Downtown Plan Wins International Award

Date: Wednesday, September 26, 2012

VICTORIA, BC — Last Saturday in Minneapolis, the City of Victoria was recognized by the International Downtown Association with a Downtown Merit Award for the development of the new Downtown Core Area Plan for Victoria, British Columbia’s Capital City.

Approved in 2011, the Downtown Core Area Plan provides guidance for growth and development over the next 30 years to foster an attractive, vibrant, pedestrian-friendly and economically resilient downtown and ensure that downtown remains the heart of the Capital Region.

“Victoria’s downtown has a wonderful and unique character that is recognized throughout the world,” said Victoria Mayor Dean Fortin. “Our job is to ensure we have an effective and comprehensive map for future growth that protects our charm, support the region’s business centre, and encourages thoughtful development. This plan does just that.”

The Downtown Core Area Plan outlines a number of strategies to improve the vitality of the downtown; including:

- Development guidelines to support a rapid transit system along Douglas Street
- New density bonus system that balances increased density with the provision of public amenities
- Incentives to encourage the seismic upgrading and rehabilitation of heritage buildings
- Taller building heights within the Central Business District to support employment with a gradual building height transition to the lower-scale surrounding neighbourhoods
- New urban design guidelines that respond to the varying built form context within the Downtown Core Area
- Land use policies designed to strategically support mix of residential, commercial and industrial activity to support of economic development

“Each year the jury for the IDA Awards recognizes organizations that utilize best practices in our industry,” said David Downey, IDA President and CEO. “Victoria’s Downtown Core Area Plan is a shining example of excellent downtown management that delivers real results.”

Victoria's submission was among 10 qualified entries in the category of Planning. This category recognizes planning efforts that establish a strategic position for downtown with elements of the plan having already been approved, ratified, or implemented. Awards were presented at the annual conference, this year held in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

This award is the second time that the City of Victoria has been recognized by the International Downtown Association. In 2009, the City of Victoria was recognized with a Downtown Pinnacle Award for its work in addressing late night issues related to public urination, through a custom-designed urinal at the corner of Pandora Avenue and Government Street.

The Washington, DC, based International Downtown Association (IDA) is a champion for vital and livable urban centers and strives to inform, influence, and inspire downtown leaders and advocates.

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