

A photograph of a worker in a safety vest and hard hat walking away from the camera on a metal walkway at a water treatment facility. The walkway is flanked by metal railings and leads through a series of concrete basins. The background shows industrial structures and a clear blue sky.

Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the Upcoming 2022 Federal Budget

Metro Vancouver Regional District
August 6, 2021

Metro Vancouver acknowledges that the region's residents live, work, and learn on the shared territories of many Indigenous peoples, including 10 local First Nations: Katzie, Kwantlen, Kwikwetlem, Matsqui, Musqueam, Qayqayt, Semiahmoo, Squamish, Tsawwassen, and Tsleil-Waututh.

Metro Vancouver respects the diverse and distinct histories, languages, and cultures of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, which collectively enrich our lives and the region.

FRONT COVER: LULU ISLAND WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

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Recommendations

1. That the federal government provide predictable, equitable cost sharing to local governments on critical infrastructure projects, in particular, those driven by federal regulatory requirements like the Iona Island Wastewater Treatment Program. This is critical in maintaining affordability at the household level and ensuring these projects move forward without delay.
2. That the federal government fund community infrastructure projects that prioritize emissions reductions and resiliency to climate change, as green infrastructure projects represent an immediate opportunity to achieve our shared climate goals.
3. That the federal government support major sustainability upgrades in existing and new housing, as well as the development and preservation of affordable rental housing, including through portfolio-based funding partnerships with local governments that provide affordable housing services.



Dear Finance Committee Members:

Metro Vancouver is pleased to provide this submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, sharing our recommendations as federal budget and spending priorities are formed.

The Metro Vancouver region is critical to the economic performance and social fabric of the province of British Columbia and Canada. Our regional economy sustains the largest and most diverse share of British Columbia's employment and economic activity, and is a driver of sustained growth, innovation and new enterprise.

As we move forward from the challenges brought on by the pandemic and look toward recovery, we are at a critical juncture in setting the foundation for a future that is greener, resilient, more equitable and more sustainable. From new supports for the conservation of wild Pacific salmon populations, to the creation of a permanent public transit fund, Metro Vancouver values the federal government's attention to climate adaptation, resiliency and the transition to a greener economy, including job creation.

Now, it is imperative that we work together to continue these investments in critical infrastructure, housing, clean energy, climate action and habitat restoration in order to achieve our shared goals. These investments include transformational projects such as the replacement of the Iona Island Wastewater Treatment Plant in Richmond, British Columbia, which will restore one of the world's most important rearing habitats for juvenile salmon at the mouth of the Fraser River, while creating thousands of jobs and reducing GHG emissions.

On behalf of the 21 municipalities, one treaty First Nation and one electoral area that make up Metro Vancouver, I thank the members of the Committee for the opportunity to present our recommendations for Budget 2022. We look forward to continuing the strong partnership between our region and the Government of Canada to protect and enhance Metro Vancouver's prosperity, environment and quality of life.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sav Dhaliwal". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sav Dhaliwal
Chair, Metro Vancouver Board of Directors

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 nearly \$2.5 billion annually in 2021 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. Over the next five years, we are planning over \$6 billion in critical infrastructure investments to build, maintain and upgrade the infrastructure that underlies the prosperity and livability of the region.

Metro Vancouver is ideally positioned as a partner to the Government of Canada in realizing its economic recovery and climate change objectives. Our governments share many of the same priorities:

- Leading the fight against climate change
- Driving towards a net zero emissions future
- Increasing affordable housing
- Advancing reconciliation with Indigenous peoples
- Supporting a vibrant and prosperous regional economy
- Building inclusive communities

By investing together—in infrastructure, housing, clean energy, climate action and habitat restoration—we can create new jobs and lay the foundation for a recovery that is greener, resilient, more equitable and more sustainable.

Investments in critical infrastructure

As we plan for the future, we must take into consideration the need for expanded core utility services and regional services to respond to new growth. Our country and region are dependent on healthy, functioning ecosystems and require actions to reduce pollutants, including greenhouse gases, to prevent waste and to conserve our natural ecosystems. We must also maintain and replace critical regional infrastructure to meet current and future service needs and to be resilient to the effects of climate change and natural disasters, including impacts from severe weather events and flooding, wildfires, power failures and seismic events.

To achieve these goals, we must ensure core services and infrastructure are delivered with an adherence to sound fiscal policies that balance long-term financial health, while maintaining affordability for ratepayers. As the regional government, Metro Vancouver is prepared to make significant investments in a range of infrastructure projects, but we cannot do it alone. We will need the federal government to join us in making these crucial investments for the benefit of our shared constituents for generations to come.

