



## Budget 2020 Prepares City for the Future

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — Through Budget 2020, the City is making strategic investments to ensure Victoria is ready for the challenges faced today and tomorrow.

“Everyone in Victoria deserves a home, a good job and a sustainable community,” said Mayor Lisa Helps. “To ensure we’re a forward looking, future-ready City, we’re going to continue to make the investments we know are going to have the biggest impacts to the people that call Victoria home.”

### **Everyone Deserves a Home**

The City is increasing its investment by \$650,000 in its Housing Reserve Fund for a total of \$900,000 in 2020 and committing \$650,000 annually in the future to provide grants for the development and retention of affordable rental and home ownership projects. Further, the City is continuing to implement its Housing Strategy which works to support increased housing choice for all Victoria residents, regardless of family size or income level.

Two bylaw officers will be hired to focus on enforcing the City’s Short-term Rentals Bylaw to support the return of housing to rental stock in Victoria, and a Tenant Housing Ambassador will be assigned to City Hall to make it easier for renters to navigate the Tenant Assistance Policy, Standards of Maintenance Bylaw and other programs to support renters.

### **Everyone Deserves a Good Job**

Investments in infrastructure are vital for City maintenance but they also support attracting businesses and industry as they look for locations to invest, creating the dynamic environment for job creation.

Over the next four years, the City will invest \$36 million in active transportation, streets and sidewalks. An additional \$500,000 has been added to improve City streets in 2020.

The South Island Prosperity Partnership will receive funding of \$220,000 to support their work collaborating with government, First Nations and private sector partners to develop a sustainable, diversified economy on the South Island.

These investments are some of the first steps in implementing *Victoria 3.0 – Pivoting to a Higher-Value Economy*, the City’s draft economic action plan for 2020 – 2041, which positions Victoria as a future-ready, globally-fluent, and innovative urban hub with high-value jobs.

### **Everyone Deserves a Sustainable Community**

“A sustainable community is green, safe and has space for everyone. We’re making sure our investments tackle the number one issue of our times – climate change – while ensuring everyone feels welcome and included,” said Helps.

A total of \$28 million will be invested in 2020 in the City's parks, recreation and facilities, which includes 137 parks and 104 City facilities. The City has also joined the United Nations Trees and Cities Challenge and pledged to work with the community to plant 5,000 trees in 2020.

Also, \$18.5 million is being invested to continue the replacement of Victoria's aging pipes, some of which were installed in 1891, to ensure clean water and environmental protection for the harbour and natural areas.

Through the Climate Leadership Plan, the City will invest over \$2 million in 2020 projects, including \$400,000 in top-up incentives to CleanBC's Oil to Heat Pump program, to help building owners affordably transition to renewable energy heating. More 2020 projects include the development of a proposed regional building Deep Energy Retrofit Program, and new electric vehicle chargers in villages and the downtown. Additionally, \$200,000 will be allocated to finalize and start implementing the City's Zero Waste Strategy.

Victoria's neighbourhood associations, community associations and seniors centres will receive \$1.4 million in funding to deliver important services and programs to residents and help make the community healthier and age-friendly for seniors.

Council also approved the Victoria Police budget request which will support hiring four new special municipal constables freeing up time for officers on the front lines, in addition to special duty policing for Canada Day festivities and other special events.

Finally, to make Victoria more accessible and inclusive, the City is investing more than \$650,000 in the development and implementation of a Welcoming City Strategy, gender diversity training for all City staff, and new staff to support inclusion and equity in all the work of the City.

"Last year, we developed a Strategic Plan that reflects the values and concerns of our City residents and business owners," said Helps. "I'm confident that through our open, transparent and engaging budget process we have aligned our limited taxpayers dollars to create a strong community now and for the future."

The City's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan includes more than 180 actions under eight strategic objectives:

1. Good Governance and Civic Engagement
2. Reconciliation and Indigenous Relations
3. Affordable Housing
4. Prosperity and Economic Inclusion
5. Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City
6. Climate Leadership and Environmental Stewardship
7. Sustainable Transportation
8. Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods

### **Highlights of 2020 Strategic Plan Actions**

#### **Objective #1 - Good Governance and Civic Engagement**

- Continuing to work with Saanich Council to develop and implement a Citizens Assembly process to explore amalgamation.
- Developing an Equity and Inclusion Lens and Framework
- Continuing implementation of the City's Youth Strategy

#### **Objective #2 - Reconciliation and Indigenous Relations**

- Delivering Reconciliation training to all City Staff
- Continuing to work with First Nations and the community to deliver the remaining three Victoria Reconciliation Dialogues
- Establishing an Indigenous Relations function to provide advice on City programs and operations with guidance and support from the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.
- Continuing the Witness Reconciliation Program

### **Objective #3 - Affordable Housing**

- Accelerate Implementation of Victoria Housing Strategy
- Considering grant programs for secondary suites and affordable garden suites, including those that are accessible and serve an aging population.

### **Objective #4 - Prosperity and Economic Inclusion**

- Investing \$100,000 in 2020 to deliver a Create Victoria Cultural Infrastructure Grant Program, and \$25,000 to develop a Cultural Spaces Roadmap.
- Providing \$4 million in 2020 to support economic development initiatives and make it easier to do business in Victoria, including the Business Hub at City Hall, the South Island Prosperity Project, the Victoria Film Commission and operating the Victoria Conference Centre.

### **Objective #5 - Health, Well-Being and a Welcoming City**

- Continuing the work of the City's Peer-Informed Task Force to identify priority actions to inform a Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, actionable at the municipal level.
- Investing \$50,000 for storage facilities at Our Place for members to store their belongings.
- Adopting an Accessibility Framework and delivering training for staff to make City policies, services, infrastructure and facilities more accessible for all.
- In 2020, a pilot will see City-sponsored spring distribution of gardening materials in partnership with community organizations.

### **Objective #6 - Climate Leadership and Environmental Stewardship**

- Taking serious climate action to reduce carbon pollution by 80 per cent and transition to 100 per cent renewable energy by 2050.
- Working with the community to develop and implement a Zero Waste Strategy that will chart the course to a local economy where nothing is wasted.
- Implementing the BC Step Code and mandating electric vehicle charging capacity in all new developments.

### **Objective #7 - Sustainable Transportation**

- Investing in traffic calming initiatives to make local streets safer in 2020.
- Investing in crosswalk upgrades or new installations to improve safety and encourage walking in 2020.
- Continuing to build out the All Ages and Abilities cycling network to include Humboldt and Vancouver Streets and Harbour Road.
- Continuing to provide free BC Transit passes for all Victoria youth, supported by new revenue raised by charging for Sunday on-street metered parking.

### **Objective #8 - Strong, Liveable Neighbourhoods**

- Providing \$60,000 for the City's Participatory Budgeting program to empower the community to direct investment in neighbourhoods, with newcomers being the theme in 2020.
- Hosting a combined Neighbourhood/Engagement Summit to identify opportunities for all voices in the community to be a part of the conversation and inform decisions for City programs and services.

Budget 2020 will be finalized at the end of April after BC Assessment finalizes its property assessments for the year.

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#### **For More Information:**

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