room (RevPAR)	+10%	Growth in revenue efficiency per available room
Total Visitor Spending	\$371.5M	+3.7% from 2024

What visitor spending means for the City

The \$371.5 million in visitor spending represents external money entering the Nanaimo economy, not local residents spending locally. This external injection circulates through Nanaimo's businesses, supports local employment, and generates direct funding back to the City:

- \$1.3 million in Municipal and Regional District Tax (MRDT) — reinvested in tourism and destination development
- \$240,000 in Overnight Accommodation Program (OAP) funding invested in affordable housing
- Visitor spending breakdown: Food & Beverage 36.3%, Accommodation 24.2%, Transportation 17.2%, Retail 14.6%, Recreation & Entertainment 7.8%

Section 2 — Q1 2026 Program Results

2a. Meetings and Conferences

Tourism Nanaimo's Meetings and Conferences team hosted four conferences in Nanaimo during Q1 2026, generating \$525,930 in confirmed economic impact and welcoming 1,200 delegates, 850 delegates from provincial and regional markets.

Q1 2026 Hosted Conferences

Conference	Dates	Delegates	Market	Est. Impact
Coast Brand Hotel Conference	Feb 9–11	250	Provincial	\$180,480
WCOWM Conference	Feb 26–28	200	Provincial	\$94,000
Assoc. of BC Land Surveyors	Mar 10–13	250	Provincial	\$180,950

Conference	Dates	Delegates	Market	Est. Impact
Safety Alliance Regional Conference	Mar 30–31	150	Regional	\$70,500
Q1 TOTAL		850		\$525,930

Note: Non-contracted conferences do not have room blocks, tracking the economic impact is not as accurate, we rely on the official calculations at year end from the VICC for total delegate impact, as they manage delegate impact YOY. In the presentation you will see listed, additional events that do not have economic impact calculated at this time.

**The 2025 annual total of 49 hosted conferences (up from 27 in 2024) and 32,000+ delegate days provides important context for this growth trajectory. Q1 2026 continues this momentum.*

Sales and business development activity

Tourism Nanaimo attended two major national tradeshows in Q1, generating immediate and pipeline RFP activity:

- Go West (Edmonton, Jan 31–Feb 3): 2 RFPs secured on-site, 8 strong leads. Hosted Buyer Program added to annual sales budget based on results.
- Ottawa Meet Week (February): \$15,000 investment. 15 qualified planners hosted in a branded Meet in Nanaimo suite. Results: 3 on-the-spot RFPs, 4 additional RFPs incoming, 3 FAM tour confirmations, 90+ planners engaged at Tête-à-Tête tradeshow.

Marketing and visibility

- Ignite Magazine editorial published: 27,700 total distribution (14,800 print + 13,400 digital) reaching Canada's professional event planning community
- InFocus Magazine editorial: Nanaimo featured ahead of BCHA Summit — positioning the city as an emerging meetings hub
- Ignite Destination Hub launched: digital planner resource centralizing Nanaimo's RFP tools, venue guides, and destination assets
- 'Host It Here' digital campaign launched with H2, targeting local and BC-based association planners
- CRM transition to Simpleview underway — improved lead tracking and reporting capacity expected in Q2

2b. Sport Tourism

Tourism Nanaimo's Sport Tourism program supported seven events across Nanaimo's facilities in Q1 2026, generating \$158,960 in tracked economic impact. A confidential national sport bid was won in March, with the MOU signed and a working group established with the City of Nanaimo.

Note on methodology: Sport economic impact figures are tracked using the Destinations International Event Impact Calculator, onboarded in early 2026. These figures represent confirmed trackable activity — total destination impact is materially higher. Tracking capability will continue to improve through 2026.

