

**Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in
Advance of the 2021 Budget**

**By: Jewish Community Centre (JCC) of
Greater Vancouver**

Recommendation 1: That the federal government match the BC government's contribution of \$500,000 received in 2019 to support the planning and design work that will help ensure the Jewish Community Centre of Greater Vancouver's (JCC) new \$150 million multigenerational community centre and affordable housing project moves forward. It would serve as a symbol of the federal government's commitment to advance critical social infrastructure that has been so important through the pandemic.

Background

The Jewish Community Centre of Greater Vancouver (JCC) provides services for over 40,000 people per year through cultural, recreational, educational and social activities, and houses 15 not-for-profit community organizations. The JCC serves the entire diverse community around it without regard to religion, race or ethnicity – ‘Jewish at heart and open to all’. For 90 years, the JCC has been a pillar of the community and an integral part of the lives of several generations of residents, but its current facility - built in 1961 - is desperately in need of updating and modernization given the increasing number of children, youth, senior and families who rely on the JCC for critical community services. The JCC plays an instrumental role in deepening inclusion, diversity and multiculturalism in the Vancouver region, British Columbia and for all Canadians.

Issue

The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impact on our daily lives, the way we interact with our communities and on the economies that underpin our standard of living.

As the federal government considers ways of fostering economic recovery and growth, it is likely that one of its most important levers will be investment in social infrastructure to create jobs directly and indirectly. As it chooses its priorities for those investments, it will be important to recognize the vulnerabilities exposed by the crisis we are living through and how we can address them and strengthen our capacity to deal with them going forward.

Community organizations and the services and social infrastructure they manage have been critical in providing help to the vulnerable and supporting their members through the period of debilitating isolation and thousands of Canadians have turned to them throughout the crisis. It is also clear that there is a need to increase the resilience of these social networks and the infrastructure that supports and houses them.

The crisis has also demonstrated the consequences of an insufficient stock of affordable housing including the heightened risks for those who live in cramped, inadequate housing or are homeless.

The JCC is developing a new proposal for a vibrant, inter-generational community centre and campus, including a major affordable housing project. In particular, the project will comprise a new 200,000 square foot state of the art recreational, cultural and community hub – doubling the JCC’s current childcare capacity and delivering a major expanded seniors centre. The project will also provide 500-660 new units of mixed-use below market rental housing over the next eight years.

This new project has had initial support from the Government of British Columbia and of the City of Vancouver. We also have support from the federal Pacific Caucus, and believe the Government of Canada should also support the JCC’s new project both on its merits and because of the context in which we find ourselves.

Investing in this project will create jobs and strengthen our ability to support the community in normal times and through crises that may arise in the future. As well, the mission of the JCC aligns with the policy objectives of the government by building new social and cultural infrastructure that both advances the interests of the community, and strengthens multiculturalism, anti-racism, inclusion and diversity. The JCC’s new project will have a dramatic impact for multiple generations for years to come.

It also aligns with the federal government's National Housing Strategy in a city where there is great demand.

Our Recommendation

The new investing in Canada Community, Culture and Recreation stream does not provide a framework for seed or design money, and it requires federal and provincial agreement. While a potential source of funding, its process, even if successful, would set back the project timetable significantly and drive up the overall cost of the project.

At this stage, we are asking the Government of Canada to match the BC government's contribution of \$500,000 received in 2019 to support the planning and design work that will help ensure the project continues to move forward.

While our initial ask to match the provincial commitment of \$500,000 is small, we want to be transparent about our need to come back in future budgets, for more substantial federal support, similar to the \$15 million the government provided to the Toronto Jewish Community Centre. This project was funded under the Canada Building Fund which has now wound up and its successor project is fully subscribed; we are actively seeking a path forward for federal funding. To date, we have secured a total of \$600,000 from the Province of British Columbia as well as in private funding.

Accordingly, based on the critical needs of the local community, in Vancouver and alignment with the stated priorities in the ministerial mandate letters, we respectfully ask the federal government to consider providing financial support to the JCC of Greater Vancouver in the 2021 federal budget. It would be a highly visible symbol to local communities of government's commitment to build important community and social infrastructure in British Columbia and across Canada.

