A STRONGER BC, FOR EVERYONE

BUDGET 2020: A BALANCED PLAN TO KEEP BC MOVING FORWARD



STRATEGIC PLAN

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Across British Columbia, things are changing for the better. More families can breathe a sigh of relief because they have finally found good, affordable child care. Students are learning in newer, safer schools. More people who struggled to find housing in the face of skyrocketing rents and low vacancy rates are moving into new homes. Patients don't have to wait as long for an MRI. And the elimination of MSP premiums has put more money back in the pockets of British Columbians.

It's no accident that everyday life is getting a bit easier for people. It's because our government is making different choices. We're choosing to put people first and tackle the challenges they face. Instead of ignoring problems and making reckless cuts to services, we are investing in solutions.

While people are starting to see the benefits, there's still more to do.

Budget 2020 keeps building – it keeps building on the progress we've made to make life more affordable and improve the services families count on. And it keeps building the infrastructure we need. New roads, bridges, housing, energy projects, schools and hospitals – investments like these create jobs, grow the economy and prepare B.C. communities for growth.

B.C. is an economic leader in Canada. We are leaders in other ways, too – in our commitments to better public services; protecting B.C.'s clean water, air and land; and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. These commitments all work together to create a sustainable and resilient modern economy in which everyone shares in the benefits. In today's economy, we can't afford to leave anyone behind.

Budget 2020 continues to focus on this government's three core priorities:

- >> Making life more affordable
- >> Delivering the services British Columbians depend on
- Building a sustainable economy that creates opportunities for everyone

We understand that, in order to deliver on these priorities, we must take bold action on climate change, build meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and support equity, diversity and inclusion.

Supported by the Confidence and Supply Agreement with the BC Green Party caucus, government is advancing these priorities to make life better for people.

Two years ago, we set a new direction for this province. British Columbians work hard, and they deserve a government that works hard for them. That's what *Budget 2020* is all about. It keeps building a stronger B.C., for everyone.

MAKING LIFE MORE AFFORDABLE

For too long, life in B.C. became more and more expensive while government looked the other way. Since July 2017, this government has taken meaningful steps to make life more affordable. And British Columbians are starting to see the results.

When we eliminated the Medical Services Plan (MSP) premiums on January 1, 2020, we delivered one of B.C.'s biggest middleclass tax cuts – saving families as much as \$1,800 a year.

We have made ferry travel more affordable by cutting or freezing all fares and fully restoring the Monday to Thursday seniors' passenger fares discount. We also eliminated the tolls on the Port Mann and Golden Ears bridges.

In *Budget 2018*, we introduced ambitious plans to tackle two of the biggest affordability problems facing people in British Columbia: shortages of quality child care and affordable housing. Both are priorities identified in the Confidence and Supply Agreement. Two years later, affordable housing and child care remain cornerstones in building a stronger B.C., and they continue to be among our top priorities.

British Columbians deserve safe and affordable housing in the communities they call home. When people can find affordable housing that is closer to work, it gives them more time at home and with family – making life better for everyone.

Homes for BC included the largest investment in housing affordability in B.C.'s history: \$7 billion over ten years. We are working with non-profits, the private sector, Indigenous communities and local governments across British Columbia to build the homes people need. We have also taken steps to moderate the housing market, crack down on tax fraud, close loopholes, and make renting more secure.

And we are beginning to see results.

Close to 23,000 new homes are completed or underway in nearly 90 communities in B.C. Thousands of low- to middleincome families, seniors and individuals will soon have access to new affordable housing. This includes more than 5,200 affordable, mixed income rental homes – with a goal of over 14,000 – that are on the way through our Community Housing Fund. And the HousingHub, which is bringing partners together and delivering thousands of homes for the "missing middle" – middle-income families who have struggled to find affordable housing.

Nearly 2,100 people who were homeless or at risk of being homeless now have a safe and secure home with access to 24/7 support. And more than 800 additional supportive homes are on the way for people currently without housing.

