



## **Housing Tops BC Urban Mayors' Calls to Action in Federal Election Blueprint**

### **For Immediate Release**

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BRITISH COLUMBIA – Today the BC Urban Mayors Caucus is releasing its 2021 Blueprint for BC's Urban Future. The Blueprint calls on the next federal government to take action on key issues facing cities across British Columbia including mental health and substance use, affordable housing, public transit, and the long-neglected local government finance system.

"We're happy to see all the major federal parties address key urban issues in their platforms and take cities seriously," said Kelowna Mayor and BCUMC Co-Chair Colin Basran. "Our hope is that whichever party forms government, the platform promises are quickly turned into positive action that will benefit our residents and businesses in the throes of the fourth wave of the pandemic, and through recovery."

The BCUMC 2021 Blueprint for BC's Urban Future puts a focus on housing. The key calls to action include:

- Making the Rapid Housing Initiative permanent with at least a \$2 billion investment per year until the goal of ending chronic homelessness has been reached.
- Implementing a non-market acquisition strategy to enable the non-profit sector to purchase low-end-of-market rental buildings and preserve them as affordable in perpetuity.
- Developing and funding an urban, rural and northern Indigenous strategy to enable urban Indigenous organizations to provide culturally-supportive housing.
- Using federal tax policy to disincentivize the financialization of housing and to incentivize the construction of more market rental units annually that are within reach of local wages.
- Partnering with the Province to fund Complex Care Housing and provide adequate and appropriate supports for those currently falling through the cracks and unable to live stably in existing supportive housing.

"Canada has one of the most severe housing supply challenges of any OECD country," said Victoria Mayor and BCUMC Co-Chair Lisa Helps. "This is showing up in our cities where hard-working residents can't afford to live in them. We know local governments have a role to play in increasing housing supply and we're committed to that, but we need strong federal policy and funding to assist."

British Columbia's urban areas are facing unique challenges coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. The BCUMC wants to ensure the next federal government is ready to work in partnership with local government to address the most pressing issues facing cities across B.C., as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for the future, including a changing climate.

A strong recovery depends on the creation of a new fiscal relationship between federal, provincial and local governments – one that provides cities with sustainable, predictable and reliable funding tools, so that they can support inclusive, equitable urban economies well into the future. To read the whole 2021 Blueprint please visit [www.bcurbanmayorscaucus.ca](http://www.bcurbanmayorscaucus.ca).

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### **About the BC Urban Mayors' Caucus**

The BC Urban Mayors' Caucus is an informal, non-partisan group of mayors from Abbotsford, Burnaby, Coquitlam, Kamloops, Kelowna, Nanaimo, New Westminster, Prince George, Richmond, Saanich, Surrey, Vancouver and Victoria, representing over 55 percent of the province's total population. The group came together in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and acts as a unified voice on critical issues facing their communities and the province. Online at [www.bcurbanmayorscaucus.ca](http://www.bcurbanmayorscaucus.ca).