PROJECT BUDGET

The total budget for the JCC new community centre is \$150M, with a target completion year of 2023. The Government of British Columbia has provided funds to support the preliminary work on the project. The City of Vancouver has fast-tracked rezoning applications and waived \$9.3M in development cost levies (DCLs) and \$75M for Community Amenity Contributions (CACs). These fees were waived during the rezoning negotiations because we were able to demonstrate that our project offers enormous public benefit to the entire city. The fees that are routinely administered are primarily for developers who are proposing projects who generate profits.

Financing of the 500-660 new mixed-use below market rental housing units amounts to \$210M, for completion by years 2026-27. The City of Vancouver has also encouraged us to apply for increased density for the housing towers. The increase could mean between 250-350 more rental housing units.

We are now raising private funds to underwrite further planning and design with an eye on obtaining the majority of our funding from those sources. The JCC is committed to raising \$80-\$100M from private philanthropic community gifts, with the goal of remaining funding being sourced from different levels of government and within the overall project financing framework.

This project has already been delayed one year from our initial community plan. We are concerned that further delays could lead to increased project costs.

A full project breakdown is outlined below:

Community Centre	Completion Date
New Community Centre, childcare spaces, seniors care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction \$150 million for soft and hard costs • The objective is to raise \$80-\$100 million from private philanthropic gifts with the rest coming from different levels of government and project financing 	2023
Rental Housing	Completion Date
Minimum 300 New Mixed-Use Below Market Rental Housing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction \$210 Million • Seeking \$10 Million from BC's Community Housing Fund, along with financing and other supports from CMHC and BC Housing 	2026-2027

A PATH FORWARD: PAN CANADIAN SUPPORT FOR THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

This project is of great importance to British Columbians of all faiths in addition to being of strategic interest to the Canadian Jewish Community. The JCC in Vancouver is the only organization of its kind in Western Canada, and this project won't happen without the active support of the Government of Canada.

APPENDIX I – JCC NEW PROJECT & ALIGNMENT WITH MINISTERIAL MANDATE LETTERS

1. Building New Social and Cultural Infrastructure

The Community, Culture and Recreation Infrastructure stream will provide funding for infrastructure projects that improve social inclusion and civic engagement. Funding will support new, expanded or renewed community centres and hubs, amateur sport, cultural, and recreational installations and facilities. Priority will be placed on facilities primarily aimed at supporting vulnerable populations.

– Federal-Provincial Bilateral Infrastructure Agreement

2. Continue to Implement the National Housing Strategy

- *Building on our historic investment of \$13 billion, including the creation of 41,800 new units and the repair of another 229,600 units, continue to build and renovate housing through the National Housing Strategy.*

- *In collaboration with the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, finalize the design and implementation of the Housing Supply Challenge. The design should include a detailed outreach plan to municipalities, which are the main stakeholders targeted by the challenge.*

- Mandate Letter, Hon. Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

3. Provide More Affordable Housing Options for Canadians

Support the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development to finalize the design and implementation of the Housing Supply Challenge. The design should include a detailed outreach plan to municipalities, which are the main stakeholders targeted by the challenge.

-Mandate Letter, Hon. Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities

4. Investing in Cultural Centres and Supporting Minority Groups

Based on new targets set by the provinces and territories, develop and promote new opportunities for language and cultural exchanges and invest in building infrastructure that supports strong Official Language minority communities, including schools and cultural centres.

– Mandate Letter, Hon. Mélanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages

5. Strengthening Multiculturalism, Anti-Racism, Inclusion and Diversity

- *Lead multiculturalism policy, program and activities to ensure that Canadian diversity is celebrated and respected in all its forms.*
- *Work to ensure that multicultural programs are delivered in an effective way.*
- *Work with your colleagues to develop policies that tackle systematic discrimination and unconscious bias in our country.*

– Mandate Letter, Hon. Bardish Chagger, Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth

6. Ensuring Seniors have Access to Affordable Housing

Support the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development to ensure seniors' housing needs are reflected in the implementation of the National Housing Strategy.

– Mandate Letter, Hon. Deb Schulte, Minister of Seniors