Q1 2026 sport events hosted

January	U11 NMHA Hockey Tournament	NIC & Beban Arenas
January	Vancouver Island Regional Skating Championship	Frank Crane Arena
January	Nanaimo Squash Open	Nanaimo Squash Club
February	Annual Tubbers Cup Hockey Tournament	Nanaimo Ice Centre
February	BCSS 4A Sr. Girls Basketball Island Championships	Dover Bay Secondary
February	Pacific Peaks Provincial Championships	Nanaimo Aquatic Centre
March	CCAA Men's Basketball National Championships	Vancouver Island University

Sport Hosting Grant — February 2026 intake

Six events were approved for funding in the February intake, with \$30,500 allocated across the successful applicants:

- BC School Sports 3A & 4A Senior Girls Volleyball Provincials
- BMX Canada Cup
- RW Invitational
- Westwood Lake Triathlon
- Tim White Memorial Lacrosse Tournament
- CHILL: Hip Hop Battle

Industry engagement and national bid

- Sport Event Congress 2026 (Mississauga): Attended with Grace Bell, City of Nanaimo. Met with 19 national sport organizations — Canada's largest annual sport tourism gathering. Identified future bid opportunities and strengthened Nanaimo's national profile.
- Confidential national sport bid WON: MOU signed March 2026. Working group established with City of Nanaimo. Full details to be announced — this is a city-wide activation with significant economic impact potential.
- Local Sport Organization meeting: 19 participants representing approximately 15 local organizations. Capacity-building sessions on governance, budgeting, and strategic planning. Tourism Nanaimo presented grant and event support services.
- Play in Nanaimo assets hard-launched: Destination video and Sport Hosting Toolkit publicly released March 2026.

2c. Marketing

Tourism Nanaimo's Marketing team launched three major campaigns in Q1 2026, building on months of planning and creative development. These campaigns collectively target Nanaimo's core drive, ferry, and air markets during the spring shoulder season — the period where tourism investment returns the highest incremental value.

Campaigns active — Q1 2026

Break Spring	Repositioning Nanaimo as an authentic spring alternative to crowded destinations	BC, Washington, Alberta
Escape the Noise	FIFA 2026-aligned — positioning Nanaimo as the nearby coastal escape for Vancouverites during peak congestion	Metro Vancouver; drive + ferry market
Beyond Van Gogh	Arts-led campaign driving shoulder-season visitation around the summer exhibit arrival	BC, Alberta — cultural travel segments

Digital audience — Q1 2026

- Website: approximately 118,000 users across Q1 (January 67K peak; March 34K on campaign launches)
- Email subscribers: 11,289–11,687 active subscribers; open rates 18–29% (above industry average)
- Instagram: 37,292 followers by March-end; accounts reached spiked to 116,885 in March on campaign launch (+325% month-over-month)
- Facebook: 32,956 followers; March impressions 1.64M (+425% on campaign launch)
- TikTok: 2,107 followers — growing emerging channel

Additional highlights

- New Tourism Nanaimo website launched April 1, 2026 — primary visitor-facing destination tool
- DBC Co-op Marketing Program completed March 31, 2026 — final reporting in progress
- Saysutshun Spring Shoulder Season campaign in development — co-created with Petroglyph Development Group and the Saysutshun team
- Regional editorial placements: Voyager Magazine, Nanaimo Magazine, Go Vancouver Island, Vancouver Island Visitor
- KinPR engaged for earned media and influencer coordination across spring campaigns

Section 3 — The Pipeline

A critical measure of Tourism Nanaimo's effectiveness is not only what happened this quarter, but what is already confirmed for future quarters. The following represents business already secured — generating future economic activity for Nanaimo.

Confirmed meetings and conferences — 2026 calendar

Six groups are contracted under Tourism Nanaimo's conference incentive program for 2026, collectively bringing over 1,700 delegates to Nanaimo. An additional 8 conferences are hosted between April 14 - June 25th resulting in an additional 1,960 delegates in the city.

Conference	Dates	Delegates	Market	Est. Impact
BC Hotel Association Summit	Apr 13–16, 2026	350	Provincial	\$327K est.
Canadian Congress of Leisure Research	May 19–22, 2026	300	National	\$280K est.
BC Narcotics Anonymous Conference	May 31–Jun 2	350	Provincial	\$327K est.
Grand Lodge of BC & Yukon	Jun 17–21, 2026	400	Provincial	\$374K est.
First Nations Health Authority AGM	Sep 15–17, 2026	300	National	\$280K est.
2026 TOTAL (incentive program)		1,700+		\$1.59M est.

