



Federal Budget Aligns with City of Victoria Initiatives

Date: Wednesday, March 22, 2017

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC – The federal budget released today has good news in it for cities across the country. The housing commitments, social infrastructure announcements and focus on the tech and innovation agenda align closely with work underway at the City and in the region.

“It’s great to see the federal government make this substantial and much-needed investment in affordable housing,” said Mayor Helps. “This commitment could provide the opportunity for us to build substantially on the \$60 million innovative Regional Housing First Program underway here. The housing investments would also help to keep our economy strong; the number one issue we’re hearing from employers is about a lack of affordable housing.”

Announcements potentially relevant to the City and community include:

- Creation of the Impact Canada Fund including the Smart Cities Stream. The Smart Cities Stream will be supported by \$300 million over 11 years. (Previously announced as Smart Cities program.)
- \$21.9 billion allocated over 11 years to support social infrastructure – \$2 billion dedicated for northern communities
- \$11.2 billion allocated over 11 years to build and renew affordable housing stock as part of the new National Housing Strategy, including \$5 billion for a dedicated National Housing fund.
- \$125 million allocated to launch a pan-Canadian artificial intelligence strategy for research and talent attraction.
- Federal government to establish a program to teach kids to code, allocating \$50 million over two years. Interested organizations will be allocated funding through a competitive process. An additional \$29.5 million is allocated over the next five years for non-profit organizations to run a Digital Literacy Exchange program (teaching basic digital skills), focused on vulnerable groups (low income and seniors).

The federal budget aligns with the City’s innovative approach to infrastructure investment and innovation initiatives which support economic development and social enterprise, as well as an Innovations and Skills Plan to foster growth in six sectors: advanced manufacturing, agri-food, clean technology, digital industries, health/bio-sciences, and clean resources.

While there was no specific announcement about the Belleville Terminal, the City is aware that the Province is working hard with the federal government on this important international gateway.

“Appropriate investments in our communities is the best form of ‘Nation Building’ we can follow,” said Councillor Chris Coleman and Chair of the BC Caucus for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. “This budget delivers the right tools for our community to shorten commutes, build more affordable housing and spur economic growth.”

[FCM's recommendations for Budget 2017](#) include predictable, long-term allocations to launch the next era of public transit—with reasonable cost-sharing so local fiscal limits don't hamper progress. FCM also called for major investments to tackle Canada's housing crisis by protecting social housing and building new affordable homes.

The City will be following up with Ottawa in the coming weeks to obtain more information and to ensure that the City is well-positioned as a partner in delivering the federal government's ambitious and much-needed infrastructure agenda.

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