For individuals and families who rent their homes, government has limited the yearly allowable rent increase to the rate of inflation – 2.6% for 2020. And we are giving more support

to help families and seniors afford rent through the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) and Shelter Aid For Elderly Renters (SAFER).

And there is more to come.

Budget 2020 ensures this positive momentum will continue, with more than \$4 billion invested in housing over the next three years.

At the same time, we have put British Columbia on the path to universal child care. Our made-in-B.C. plan is showing results. The parents of more than 65,000 kids are seeing real savings with the Affordable Child Care Benefit – up to \$1,600 each month. And kids in more than 55,000 spaces have seen their rates reduced with the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative. Thanks to our combined child care affordability measures, over 28,000 families have benefited from paying \$10 per day or less for child care.

Budget 2020 continues to invest in the Childcare BC plan, which reaches a total of \$1.4 billion over the fiscal plan in new investment since 2018. This brings overall child care programming to a total of \$2 billion over three years. This investment will help create thousands of child care spaces, build and improve the quality of facilities, and grow the workforce.

To give families with children even more support, the BC Child Opportunity Benefit, announced in *Budget 2019*, will begin later this year. Nearly 300,000 families with children under 18 will receive a benefit up to as much as \$1,600 per year for their first child, up to \$2,600 per year for families with two children, and up to \$3,400 per year for families with three children.

For years, B.C.'s car insurance rates have soared. The old government ignored problems at ICBC, allowing it to become a system that made lawyers rich, while drivers paid too much for insurance. It's time for change at ICBC. We're going to transform ICBC to deliver lower rates for B.C. drivers – saving them an average of \$400 on their insurance, while also improving care coverage for people who have been injured in a crash.

Government is also taking steps to put more money in the pockets of British Columbia's lowest-paid workers. We will keep strengthening the minimum wage, increasing it to \$14.60 an hour in 2020 and reaching \$15.20 an hour in 2021. Government is also increasing the liquor servers minimum wage, which disproportionately discriminates against women, to \$13.95 in 2020 and \$15.20 in 2021, when it will be the same as the general minimum wage.

DELIVERING THE SERVICES PEOPLE COUNT ON

Making sure high-quality public services are there for British Columbians when they need them is at the heart of what people count on governments to do. Protecting and improving health care, education, social and family support services, public safety and other services remains a central priority of this government.

We are taking steps to give people faster access to health care in communities across B.C. We are building and expanding hospitals. We have opened new urgent and primary care centres, hired more doctors and nurses, and increased staff levels at residential care homes.

B.C.'s Surgical and Diagnostic Imaging Strategy is shortening the wait times for surgeries and diagnostic procedures. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of MRI exams being done in the province, and wait times for hip and knee surgeries have fallen since 2016.

We are giving hospital patients access to more food grown and processed in B.C. through FeedBC. This not only delivers fresh, local food to people while they are in hospital, it also supports local farmers and communities.

Budget 2020 invests over \$1 billion in additional health care funding for British Columbians. This funding will continue improving the quality of health care services and enhancing patient outcomes. This includes supports for seniors, and more resources to continue tackling wait times for hip, knee, dental and other surgeries.

For too long, mental health issues were dismissed as a weakness, and addiction as a sign of moral failure. That's starting to change. As a society, we are finally recognizing these challenges for what they really are: health issues. We understand that comprehensive services are needed to support people coping with mental health issues or addiction. That's why in 2017, we created the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions to respond to the ongoing overdose crisis and build a better system for mental health care.

While much more is needed, interventions made by this government to tackle the overdose crisis are estimated to have averted more than 5,000 deaths since the crisis began.

Our goal for mental health care is a system where, if you need help, you only have to ask once and you receive it quickly. Our path to getting there is laid out in B.C.'s mental health roadmap: *A Pathway to Hope*, which we released last June. This plan includes a comprehensive mental health and addictions system of care. Our immediate focus is on improving wellness for children, youth and young adults, supporting Indigenous-led solutions, improving substance use care, and improving access and quality of care throughout B.C.

