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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Municipal Affairs

### **New infrastructure, jobs coming to communities hit hard by COVID-19**

VICTORIA – Building on other recovery funding, the Province is boosting local economies by investing \$30 million in small-scale infrastructure projects throughout B.C. to create jobs and support recovery for people and communities affected by COVID-19.

“Communities, large and small, have been dealing with the impacts of COVID-19, and we are here to help them recover stronger than ever,” said Josie Osborne, Minister of Municipal Affairs. “This new funding will assist local governments, First Nations and non-profits to invest in the infrastructure their communities need, while creating and restoring jobs for people who live within B.C.’s hardest hit regions. We’re making sure that no one is left behind as we advance job and economic development across the province while building stronger, more resilient communities.”

Local governments, First Nations and not-for-profit organizations were eligible to apply in October 2020, and 63 infrastructure projects have been approved.

These projects will address short-term community needs, such as revitalizing local parks, washrooms and downtown cores, creating additional space for physical distancing and upgrading public buildings like recreation centres, e.g.:

- The City of Richmond received approximately \$1 million for upgrades to Alexandra Neighbourhood Park, such as retaining existing trees and the construction of new recreational features, including a playground and dog park.
- The Mission Community Skills Centre Society received \$999,450 to retrofit and upgrade an existing building in downtown Abbotsford into a full-scale Fraser Valley artisans’ food centre.
- The Gitga’at Development Corporation received \$456,000 to upgrade a two-storey building in downtown Prince Rupert to improve energy efficiency and accessibility, as well as remove and replace the front awning to address public safety concerns.

Successful applicants can hire the company of their choice to work on projects with the goal of stimulating local economies by creating new construction jobs and restoring jobs in other areas impacted by COVID-19, such as retail and hospitality services.

The \$30 million comes from the Community Economic Resilience stream of the Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program (CERIP).

CERIP is providing \$100 million in one-time infrastructure grants for projects that are ready to go throughout the province. These projects will improve community economic resilience, develop tourism infrastructure, support unique heritage infrastructure and support economic recovery for rural communities.

CERIP funding is distributed across five different streams managed by separate partner ministries: Municipal Affairs; Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport; Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operators and Rural Development; and Children and Family Development.

All CERIP projects must begin construction in 2021 and be completed by March 31, 2023.

CERIP is part of StrongerBC: BC's Economic Recovery Plan, which sets out the Province's latest steps to help people, businesses and communities recover and come out of COVID-19 stronger and better prepared. B.C.'s total provincial response to the COVID-19 pandemic exceeds \$8 billion.

#### **Quotes:**

##### **Stephen Evans, executive director, Mission Community Skills Centre Society –**

“On behalf of Mission Community Skills Centre Society, we are delighted with the funding announcement by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in helping us launch the Fraser Valley Artisans' Food Hub. The support will help create a more dynamic and diversified 'local' food scene as we 'Grow in BC, Feed BC and Buy BC.' ”

##### **Paul Paterson, CEO, Gitga'at Development Corporation –**

“Gitga'at has long participated in the economic and social life of the region. Funding provided through CERIP allows us to address accessibility issues for members with mobility challenges, as well as supporting extensive exterior renovations, making us an early contributor to Redesign Rupert's vision for a revitalized downtown.”

##### **Malcolm Brodie, mayor, City of Richmond –**

“The Alexandra Neighbourhood Park will revitalize an outdoor recreation space, providing a destination for people of all ages to gather and reconnect with nature. Growth in the Alexandra neighbourhood has resulted in an increasing number of multi-family dwellings, and the funding provided by government through CERIP will help this area grow to become an even more vibrant and active community.”

#### **Quick Facts:**

- The CERIP funding is in addition to the \$540 million in shared provincial and federal funding to local governments under the Safe Restart Agreement to help communities manage the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic, which includes:
  - \$100 million for Strengthening Communities to address the increase in unsheltered homelessness in many communities, as well as challenges related to community health and safety;
  - \$425 million in direct grants for local government operations to address facility reopening and operating costs, emergency response costs, lost revenues and other COVID-19 related impacts; and
  - \$15 million for the Local Government Development Approvals Program to increase the efficiency of local development approval processes.
- The Province is providing nearly \$136 million, cost shared with the federal government, in infrastructure grants through the COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream, part of

Investing in Canada's Infrastructure Program.

- This new fund will support projects that focus on retrofits, rehabilitation and upgrades to existing local government and Indigenous community buildings, COVID-19 response infrastructure, active transportation and disaster mitigation.

**Learn More:**

For a backgrounder with information on community economic recovery projects, visit:

[https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/2.24.2021\\_CERIP\\_CER\\_projects.pdf](https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/2.24.2021_CERIP_CER_projects.pdf)

Learn more about B.C.'s Economic Recovery Plan:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020PREM0052-001780>

Learn more about the Community Economic Recovery Infrastructure Program:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/cerip>

Learn more about the COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020MUNI0062-001977>

Learn more about CERIP's Unique Heritage Infrastructure stream:

<https://heritagebc.ca/uhi-cerip-funding-announcement-february-22-2021/>

Learn more about CERIP's Rural Economic Recovery stream:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021FLNRO0010-000310>

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