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Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
Office of the Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities

\$272 MILLION FOR SMALLER BRITISH COLUMBIA COMMUNITIES

VICTORIA – For the first time, smaller British Columbia communities with populations of less than 100,000 can now access more funding for cleaner water, better waste management and flood mitigation thanks to a \$272-million investment by the federal and provincial governments through the Building Canada Plan.

Until 2014, the federal and provincial governments will each invest \$136 million to be applied to projects approved under the Communities Component, which includes \$25 million for flood mitigation. Together with matching funds from the local governments, \$408 million will be available, through until 2014, to help meet the local infrastructure needs and priorities of smaller British Columbia communities.

The announcement of the Communities Component of Building Canada was made today by the Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, the Honourable Stockwell Day, Minister of Public Safety, the Honourable Kevin Falcon, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Honourable Blair Lekstrom, Minister of Community Development.

“Our government is proud to commit this unprecedented level of funding to assist communities with populations of less than 100,000,” said Cannon. “Working with our partners in the spirit of open federalism allows us to provide better sewer, water, local roads, tourism infrastructure, short-sea shipping, and short-line rail, as well as flood mitigation infrastructure. This will make a real difference in the everyday lives of the people in British Columbia's smaller communities.”

“Today’s announcement is a significant step forward in implementing our Building Canada plan in British Columbia. The Communities Component will help to address the infrastructure needs of smaller communities to help develop a stronger, safer and better British Columbia,” said Day. “Building Canada will provide targeted funding for infrastructure projects in communities with populations of less than 100,000 – helping these communities meet their unique challenges.”

Eligible applicants may now submit applications for the first round of the Communities Component. The focus of the first intake will be projects related to sewer, water, local roads, tourism infrastructure, short-sea shipping, and short-line rail, as well as flood mitigation. Projects funded will be selected through a competitive process, with priority given to those demonstrating the principles of sustainability and supporting provincial initiatives such as action on climate change and the objectives in B.C.’s Energy Plan, Living Water Smart and Green Building Code. Applications are available on the BC Secretariat website at www.bcbuildingcanadafundcommunities.ca, with a deadline of Sept. 5, 2008.

“Today’s announcement supports our commitment to work in partnership with federal and local governments to ensure high-quality, modern public infrastructure,” said Falcon. “This new infrastructure funding will contribute to long-term economic growth, a clean environment and strong communities.”

“The Province is committed to helping B.C.’s local governments build and improve their communities,” said Lekstrom. “This new infrastructure funding will be key in supporting local governments as they build strong local economies and greener, more sustainable communities.”

“By targeting communities with populations of less than 100,000, the Communities Component will deliver more per-capita funding than the previous Municipal Rural Infrastructure Program,” said Susan Gimse, president of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities. “Building Canada is an excellent example of governments working together to renew infrastructure in B.C. communities.”

All local governments, large and small, will have the opportunity to benefit from Building Canada. Over \$1.485 billion will be transferred to British Columbia local governments through the federal Gas Tax Fund between 2007 and 2014. Further, both governments have agreed that a further \$78 million will be made available for major projects in communities with populations over 100,000 or to further supplement the Communities Component. In addition, significant funding will flow to major projects of importance to municipalities. For example, Canada and British Columbia today announced a tri-partite working group with representatives from all three levels of government to advance planning and preparations for moving forward on the first phase of the Capital Regional District Sewage Treatment Project.

Through its unprecedented \$33-billion Building Canada infrastructure plan, the federal government is providing long-term, stable and predictable funding to help meet infrastructure needs across Canada. Building Canada will support a stronger, safer and better country. On Nov. 6, 2007 the governments of Canada and British Columbia announced the signing of a Framework Agreement under Building Canada worth \$2.2 billion.

The Communities Component of the Building Canada Fund will be administered jointly by Western Economic Diversification Canada, and the provincial Ministry of Community Development.

For more information on the Building Canada plan, visit www.buildingcanada.gc.ca.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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