Metro Vancouver is uniquely positioned to partner with the Federal government to play a leadership role in supporting Canada's economic recovery through strategic co-investments into infrastructure projects that will create long-term jobs, mitigate climate change and protect the environment.

Iona Island Wastewater Treatment Plant

Metro Vancouver is advancing one of Canada’s most dynamic and transformative urban sustainability programs—the Iona Island Wastewater Treatment Plant. This innovative project will protect the health and well-being of people, wildlife and ecosystems while enhancing seismic and climate resiliency. The project is designed to maximize energy and resource recovery, and will make a significant impact in reducing Metro Vancouver’s greenhouse gas emissions.



The Iona program represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to protect wild salmon on the west coast.

The new plant is being designed to enhance wildlife habitat, support biodiversity and restore one of the world’s most important rearing habitat for juvenile salmon at the mouth of the Fraser River, while serving generations to come.

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 a growing population and a globally significant ecosystem.

Metro Vancouver is engaging 14 First Nations on the new 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. Metro Vancouver and Musqueam Indian Band are working towards a partnership agreement that will provide benefits for both organizations and ensure that the best possible projects are developed. Input from the Musqueam Indian Band is being incorporated into the project design, including 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 River.

Canada’s most dynamic and transformative urban sustainability project

- Phase 1: 2021-2025 (\$750 million), Phase 2: 2026-2034 (\$6.7 billion), Phase 3: 2035-2042 (\$3 billion)
- 100,000 jobs supported
- Enhances seismic and climate resiliency
- Restores habitat for juvenile salmon
- Partnership opportunities with Musqueam Indian Band
- Increases energy and resource recovery
- Significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions



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 federal 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. We urge the federal government to commit to predictable funding for investments in critical infrastructure projects.

The existing plant currently treats over 200 billion litres of wastewater every year, serving 770,500 residents in Vancouver, Burnaby, Richmond, University of BC, the University Endowment Lands, the Squamish Nation and the Musqueam Indian Band. To meet federal regulatory requirements, a new plant with enhanced treatment technology must be completed by the end of 2030.

IONA ISLAND WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT





Climate Resiliency

Achieving carbon neutrality and ensuring the region is resilient to climate change guides Metro Vancouver's goals, strategies and actions for its assets and operations.

Metro Vancouver, together with its member jurisdictions, has been taking action on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building climate resilience for decades. Despite this progress, actions must be accelerated to reduce our impacts on global climate change, to protect public health and the environment and to adapt to the anticipated impacts from a changing climate.

Federal government funding for infrastructure that prioritizes emissions reductions and resiliency is essential, as green infrastructure projects represent an immediate opportunity for partnerships between all orders of government to achieve our shared goals.

Affordable Housing

The provision and maintenance of diverse and affordable housing choices is critical to the livability of communities and the quality of life of residents. Effectively addressing the affordable housing crisis will require strong collaboration.

Metro Vancouver Housing is one of the largest affordable housing providers in the region, with 49 sites across the region, including over 3,400 units to support about 9,400 tenants. Metro Vancouver Housing will invest \$190 million to develop 1,350 new and redeveloped units over the next 10 years. However, with federal support, we have the potential to leverage this investment to develop over 2,500 new homes.

Balancing the renewal of existing housing with the creation of new affordable housing will require significant investment, innovation, and collaboration. At the same time, Metro Vancouver Housing is working to enhance sustainability of our housing to meet regional and national climate targets, and improve accessibility to support an aging population. Additional funding from the federal government could further leverage this investment and create even more affordable rental units across the region.

Long-term funding commitments from the federal government are needed, along with greater flexibility and streamlined access. Portfolio-based funding partnerships with the federal government can support major sustainability upgrades in existing and new housing, as well as the development and preservation of affordable rental housing.





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| Village of Anmore | Electoral Area A | City of North Vancouver | City of Richmond |
| Village of Belcarra | City of Langley | District of North Vancouver | City of Surrey |
| Bowen Island Municipality | Township of Langley | City of Pitt Meadows | Tsawwassen First Nation |
| City of Burnaby | Village of Lions Bay | City of Port Coquitlam | City of Vancouver |
| City of Coquitlam | City of Maple Ridge | City of Port Moody | District of West Vancouver |
| City of Delta | City of New Westminister | | City of White Rock |

