

Vancouver prepares for ‘biggest ever’ business trip to China

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By [Emily Jackson](#) Metro



Contributed A friendly soccer match between Vancouver and its sister city Guangzhou. So far, the series between the two cities is tied 1-1.

Animators, ballerinas, lawyers and app developers will accompany Vancouver’s mayor on the city’s largest ever trade mission to China in November.

The two-week trip to four cities will be a business-to-business version of speed dating, with a delegation of more than 180 people traveling to shake hands, try to drum up business and build relationships with more than 600 locals expected to attend the events.

“There will be business coming out of this trip, there’s no question about that,” Vancouver Economic Commission CEO Ian McKay told city council Tuesday.

Attendees include two city councillors, nine city staff, more than 130 Chinese-Canadian community leaders and at least [18 businesses](#) (PDF file), including Nerd Corps Entertainment

(an animation studio), Avigilon (a surveillance company), Indochino (a custom clothing retailer) and the UBC Faculty of Medicine.

The trip will cost the VEC and the city \$275,000, with additional sponsorship from Gowlings law firm and KPMG.

It's hard to calculate the exact economic benefit of such missions, McKay said – some studies say they have zero return – but Mayor Gregor Robertson said the city has seen success before in London and with its sister city Guangzhou.

“In China it's important to be with a mayor to open doors,” Robertson said of the trip, which he hopes will promote economic ties with the city's clean tech, health sciences, architecture, tourism and creative industries.

Natural resource and mining companies were conspicuously missing from the attendee list. Robertson accounted for their absence by noting Vancouver's prevalence of tech and tourism jobs, adding the province's trade mission in November will pay more attention to resources.

For the first time, arts and culture institutions such as Goh Ballet and the public library will be represented on the mission.

The trip will also feature the third soccer match between Guangzhou and Vancouver – so far, the series is tied 1-1.