

A group of construction workers in safety gear (hard hats, high-visibility vests) are standing on a gravel surface at a construction site. In the background, there is a large, arched metal structure, likely part of a wastewater treatment plant. The scene is set during the day under a clear blue sky.

Supporting Canada's Economic Recovery Through Shared Investments in Critical Infrastructure

Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations
in Advance of the Upcoming Federal Budget

Metro Vancouver Regional District
July 31, 2020

Recommendation

Recognizing the threat of climate change and the negative impacts associated with loss of biodiversity, particularly in coastal regions, we recommend that the Government of Canada prioritize investments in community infrastructure as part of a green and resilient long term recovery strategy from the COVID-19 crisis.

In partnership with provincial and local governments, Canada should invest in transformative, critical infrastructure projects that advance environmental and societal objectives while creating long-term jobs, spur economic growth, address climate change, protect natural habitats and create more affordable and inclusive communities.

Metro Vancouver Regional District

As the regional body responsible for providing critical services to 2.7 million residents – more than half the population of B.C. – Metro Vancouver oversees a combined capital and operating budget of more than \$1.7 billion annually to build, maintain and upgrade the infrastructure and services that are key to the prosperity and livability of the region. We provide essential services including drinking water, liquid waste treatment and solid waste management, as well as air quality monitoring, parks, affordable housing and regional planning.

Our mission as the regional federation of Metro Vancouver's local governments is focused on:

- Delivering resilient infrastructure and utility services;
- Building and operating affordable housing;
- Protecting local ecosystems and enhancing biodiversity;
- Fighting climate change and helping communities adapt to its impacts; and,
- Supporting a vibrant and prosperous regional economy.

The Metro Vancouver region is the economic engine of British Columbia, representing 61 percent of the province's GDP¹ and 1.28 million jobs. The region is also critical to the economic performance and social fabric of Canada. Our regional economy sustains the largest and most diverse share of provincial employment and economic activity, and has been a driver of sustained growth, innovation and new enterprise over the past decade.

As governments at all levels respond to the unprecedented fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic and determine how we can build back better from this crisis, the continuing resilience and performance of the Metro Vancouver region will be central to our nation's recovery.

¹ Source: Conference Board of Canada, January 2019.

A better Metro Vancouver. A better Canada.

Our region has enjoyed a successful partnership with the governments of Canada and British Columbia. In recent years, we have invested together to create new housing and transportation infrastructure to support our region's economic competitiveness, improve affordability and protect our natural environment. As we continue working together to bring about a green and resilient recovery from the pandemic, investments into critical infrastructure should be a key part of our collective strategy.

Metro Vancouver is planning \$6 billion in shovel-worthy infrastructure projects over the next five years that will provide core services while creating long-term jobs, addressing climate change, enhancing

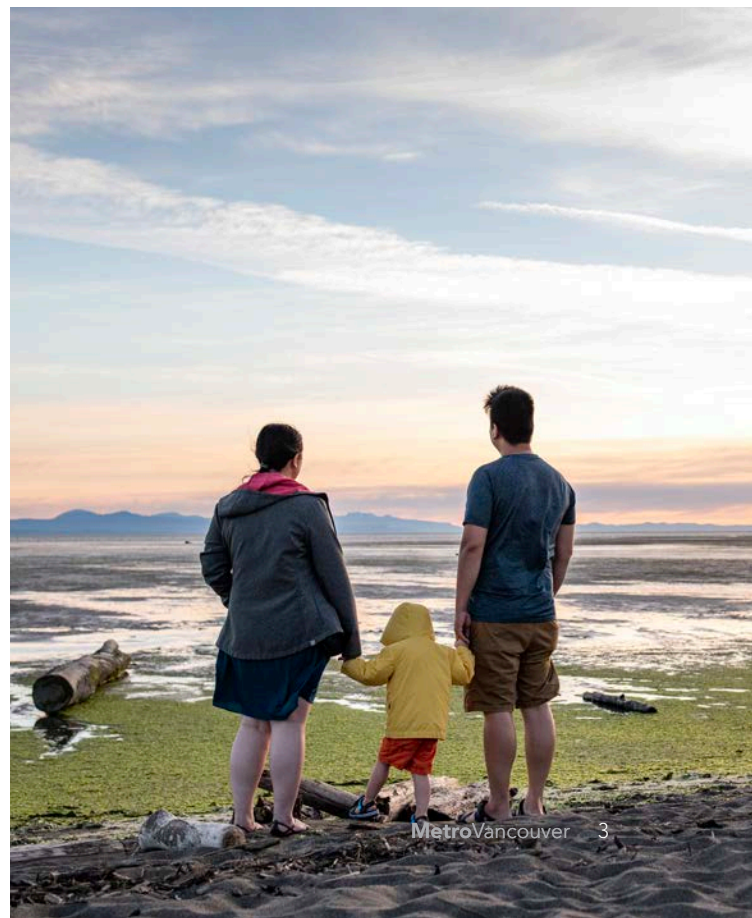
the natural environment, protecting biodiversity and meeting the demands of population growth. The projects include upgrades and replacement of infrastructure for drinking water and wastewater treatment, as well as renewable energy generation, parkland enhancements and affordable housing developments.

