

Highlights of 2020 BC Provincial Budget

At first glance it's a balanced budget (\$61-64B) with forecasted surpluses of;

- 2020/21 \$203M surplus (\$900M in contingency)
- 2021/22 \$227M surplus (\$700M in contingency)
- 2022/23 \$179M surplus (\$700M in contingency)

Provincial Budget Highlights Impacting CRD & Member Municipalities

1. *Affordable Housing*

- The previous budget included \$1B over three years. This budget adds (in support of new low and middle income construction);
 - \$56M in 2020/21 for 200 new units of supportive modular housing **[CRHC, non-profit housing providers]**
 - Absent was the \$400 renters' rebate announced 3 years ago **[Affordable Housing]**
 - \$50M over the three years to support at risk and homeless. Funding to create "navigation centres" providing integrated shelter, medical and support services **[Community Health]**

2. *Environment*

- The previous budget announced the CleanBC program. This budget adds \$419M over three years for a total commitment of \$1.3B under the 4 year program.
 - 2020/21 includes \$20M for financing of electric vehicles and \$12M for charging stations (public and private) **[Climate Action, Municipal & EAs]**

3. *Support Services*

- This budget adds \$41M over three years to enhance public safety and support services, including victim services, correction services, prevention programs and police services. **[Municipal & EA?]**
- Around 10,400 new licensed childcare spaces have been created over the past two years and 28,000 kids received care that cost less than \$10 per day **[Municipal & EA, Recreation]**
- During the budget consultation period there was some discussion on lifting the Employers Health Tax exemption from \$0.5M to \$1.5M, this did not materialize in budget 2020 **[Municipal & EA]**

4. *Emergency Response*

- This budget adds \$195M over three years to improve wildfire and emergency response. This includes an increase of \$35M/year for base funding and \$30M/year for emergency program base funding. **[Emergency Services]**

5. *Capital Program Spending*

- Taxpayer-supported capital spending, such as construction projects, over the next three years will total \$22.9B (highest 3 year total ever). Includes;
 - 2 new schools for the Sooke School District. \$89M split between a 500 student West Langford Elementary and a 700 student West Langford Middle school opening in 2022 **[Municipal & EA?]**

- Victoria High School is approved for a seismic upgrade and an addition to increase capacity by 200 students at a total cost of \$80M to be complete in 2022 **[Municipal & EA?]**
- \$201M to construct 2 new student housing buildings at the University of Victoria for 620 beds to provide some housing relief to the area **[Municipal & Affordable Housing]**
- Highway 14 improvements including realigning 1.5kms between Glinz Lake Road and Connie Road, a new Park-and-Ride facility on Gillespie Road, and wider shoulders between Otter Point Road and Woodhaven **[Municipal & EA, Transportation]**
- Procurement and Delivery for 10 battery electric buses for use by BC Transit in Victoria to reduce carbon emissions and improve rider experience **[Municipal & EA, Transportation]**

6. *Other Budget Items of Interest*

- Additional investment of \$13M over three years for developing new opportunities in the bio-economy. This is in addition to last budget's \$69M for the Forestry Workers Support program.
 - The budget did not provide any update on the future of the Rural Dividend fund. After contacting the program office, we understand applications submitted in the 6th Intake will continue to be retained for funding considerations at a future date **[EA and grants]**
- Auditor General for Local Government funding shows a reduction from \$2.6M to \$1.8M in 2020/2021 (30% reduction) **[Municipal & EA?]**
- Province will work with local governments on the centralization of the administration of the home owner grant **[Municipal & EA?]**
- Cannabis excise tax is expected to generate \$190M in over three years. **[Municipal & EA?]**
 - \$18M new funding to support implementation of legalized cannabis (in addition to the \$52 million already approved over the next three years)
- Provincial property tax revenue expected to increase by 4.4%/year over the three years. Property transfer taxes will also increase by 4.5%/year over the three years **[Municipal & EA?]**

7. *Other Budget Items of Interest (reductions to provincial ministries and programs)*

<https://vancouversun.com/news/politics/rob-shaw-cuts-in-b-c-budget-overshadowed-by-pipeline-protests>

- Safety inspections for meat, seafood and agri-food products reduced by 12%
- RoadSafetyBC, which runs traffic safety programs reduced by 3%
- Civilian-led Independent Investigations Office that oversees death and serious injury cases against police reduced by 3%
- Environmental protection, air and water quality monitoring, managing pesticides and responding to high-risk environmental emergencies reduced by 3%
- BC Parks maintenance reduced 2%, conservation officers reduced 2%
- Forestry enforcement reduced 6%
- International trade reduced 7%
- Small business, immigration and refugee worker programs reduced 2.4%
- Tourism, arts and culture reduced 1.5%
- Anti-racism and hate speech prevention programs, along with creative economy funding, multiculturalism and sport reduced by 2%
- The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation by reduced by almost 10%
- 5% reduction off the division in charge of researching and growing new mental health and addictions services