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Upcoming sales activity

- Meeting Planners FAM Tour, Nanaimo: May 25–28, 2026 — 8 qualified planners confirmed from Toronto, Ottawa, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, and Vancouver
- Red Carpet Tour: May 29, 2026 — industry showcasing event
- Red Carpet Tour with VIU: April 29 — 17 local planners confirmed
- Venue Series, Vancouver: May 14 — BC associations, third-party planners, corporate
- CanSPEP Annual Conference, Regina: June 22–24
- Canadian Meetings & Event Expo, Toronto: August 12–13

Sport tourism pipeline

- Confidential national sport bid: MOU signed March 2026. Working group active. Economic impact to be quantified upon announcement.
- 6 funded sport events confirmed for 2026 (Feb grant intake): BC Girls Volleyball Provincials, BMX Canada Cup, RW Invitational, Westwood Lake Triathlon, Tim White Lacrosse Tournament, CHILL: Hip Hop Battle
- Next Sport Hosting Grant intake: Spring 2026
- FIFA 2026 season: Tourism Nanaimo actively supporting destination readiness and regional visitor diversion strategy through summer

Section 4 — Alignment with City of Nanaimo Strategic Priorities

Tourism Nanaimo's programs are designed to deliver results within the City of Nanaimo's four strategic pillars. The following maps confirmed Q1 2026 activity to each pillar.

A Prosperous Nanaimo — Thriving & Resilient Economy

Economic development · Business growth · Destination investment

- ▶ \$525,930 in confirmed conference economic impact in Q1 2026
- ▶ \$158,960 in tracked sport event economic impact in Q1 2026
- ▶ \$371.5M in total visitor spending (2025), generating \$1.3M MRDT + \$240K OAP to the City
- ▶ 1,700+ delegates confirmed for Nanaimo across spring and summer 2026
- ▶ Confidential national sport bid won — city-wide economic activation forthcoming
- ▶ Creative Cities Summit 2028 secured (\$423K confirmed impact)
- ▶ DBC Co-op Marketing Program completed — provincial co-investment in Nanaimo promotion
- ▶ 3 spring marketing campaigns active, driving shoulder-season visitation

A Healthy Nanaimo — Community Wellbeing & Livability

Arts, culture, active living · Downtown vitality · Community programming

- ▶ 7 sport events hosted Q1, activating NIC, Beban, Frank Crane, Dover Bay, Nanaimo Aquatic Centre, and VIU facilities
- ▶ 19 local sport organizations engaged through capacity-building session with PacificSport Vancouver Island
- ▶ \$30,500 in sport hosting grants invested in community-based events
- ▶ Beyond Van Gogh campaign launched — supporting summer arts programming and cultural infrastructure
- ▶ Voyager Magazine and Nanaimo Magazine editorial placements highlighting arts, culture, and local business districts
- ▶ Dine About Mid-Vancouver Island promoted across newsletters and social channels

An Empowered Nanaimo — Reconciliation, Representation & Inclusion

Indigenous collaboration · Accessibility · Diverse community engagement

- ▶ Saysutshun Spring Shoulder Season campaign in development — co-created with Petroglyph Development Group and the Saysutshun team
- ▶ Sport Hosting Toolkit includes Snuneymuxw First Nation contacts, protocols, and reconciliation resources for event organizers
- ▶ CHILL: Hip Hop Battle funded through Sport Hosting Grant — centering diverse and youth-led community arts and sport

- ▶ Indigenous collaboration embedded in destination storytelling across marketing channels
- ▶ Accessibility and inclusion embedded in sport event planning standards
- ▶ Land acknowledgment foregrounded in all public-facing presentations and reporting

