



Federal Budget Delivers Promising Commitments to Municipalities

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — Released today, Federal Budget 2019 includes several measures that will help the City of Victoria, and municipalities across Canada, grow and prosper in the coming years. Federal commitments on housing affordability, transitioning to a green economy, and workforce skills training align closely with City Council's priorities in its 2019 – 2022 Strategic Plan.

"I'm pleased that the federal government made investments today in affordable housing, clean transportation, and lifelong skills training," said Mayor Lisa Helps. "Taking action on those issues is crucial to ensuring that Canada's cities are liveable, healthy, and competitive in the global economy."

As profiled in the budget, the Capital Regional District's Regional Housing First program, supported by the Federal and Provincial governments, is enabling communities to make transformative progress on eliminating homelessness and providing safe, secure affordable and supported housing. As access to housing remains a challenge, the City of Victoria welcomes the many initiatives in Budget 2019 to improve housing affordability, including a First-Time Home Buyer Incentive and the Housing Supply Challenge for municipalities.

Government-led measures to increase housing affordability can be beneficial to the rental market, which is key to creating liveable communities. In Victoria, the Vivid condominiums, built in partnership with B.C. Housing, incentivized home ownership at below market rates. The units sold out, and 50% of the buyers – who had an average age of 35 – were moving out of rental units, thereby freeing up rental stock for those more in need.

"The number one issue that we continue to hear about from the public is a shortage of affordable housing," said Mayor Helps. "Dedicated federal attention to the affordability issue is an essential part of the solution."

Addressing climate change is a shared priority of the City of Victoria and the federal government. The subsidies for purchasing electric and hybrid vehicles, funding for electric vehicle charging stations, and investments in home and commercial energy retrofits that are proposed in Budget 2019 are welcome measures to reduce carbon pollution. Already, there are 142 electric vehicle charging stations in the Capital Regional District, and today's federal commitments are much-needed to reduce emissions from transportation.

Other budget announcements relevant to the City of Victoria include:

- A federal allocation of \$9.1 million to support the construction of an Indigenous Legal Lodge for the University of Victoria's Indigenous Legal Orders program – the first of its kind globally;
- A one-time transfer of \$2.2 billion through the federal Gas Tax Fund to municipalities and First Nations, to address short-term infrastructure priorities; and
- A comprehensive federal plan to support lifelong workforce skills training.

“These investments will help make Victoria more sustainable, inclusive, and economically competitive,” said Mayor Helps. “In particular, I commend the federal investment in the Indigenous Legal Lodge for the University of Victoria – the project is an important step forward for Indigenous representation and national reconciliation.”

The City will follow up with Ottawa in the coming weeks to obtain more information on these and other budget initiatives and to ensure that Victoria is well-positioned as a partner in delivering the federal government’s commitments to municipalities.

Read Federal Budget 2019 at: www.budget.gc.ca.

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For More Information:

Mayor Lisa Helps
250.661.2708