

B.C. cities face off for a piece of 'Heated Rivalry' star Hudson Williams

Marissa Birnie The Canadian Press Jan 25, 2026 Updated 1 hr ago



Actors Hudson Williams, left, and Connor Storrie are shown in a scene from Crave's "Heated Rivalry" in this handout image. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Handout © Bell Media (Mandatory Credit) sdy

VANCOUVER - It's a "Heated Rivalry" beef, with a side-serving of spaghetti, as British Columbia cities lay claim to Hudson Williams, star of the gay hockey television phenomenon.

Williams, who stars as Shane Hollander in the Crave series, has connections with multiple B.C. cities — he was born in Kelowna, grew up in Kamloops, lives in Vancouver and worked in New Westminster.

The cities' tourism bodies have been leaning in to the success of the series about rival hockey players who develop an off-ice romance by participating in a tongue-in-cheek competition to "claim" Williams as their own on social media.

"I'm in a 'Heated Rivalry' psychosis and I'm all for it," Destination Vancouver's consumer marketing manager Samantha Clark said.

After Ottawa Tourism changed its Instagram bio to read "birthplace of Shane Hollander," Clark said Vancouver had to respond.

Destination Vancouver's Instagram bio now calls itself the "home of Hudson Williams."

Kamloops boasted it was the "birthplace of Hudson Williams," though it later removed the claim after Williams clarified in a podcast appearance that he was born in Kelowna.

Tourism New Westminster, meanwhile, is staking its claim, calling itself the "proud home of Hudson Williams' former workplace," since the actor used to work at the Old Spaghetti Factory there.

"Once you've served spaghetti in New West, you're officially a New Westie," said Tourism New Westminster marketing manager Jasmine Crisp, adding that Williams recently returned to the city to meet his former co-workers.

Douglas College, which has a New Westminster campus, adds a degree of separation by saying in its Instagram bio that it is: "Across the street from Hudson Williams' former workplace."

Langara College in Vancouver touts itself online as Williams' alma mater.

Clark said the social media one-upmanship is helping promote B.C. tourism, prompting her organization to create its own travel guide for fans of the show and Williams — including a stop at the Old Spaghetti Factory.

"I think that this show has beautifully showcased Canada," she said. "I think it's just a fun way to show people all you can do in Canada through a show that has really captured the hearts of so many people internationally."

Clark said that while "everyone can have a piece of" Williams, Vancouver's claim is the strongest.

"There is no Shane Hollander without Hudson Williams. And Hudson Williams became who he is when he moved here," she said.

Destination Vancouver posted its own "investigation" into the competing claims over Williams.

In the video, a "lawyer" presents evidence of Williams' Vancouver connections — including his time as a student at Langara, that he spent New Year's Eve in the city, and said he lives in Vancouver with his mother.

"Nothing more Vancouver than that," Destination Vancouver says in the video. "This man is ours."

Others disagree. "When you see other cities trying to claim one of your own, you've got to defend your turf," Tourism Kamloops content specialist Katy Morrison said in response to the "beef."

While the Canadians fight it out, the claim over Williams could go international.

He and his American co-star Connor Storrie were recently announced as torchbearers for the Olympic flame at the Milan Cortina Games in February.

"Heated Rivalry," based on a book series by Nova Scotia's Rachel Reid, has become an international sensation, with Williams and Storrie appearing on late night talk shows and presenting at the Golden Globes.

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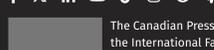
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