For example, we are expanding the Foundry primary health, mental health and substance use centre "one-stop-shop" model to give youth and their families in communities throughout B.C. access to wraparound care. Eight centres are currently open and eleven more are on the way, for a total of 19 provincewide.

To make sure kids in British Columbia are set up for future success, this government has increased and accelerated investment in the province's K-12 education system.

Since 2017, we have announced more than 80 capital projects for expanding, building and seismically upgrading schools across the province. More than 10,000 spaces are being created to improve the learning environment for students in growing communities.

Inside the classroom, we are supporting students with over 4,200 new teachers, including 700 new special education teachers and nearly 200 new teacher-psychologists and counsellors. Close to 2,000 new education assistants have also been hired.

In addition, we have been building new playgrounds, modernizing the curriculum and graduation program, training more Indigenous teachers, and looking out for the well-being of all students through programs like ERASE (Expect Respect and a Safe Education) and the SOGI-inclusive (students of all sexual orientations and gender identities) codes of conduct.

Budget 2020 invests an additional \$339 million over three years to build on work already happening to improve B.C. schools and set students up for success.

We are also working to help build a safer and more resilient B.C. with a new, additional investment of \$195 million over three years to help communities better respond to and recover from wildfires, floods and other emergencies in B.C.

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY THAT CREATES OPPORTUNITIES, FOR EVERYONE

Despite uncertainty in the global economy, British Columbia's economy remains strong and resilient. We are one of Canada's fastestgrowing economies and have one of the lowest unemployment rates. As a government, we are taking steps to make sure B.C.'s economic strength is creating opportunities for everyone, not just the few at the top.

For all British Columbians, a good job makes a real difference. Over the next decade, more than 860,000 new job opportunities will open up across B.C. and more than 75% of these jobs will require some post-secondary education or training. With new opportunities in every region, it's critical that British Columbians have access to the training and education they need to benefit from B.C.'s momentum.

That's why we eliminated tuition fees for Adult Basic Education and English Language Learning programs within the first 100 days of forming government. More than 20,000 British Columbians are now upgrading their skills through adult basic education.

Last year, in *Budget 2019*, we eliminated the interest from all new and existing B.C. student loans – so people paying off their student loan experienced immediate relief and current and future post-secondary students will come out of school able to pay off their loans faster.

These were important steps in reducing barriers and expanding access to education. *Budget 2020* builds on them by introducing a new, up-front, needs-based grant program, giving financial support to students who need it most. Starting in September 2020, this grant program will support more than 40,000 students in degree, diploma and certificate programs as well as the skilled trades.

B.C. is growing, and that means there is a need to build and expand infrastructure across the province. Investment in infrastructure projects improves services and makes life better for people. It also creates training and good job opportunities. Government's capital investment will build, improve and expand B.C.'s roads, bridges, hospitals and schools, and support more than 100,000 direct and indirect jobs during construction throughout the province.

Infrastructure projects like the new Pattullo Bridge and the Highway 1 expansion are being built with Community Benefit Agreements. These agreements provide good jobs for local people and apprenticeship opportunities for women, Indigenous peoples and others underrepresented in the trades.

The \$7 billion investments in housing affordability laid out in government's plan to build 114,000 homes over 10 years will

create more than 54,000 jobs. It will also strengthen local economies by providing the housing employers need to attract and keep workers.

We know a strong economy is a diverse economy. Industries from tech and innovation to mining, agriculture and energy continue to generate good jobs for people and grow our economy.

Delivering on a Confidence and Supply Agreement priority, government appointed B.C.'s first innovation commissioner, whose work over the past two years has helped advance tech and innovation, by building relationships and helping companies access talent and capital.

The Emerging Economy Task Force, another shared priority in the Confidence and Supply Agreement, will help B.C. stay at the forefront of emerging economic developments and address the challenges and opportunities ahead.

We are working to create and foster the conditions that make B.C. a great place to invest and do business. In fall 2018, LNG Canada announced its decision to build an LNG plant in Kitimat – the largest private-sector investment in Canadian history.

