



# LOWER MAINLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

## NEWSLETTER

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# ADVOCACY WORK AT THE UBCM CONVENTION

THE EXECUTIVE OF THE LOWER MAINLAND LGA MET WITH BC GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES ON SIX DIFFERENT TOPICS DURING THE UBCM CONVENTION AS PART OF OUR ONGOING MISSION TO ADVOCATE ON BEHALF OF OUR MEMBERSHIP.

The following meetings were held:

## Help Cities Lead Initiative

The Lower Mainland LGA Executive as well as the City of North Vancouver put forward a resolution entitled "Help Cities Lead Initiative". The two resolutions were endorsed by our membership and went on to the UBCM conference where it received province wide endorsement.

The Lower Mainland LGA Executive met with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, George Heyman and a representative from the Climate Action Secretariat.

Building emissions account for 40-60% of a community's green house emissions and current actions in British Columbia to reduce GHG emissions from buildings are insufficient to achieve the province's GHG targets for 2030 and 2050.

The November 2020 provincial mandate letters to ministers included direction to provincial ministries to move forward with three of the five policy measures included in the Help Cities Lead campaign to drive GHG reduction in BC's building sector.

**REQUESTED ACTION:** That the Province immediately introduce legislation supporting the three measures identified by Help Cities Lead and addressed in the ministerial mandate letters. These are:

- GHG requirements for new buildings
- PACE Financing
- Home Energy Labelling

**REQUESTED ACTION:** That the province introduce enabling legislation to permit local governments who so choose to implement the two remaining measures identified in the Help Cities Lead campaign which are:

- GHG requirements for existing buildings
- Building energy benchmarking

## Illegal Dumping

The Fraser Valley Regional District and the City of Chilliwack put forward resolutions on Illegal Dumping. The two resolutions were endorsed by our membership and went on to the UBCM conference where they received province wide endorsement.

The Lower Mainland LGA Executive met with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, George Heyman.

Illegal dumping of waste on private and crown land continues to be an issue across British Columbia and it results in unsightly, unsanitary, and potentially dangerous situations in our natural rural areas.

Illegal dumping is an area of shared jurisdiction between multiple provincial ministries. Unfortunately, this shared jurisdiction results in decreased accountability and gaps in service.

**REQUESTED ACTION:** That the provincial government designate a single Ministry to be responsible for regulation of illegal dumping in BC, including enforcement of regulations and clean up and removal of dumped waste.

## Provincial Circular Economy Strategy

The District of North Vancouver put forward a resolution on a Provincial Circular Economy Strategy. The resolution was endorsed by our membership and went on to the UBCM conference where it received province wide endorsement.

The Lower Mainland LGA Executive met with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, George Heyman.

The provisioning of food and management of food and goods consumed in BC communities produces quantities of waste, pollution and carbon emissions that exceed equitable per capita environmental limits.

The average British Columbian is consuming materials at a rate 3x what the earth can sustain and Canadians in general are one of the highest per capita generators of waste in the world.

The concepts of zero waste and a circular economy provide a vision and policy framework to transition BC's economy to sustainably provision and manage the materials it consumes.

A circular economy operates on three key principles: designing out waste and pollution, keeping materials in use and regenerating natural systems to help BC communities move towards zero waste.

A comprehensive circular economy strategy with benchmarked targets for increasing circularity would provide a clearer road map of what needs to be accomplished, allowing the province to best utilize its powers in supporting local governments in tackling the waste issue and create sustainable jobs.

**REQUESTED ACTION:** That the Province develop a provincial circular economy strategy.



Innovation in Local Government

## CivX 2021: Inclusive Local Government: Building Equality, Embracing Diversity

November 15, 16, and 17

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states, "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability."

Today, there is broad recognition that our country, our institutions - and we as citizens - have not always lived up to these ideals. Together, we can and must do better.

What role can local governments play? To start, we need to listen, and we need to trade ideas that can lead to positive change. As part of that process, we invite you to join us online for CivX 2021, Inclusive Local Government: Building Equality, Embracing Diversity, November 15 - 17, 2021, hosted by the Lower Mainland Local Government Association and CivicInfo BC.

