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Western Economic Diversification Canada  
Ministry of Community Services  
Ministry of Economic Development

### **FUNDING TURNS RAIL INTO URBAN TRAIL**

CRANBROOK – The federal and provincial governments will invest more than \$1.8 million to turn an abandoned railway into a 25 kilometre urban trail that connects Cranbrook to Kimberley, reduces greenhouse gases and encourages residents to be more active. Jim Abbott, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, and Bill Bennett, MLA for East Kootenay, today announced the contribution through the Canada-B.C. Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (CBCMRIF).

“The rails to trails project will convert this unused railway grade into a community recreational trail, encouraging residents of Cranbrook and Kimberley to be active and get outdoors,” said Mr. Abbott, on behalf of the Honourable Rona Ambrose, President of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification. “Our government is working in partnership through the Canada-B.C. Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund, to build healthy, prosperous communities.”

The funding enables the City of Cranbrook to turn an abandoned railway along Highway 95A into a 25-kilometre, three-metre wide commuter and recreation path that connects to existing trails in Cranbrook and Kimberley. Also, the recently abandoned railway line provides a timely opportunity to link the region’s two largest communities and complete a section of the Trans Canada Trail that connects the Kootenay region with Alberta. This project is conditionally approved pending the successful completion of an environmental assessment.

“This project has been a long time in the making and I commend both mayors Ross Priest and Jim Ogilvie for their persistence and vision on this project,” said Bennett. “We are also pleased to partner with the federal government and the City of Cranbrook in helping to make this community greener, providing residents with an alternative to driving and encouraging them to get outside and be more active.”

Under the initial CBCMRIF Agreement signed in June 2006, the federal and provincial governments each committed \$51 million to the fund, with participating local governments expected to make up the remaining costs. This year, the Government of Canada and the Province of B.C. have each provided an additional \$23.5 million to the Canada-B.C. Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund as part of their commitment to help smaller communities meet their pressing infrastructure needs. This additional funding brings the total federal and provincial investment and matching local government contribution in CBCMRIF projects to over \$220 million.

The majority of the funding is targeted towards communities of fewer than 250,000 people and at least 60 per cent of the funding will assist with “green projects” such as drinking water supply, treatment and distribution needs as well as wastewater and energy efficiency projects. The remaining funds will be dedicated to other projects like tourism, recreation and other infrastructure.

More details on the program are available through the Canada-British Columbia Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund website, at [www.canadabcmrif.ca](http://www.canadabcmrif.ca).

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