Metro Vancouver and its member municipalities appreciate the Government of Canada's commitment to supporting communities as part of the \$19 billion Restart Agreement announced on July 16. We look forward to engaging with the BC Government to determine how certain Metro Vancouver projects may be eligible for federal funding under this program.

New opportunities to support a green and resilient recovery

Metro Vancouver is ideally positioned as a partner to the Government of Canada in realizing its objectives to spur economic growth, address climate change, protect natural habitats and create more affordable and inclusive communities. We want to co-invest with the Federal and Provincial governments so we can build back better from the COVID-19 crisis. Our governments share many of the same priorities:

- To create long-term jobs
- To improve the resiliency of our communities to the impacts of climate change
- To reduce GHG emissions
- To restore natural habitats and ecosystems
- To better support health
- To improve issues of housing affordability and address social inequities for more inclusive communities.



Iona Island Wastewater Treatment Plant

Metro Vancouver is currently in the detailed design phase for the replacement of the Iona Island Wastewater Treatment Plant, located in Richmond, BC. With the first phase of the project beginning in 2021, development of the new plant and restoration of the adjacent parkland and marine habitat will create thousands of new jobs while protecting the health of people and a globally significant ecosystem.

The existing plant treats over 200 billion litres of wastewater every year, serving approximately 750,000 residents in Vancouver, Burnaby, Richmond, University of BC, the University Endowment Lands, the Squamish Nation and the Musqueam Indian Band.

Canada's most dynamic and transformative urban sustainability project

- Phase 1: \$750 million, Phase 2 and 3: TBD
- 36,000 jobs supported
- 2.4% of regional GDP
- Enhances seismic and climate resiliency
- Restores habitat for juvenile salmon
- Increases energy and resource recovery
- Reduces up to 80,000 tonnes of CO2-equivalent emissions per year

Iona has the potential to be Canada's most dynamic and transformative urban sustainability project. Iona is critically important for the protection of wild salmon, as it will restore one of the world's most important rearing habitat for juvenile salmon at the mouth of the Fraser River. The project is aligned with the goals of Canada's Oceans Protection Plan and its emerging Blue Economy Strategy.

This new plant allows for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to improve the ecological health of the Fraser River Estuary and restore ecological diversity. It incorporates tertiary wastewater treatment to minimize water quality impacts on the estuary and the Salish Sea.





First Nations Cooperation

Metro Vancouver is engaging 14 First Nations on the new Iona plant, working closely with the Musqueam Indian Band due to the proximity of the site to their primary reserve lands – directly across the Fraser River – and their strong connections to Iona Island.

Input from the Musqueam is being incorporated into the project design wherever possible, including in significant habitat enhancements that will benefit

salmon and bird migration, the use of Musqueam preferred species for revegetation, and maintaining Musqueam sight lines across the Fraser. In these ways, Metro Vancouver hopes to respect Musqueam's traditional and cultural values, while the entire region and Fraser Watershed will benefit from their knowledge and ongoing stewardship of the Fraser River and Salish Sea.

The Government of Canada as a necessary partner in the Iona project

The Government of Canada has mandated that Metro Vancouver improve the standard of wastewater treatment at Iona by 2030 and we will need the Government's support to make it possible for us to complete this project in the right way. We can't afford to miss this opportunity to restore critical habitat as we work to serve our growing population and prepare for climate impacts.

[Additional information about the Iona Island Wastewater Treatment Plant replacement project, and other shovel-worthy infrastructure and housing projects for which Metro Vancouver is seeking federal and provincial funding support can be found here.](#)

Members of Metro Vancouver

Village of Anmore

Village of Belcarra

Bowen Island Municipality

City of Burnaby

City of Coquitlam

City of Delta

Electoral Area A

City of Langley

Township of Langley

Village of Lions Bay

City of Maple Ridge

City of New Westminster

City of North Vancouver

District of North Vancouver

City of Pitt Meadows

City of Port Coquitlam

City of Port Moody

City of Richmond

City of Surrey

Tsawwassen First Nation

City of Vancouver

District of West Vancouver

City of White Rock

metrovancouver

metrovancover.org

Metrotower III, 4730 Kingsway,
Burnaby, BC
V5H 0C6

