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

SAFER SIDEWALKS FOR DOWNTOWN FORT ST. JAMES

FORT ST. JAMES – Downtown Fort St. James will get a boost when sidewalks are extended and upgraded to enhance safety and improve access to facilities, thanks to an investment of more than \$171,000 from the Canada-B.C. Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (CBCMRIF). The fund enables communities across B.C. to become healthier, greener and more sustainable places to live.

The announcement was made today by Dick Harris, MP for Cariboo-Prince George, and John Rustad, MLA for Prince George-Omineca.

The roadways bordering the areas being upgraded are used by some 2,500 drivers and carpool passengers daily. Several intersections along Stuart Drive West will be upgraded with the addition of paved concrete sidewalks. In addition, a sidewalk extension from the corner of Stuart Drive and Manson Street to the Fort St. James Bicentennial Library will improve access to this community facility.

“This investment will provide residents and visitors with safer and easier access to community facilities and businesses in downtown Fort St. James,” said Harris, 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. “The Government of Canada is proud to work in partnership with the Province of British Columbia to help its communities grow as vibrant and productive places to live, work and raise families.”

“These projects will make a tremendous difference to the health and sustainability of this community and it’s only through our partnership funding that we’re able to make this a reality,” said Rustad. “We’re pleased to support Fort St. James and other smaller communities with infrastructure that makes a real difference to people’s quality of life.”

“Investing in infrastructure projects such as this would not be possible in Fort St. James without generous assistance from senior governments,” said Rob MacDougall, mayor of the District of Fort St. James. “During challenging economic times, we are reluctant to increase the burden on our taxpayers, so we are pleased to be able to move forward on the sidewalk project with this grant.”

The majority of the program funding from the CBCMRIF, which was launched in June 2006, supports communities of fewer than 250,000 people. It helps minimize the costs to taxpayers of local infrastructure upgrades or new construction projects.

At least 60 per cent of the funding will assist “green projects” that are geared towards enhancing environmental sustainability, such as water and waste-water systems, public transit and environmental energy improvements. Other infrastructure projects will support local roads, cultural and recreational facilities, tourism and broadband connectivity. Funding for this project is conditionally approved pending the successful completion of an environmental assessment.

The total amount available through the CBCMRIF, with federal and provincial investments and matching local government contributions, is over \$220 million. More details on the program are available online at www.canadabcmrif.ca.

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