A Connected Nanaimo — Equitable Access & Mobility

Transportation links · Digital connectivity · Regional access

- ▶ Escape the Noise campaign developed with BC Ferries, hullo, Seair, and Devon Transport — reinforcing multi-modal access to Nanaimo during FIFA season
- ▶ Transportation partner meetings held with hullo, Seair, and Devon Transport in relation to BC Budget and FIFA visitor movement planning
- ▶ FIFA 2026 Vancouver–Seattle Roundtable attended bi-weekly — ensuring Nanaimo's connectivity interests are represented regionally
- ▶ New Tourism Nanaimo website launched April 1, 2026 — improved accessibility of destination information for visitors and residents
- ▶ Go Camping BC multi-channel advertisement placed — positioning Nanaimo for outdoor and regional trip planners

Section 5 — Looking Ahead: Q2 2026 and Beyond

The following key initiatives are underway or confirmed for the remainder of 2026, providing Council with forward visibility into the economic and community activities Tourism Nanaimo is advancing on behalf of the City.

FAM Tour — Meeting Planners	8 qualified planners from Toronto, Ottawa, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, and Vancouver experiencing Nanaimo. Converting trade show leads to confirmed bookings.	May 25–28, 2026
Red Carpet Tour	Industry showcase event; 17 local planners confirmed plus May 29 event. Building local champion network for 'Host It Here' initiative.	April 29 + May 29
FIFA Season Activation	Escape the Noise campaign active. Transportation partnerships live. Supporting Nanaimo business readiness and regional visitor diversion.	June–July 2026
National Sport Bid Announcement	Working group active with City of Nanaimo. Full public announcement forthcoming. Major city-wide activation with significant economic impact.	TBD — 2026
Saysutshun Campaign Launch	Spring shoulder season campaign co-developed with Petroglyph Development Group and	Spring/Summer 2026

	Saysutshun team. Indigenous-led storytelling and destination promotion.	
Simpleview CRM Fully Live	Improved conference lead tracking, economic impact reporting, and data pipeline to support more comprehensive City reporting from Q2 onward.	Q2 2026
CanSPEP + CMEE Tradeshows	Attending CanSPEP (Regina, June) and Canadian Meetings & Event Expo (Toronto, August) with VICC and OTBBC partners to build national conference pipeline.	Jun–Aug 2026
Destinations International Calculator	Onboarded for sport event tracking. All future sport events to be tracked for economic impact, providing materially improved data for City reporting.	Active from Q2

Section 6 — Key Takeaways for Council

Council may wish to note the following points from this report:

01	Nanaimo's accommodation sector is healthy and growing — 67.2% occupancy, \$180 ADR, and +10% RevPAR in 2025 signal a strong destination baseline entering 2026.
02	External visitor spending (\$371.5M) directly generates City revenue — \$1.3M MRDT and \$240K OAP. Tourism investment pays for itself in measurable, recurring returns.
03	Q1 2026 delivered \$684,890 in confirmed economic impact. This is tracked, conservative, and methodologically sound. Total destination impact is higher — tracking improvements are underway.
04	The pipeline is strong. Over \$2.1 million in future conference impact is already confirmed for Nanaimo. A national sport bid won in March adds further significant impact when announced.
05	Tourism Nanaimo is attending national tradeshows, meeting planners are coming to Nanaimo for a FAM tour in May, and campaigns are active in BC, Alberta, and Washington — all priority markets.
06	FIFA 2026 is being approached thoughtfully. Nanaimo is not competing to be a host city — we are positioning as the smart nearby escape for Vancouverites, a strategy grounded in market data.
07	Indigenous partnership is embedded — not bolted on. The Saysutshun campaign, Snuneymuxw protocols in sport hosting, and land acknowledgment practices reflect genuine commitment to reconciliation. Additionally a co-designed destination development plan is in its preliminary stages.
08	Measurement is improving. The transition to Simpleview CRM and the Destinations International Calculator mean Council can expect more comprehensive and consistent data in future quarterly reports.

For questions about this report, please contact:

Carly Pereboom · CEO, Tourism Nanaimo

hay cep qa' · Thank you

We acknowledge the Snuneymuxw First Nation, on whose traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory Nanaimo exists, and we are grateful for the opportunity to work on this land.