Over the past two years, government has supported local business by lowering the small business corporate income tax rate – making it the second lowest in the country – and eliminating the PST on electricity for businesses.

A thriving forest sector has provided good, stable jobs for many families for generations. But right now, the people who depend on B.C.'s forest industry are struggling.

To create and support good jobs in British Columbia's forest sector, government is taking steps to promote B.C. wood products at home and abroad, and making changes to encourage the construction of encapsulated mass timber buildings. Government's infrastructure plan is building, wherever possible, with B.C. wood.

We are also supporting many forestry workers and their families by providing placement co-ordination services, training programs and early retirement bridging.

A healthy and sustainable forest industry depends on bringing together employers, workers, First Nations, the private sector

and government to find solutions. New funding in *Budget 2020* invests in developing more opportunities for B.C.'s bio-economy and revitalizing the forest sector.

A strong economy is one in which we treat workers fairly, and with respect, and where workers are safe and come home at the end of each day.

Last spring, we announced much-needed reforms in the *Labour Relations Code* and *Employment Standards Act*. The Temporary Foreign Worker registry has been introduced to protect these vulnerable workers and prevent abuse. And we are making sure people affected by domestic or sexual violence or those caring for an ill relative don't have to worry about losing their job when they need time off work.

BUILDING A CLEANER FUTURE

Taking real action on climate change is central to building a more sustainable economy. By reducing carbon pollution we're creating opportunities and building a cleaner, stronger future.

In fall 2018 we launched CleanBC. This is B.C.'s plan to meet the rising climate challenge, prepare for climate impacts, and build a more prosperous, balanced, and sustainable future.

CleanBC was developed in collaboration with the BC Green Party caucus and supports the commitment in the Confidence and Supply Agreement to implement climate action to meet B.C.'s emission targets.

Budget 2019 committed approximately \$900 million over three years to implement the plan. *Budget 2020* provides an additional investment of over \$400 million to support CleanBC.

Electric vehicles (EV) are transforming how we travel around B.C. With CleanBC rebates, we're helping make electric vehicles more affordable – and we're rapidly expanding EV charging networks throughout the province. *Budget 2020*'s CleanBC investment includes additional funding to support the Go Electric BC program to help more people transition to electric vehicles.

With CleanBC, we are updating the BC Building Code to make every new building more energy efficient and improve existing buildings. We're making progress with thousands of people and businesses using CleanBC rebates to help make their homes and workplaces more comfortable and energy efficient.

We're working with industry to reduce pollution and meet world-leading climate targets. We've launched the CleanBC Program for Industry to reduce emissions directly at industrial operations, and we're supporting technological innovation, reducing emissions from natural gas production, and developing solutions for long-haul shipping and trucking.

The impacts of climate change are already being felt throughout the province. By planning and taking action now, we can take care of our homes, businesses and communities. To better understand and prepare for changing weather and other climate impacts, the Province is developing a climate preparedness and adaptation strategy in collaboration with Indigenous peoples, local governments, and other stakeholders.

We're developing a plastics action plan to help keep plastic waste out of our environment. During summer 2019, our public engagement on plastic pollution attracted so much interest that government extended it so everyone who wanted to was able to participate. We heard from more than 35,000 people who gave their input.

We are committed to being transparent and accountable when it comes to meeting our climate goals, and we are continually monitoring the impacts of our CleanBC activities and adjusting our approach as needed. That's why we passed groundbreaking accountability legislation last fall, requiring annual reporting and establishing a new independent advisory council. Work is also underway on new interim and sectoral climate targets.

ADVANCING MEANINGFUL RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Our work to build true and lasting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples is foundational to moving B.C. forward. Working in partnership with Indigenous communities, we have made significant progress – from language revitalization and child welfare, to revenue sharing and affordable housing.

Sharing gaming revenue with First Nations supports selfgovernment and self-determination, and is starting to transform communities and lives. Over the next 25 years, First Nations will have the reliability of a long-term, stable funding source to invest in the services and infrastructure their communities need.

Budget 2020 delivers on our revenue-sharing commitments.

