VICTORIA, BC – Last night, the City of Victoria was the recipient of a FCM Sustainable Community Award for its Secondary Suites Program – Making Secondary Suites Easier. The award ceremony took place at the Victoria Conference Centre as part of this week’s Federation of Canadian Municipalities Sustainable Communities Conference, being held outside Ottawa for the very first time.

“Sustainability is about more than just being environmentally conscious – it’s also about the social well-being, livability and economic vitality of a community,” said Mayor Dean Fortin. “Secondary suites help improve housing affordability; increasing the density of our neighbourhoods while protecting green space.”

In March 2009, the City of Victoria launched a new grant program for secondary suites. The program offers homeowners a grant equal to 25 per cent of construction costs of new secondary suites, up to a maximum of $5,000. The launch of the program was timed with relaxations to zoning and regulatory changes for installing secondary suites, all in an effort to make it easier for City of Victoria homeowners to install a secondary suite.

"Hands-on” information sessions were also held, giving homeowners an opportunity to speak directly with staff about their plans for building a suite, learn more about the grant program, and the zoning and regulatory relaxations. Those who attended were able to ask questions to electrical, plumbing and building inspectors, as well as zoning and engineering staff.

Since the launch of the program there has been a significant increase in the number of applications for secondary suites, almost doubling from 2007 to 2010. (25 applications in 2007 compared to 49 in 2010). Twenty-three grants have been issued since the program was introduced in 2009.

Victoria was one of the first municipalities in Greater Victoria to allow secondary suites and is currently the only municipality to offer a grant towards the cost of building a secondary suite.

This is the second FCM Sustainable Community Award for the City of Victoria. In 2009, Victoria was recognized in the brownfields category for the Dockside Green project.

For more information about the program, including steps in the application process, please visit www.victoria.ca and click on ‘Secondary Suites’ under What’s New.

For More Information:
Katie Josephson
Director of Corporate Communications
Tel: 250.361.0210
Cel: 250.217.8343