A fundamental shift in approach to B.C.'s child welfare system has been central to our work to advance reconciliation. We are focusing on prevention to help support families to stay together and to keep more kids out of care and in their communities with aunties, grandparents and other extended family members. B.C. has the lowest number of total kids in care since 1990 and the lowest number of Indigenous children in care since 2014.

Budget 2019 brought the support payments to extended family in line with those received by foster parents and boosted support payments for the first time in a decade. This is helping keep more kids out of care and in their communities with relatives, friends and other supportive people.

Government is also working on agreements with First Nations to transfer jurisdiction of child welfare to Indigenous communities.

We are beginning to address the over-representation of Indigenous peoples in the justice system. This includes new funding in *Budget 2020* to open new Indigenous justice centres that will provide culturally safe justice and social services and diversion programs to improve Indigenous peoples' experience with the justice system.

A revitalized *Environmental Assessment Act* was developed in collaboration with First Nations. This means Indigenous knowledge and laws will be applied to future regulations.

To make sure people are receiving the most effective and appropriate care, government is funding Indigenous-led projects focused on mental health and wellness. We believe everyone in British Columbia deserves a safe and secure place to live. That is why we are working with First Nations to find solutions and take action in an area generally thought of as federal responsibility: on-reserve housing. British Columbia is the first province in Canada to fund on-reserve housing.

Government has provided funding to support Indigenous teacher education. This investment directly responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action that governments fund post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.

Over the past two years, meaningful progress has also been made in a number of other key areas. This includes the language revitalization funding that is increasing the number of Indigenous languages learners. Government has supported First Nations to participate in the clean energy sector and reduce remote communities' reliance on diesel. And we have advanced treaty negotiations with a number of First Nations through new, modernized approaches and signed other important reconciliation agreements.

In fall 2019, British Columbia became the first province in Canada to pass legislation to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Implementation of the UN Declaration is a shared priority under the Confidence and Supply Agreement.

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, developed in collaboration with the First Nations Leadership Council, is an important step on the journey to advancing reconciliation and respecting the human rights of Indigenous Peoples. The next critical steps are to work collaboratively with Indigenous peoples to develop an action plan to implement the objectives of the UN Declaration and to begin the work of aligning laws to the UN Declaration over time.

ADVANCING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

A critical part of a strong, resilient economy is opportunity – not just for some, but for everyone. Opportunity for all starts by eliminating the discrimination and bias that unfairly holds people back.

That's why government created the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner. This important office is tasked with promoting and protecting human rights and creating a more inclusive and just society for all British Columbians.

We are also incorporating Gender-Based Analysis Plus into the design of all B.C. policies and programs. By addressing inequality and bias from the beginning of every decision made in British Columbia, we can build a better, more inclusive, province for everyone.

Targeted supports are an important tool government uses to help those most in need. That's why we have introduced several innovative new jobs programs aimed at providing opportunities to people who have unique needs, such as older workers and survivors of violence and abuse. Similarly, the new homes we are building as part of the Building BC: Community Housing Fund include transition homes for survivors of family violence, seniors' housing, housing for people with disabilities and Indigenous housing both on- and off-reserve.

These and other investments address inequality by giving a hand up to those who have been held back.

Bringing the tuition waiver program for former youth in care to all public post-secondary institutions was also a critical part of our plan to make sure that no one gets left behind. We have built on that work by expanding the waiver to cover several trades training programs, and by improving the supports that these young people rely on while they learn. So far, more than 1,100 young people have taken advantage of this opportunity, and we expect thousands more will do so in the years ahead.

More young adults from care than ever before are accessing educational, cost of living and other supports through Agreements with Young Adults, and we're building on that success with further improvements to the program in the coming year.

To give even more children the foundation they need to pursue their dreams, we are taking action to support vulnerable youth in our public schools. Schools will be able to provide more supports like trauma counselling, school breakfast or lunch programs, tutoring and mentoring to children and youth in care, kids with mental health challenges and those living in poverty.

For years, the most vulnerable people in our province and our communities were left out and left behind. *Budget 2020* builds

on the progress we have made towards a better, more inclusive, British Columbia with additional investments to support the nearly 6,000 children and youth in government care. *Budget 2020* also extends care and services to more people who need the support of Community Living BC and protects the continuity of care for the 23,000 people with diverse abilities who receive services through Community Living BC.

Last year government introduced our province's first-ever poverty reduction strategy, TogetherBC. *Budget 2020* takes another next step towards lifting 140,000 people out of poverty by 2024 by increasing earning exemptions for individuals and families receiving income or disability assistance.

Increased earnings exemptions let people keep more of their hard-earned wages without risking access to the supports they need. This helps people accessing government supports to stay engaged in the workforce and build up valuable work experience that can lead to future opportunities.

Legal troubles can be destabilizing for people in poverty. That's why we are providing low-income people with quicker access to justice by funding new legal aid clinics in communities throughout B.C. These clinics will provide appropriate legal assistance and represent clients in legal proceedings at no cost.

For too long transgender, genderqueer and non-binary British Columbians have struggled to access the health care and other inclusive services they need to thrive. We have been taking steps to be more inclusive of people of all gender identities by introducing the ability to get "gender X" identification, and by making it possible to access more gender-affirming surgeries here in B.C., rather than requiring people to travel out of province. We will continue work on making government services more inclusive of people of all gender identities in 2020 and beyond.

Tackling racism and other forms of hate is a fundamental part of giving everyone the opportunity to succeed. The new Resilience B.C. Anti-Racism Network provides grants and other funding for communities. It also connects them to information, supports and the training needed to respond to and prevent racism and hate, as well as promote cultural diversity and multiculturalism.

Together these programs, investments and policies are aimed at making sure everyone has the chance to succeed in B.C.

By many measures, B.C.'s economy remains strong and resilient, and we are an economic leader. But the economy is broader than that. It also includes people, as well as the communities they call home, the natural environment they cherish, and the public services they count on. Is everyone able to share in the opportunities offered by a growing economy? Will we be able to grow old with dignity? Will our kids be able to stay in B.C. when they grow up?

Budget 2020 takes all of these considerations into account. It builds on the progress made over the past two and a half years. It helps make life more affordable, makes targeted investments in services, and builds important infrastructure. In the next two and a half years – and beyond – B.C.'s population is expected to keep growing, along with our economy. *Budget 2020* prepares our province for that growth.

New roads, bridges and public transportation will help businesses and shorten commute times. New hospitals will offer people better care closer to home. And new child care centres will help more parents afford child care, so they can join the workforce if they wish.

We are working every day to make life better for people and ensure everyone has an opportunity to share in the benefits of a resilient, sustainable economy.

Budget 2020 builds a stronger B.C., for everyone.

SUMMARY – THREE YEAR FISCAL PLAN

(\$ Millions)	Updated Forecast 2019/20	Budget Estimate 2020/21	Plan 2021/22	Plan 2022/23
» Revenue	59,326	60,585	62,366	64,211
» Expense	(58,823)	(60,058)	(61,887)	(63,537)
>> Forecast allowance	(300)	(300)	(300)	(300)
Surplus	203	227	179	374
Capital Spending:				
>> Taxpayer-supported capital spending	5,248	7,126	7,399	8,390
>> Self-supported capital spending	4,301	3,409	3,204	3,119
	9,549	10,535	10,603	11,509
Provincial Debt:				
>> Taxpayer-supported debt	44,569	49,202	53,929	58,598
Self-supported debt	25,769	26,890	27,834	28,697
» Total debt (including forecast allowance)	70,638	76,392	82,063	87,595
Taxpayer-supported debt to GDP ratio	14.6%	15.5%	16.3%	17.1%
Taxpayer-supported debt to revenue ratio	77.9%	84.1%	89.4%	94.4%
Economic Forecast:	2019	2020	2021	2022
>> Real GDP growth	1.8%	2.0%	1.9%	1.9%
>> Nominal GDP growth	3.7%	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%



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