Times: 12pm - 2:30pm each day (Speakers at Noon and 1:15pm)

Cost: FREE

[civicinfo.bc.ca/event/2021/CivX](http://civicinfo.bc.ca/event/2021/CivX)



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## Support to Manage Post COVID-19 Pandemic Tourism

The Village of Pemberton put forward a resolution in regards to Funding Support to Manage Post COVID-19 Pandemic Tourism. The resolution was endorsed by our membership and went on to the UBCM conference where it received province wide endorsement.

The Lower Mainland LGA Executive met with the Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport, Melanie Mark.

BC's restart plan, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has included Destination BC focusing on encouraging residents of BC to Explore BC over the past two summers to promote domestic tourism.

The campaign has been so successful that unprecedented number of BC residents have sought ways to experience the Province's natural environment.

Reports indicate that the pandemic has increased use of trails, campsites, climbing crags, lakes, hot springs and other key tourist destinations, many of which were already reaching or exceeding capacity.

The concerns brought forward by Pemberton and supported by our membership is that there are serious threats associated with unrestricted outdoor and adventure tourism on vulnerable natural environments. We need to ensure that the desire to bring economic benefit to the region through pandemic tourism doesn't overshadow the need to protect natural ecosystems.

**REQUESTED ACTION:** That the provincial government provide funding to the provincial ministries responsible for managing parks, crown lands and recreation sites and to local governments to assist in establishing sustainable tourism policies and programs to ensure that visitor use of lands and natural resources is done in a manner that protects the natural environment in perpetuity.

## Review of the BC Assessment Appeal Framework and Process

The City of Coquitlam put forward a resolution in regards to a Review of the BC Assessment Appeal Framework Process. The resolution was endorsed by our membership and went on to the UBCM conference where it received province wide endorsement.

The Lower Mainland LGA Executive met with the Minister of Finance, Selina Robinson.

BC Assessment classifies, and values properties and local governments rely on this information to annually set property taxation rates.

Each year, BC Assessment sends out property assessment notices in January to all property owners in BC and sends the Completed Assessment Roll to municipalities.

If a property owner disagrees with the assessed value of their property, BC Assessment offers a two-tier assessment appeal process through the Property Assessment Review Panel and the Property Assessment Appeal Board.

The decisions of the Property Assessment Appeal Board may result in an amendment in the assessment roll. In most cases, appeals involve a decrease in assessment value thereby reducing property taxes.



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The amendments come to a BC municipality in the form of a Supplementary Assessment Roll. This supplementary roll comes after the tax rates have already been set by Council and they therefore have a direct impact on the value of property taxes collected.

There has been an increase in appeals in recent years and the costs incurred in 2020 were far beyond previously experienced levels.

For example, the city of Coquitlam that submitted the resolution, incurred approximately \$1.8 million in 2020 in the form of current and prior year appeal costs and related interest charges.

Specific concerns among our membership regarding the appeal process include:

1. The growing number of successful appeals
2. The transparency of appeal settlements and decisions
3. The overall stability in assessment values and the impact on local government finances.

**REQUEST ACTION:** That the Province review the BC Assessment property assessment appeals' framework and process to minimize the impacts to local governments' finances due to appeals decisions by ensuring decisions are reached in a timely manner and increasing the transparency of settled appeals.

## Fair Taxation from Railway Operations and Industrial Parks

The City of Pitt Meadows put forward two resolutions regarding a "Fair Taxation from Railway Operations and Fair Taxation from Industrial Parks" to the annual convention of the Lower Mainland Local Government Association back in May. The resolutions were endorsed by our membership and went forward to the UBCM convention where they received province wide endorsement.

The Lower Mainland LGA Executive met with the Minister of Finance, Selina Robinson.

Section 5 e and f of the *Assessment Act-Prescribed Classes of Property Regulation B.C. Reg. 438/81* mandates that land or improvements used for transporting products or used for storage of products are classified as Class 5 Light Industry, but specifically excludes land or improvements ancillary to the business of transportation from railway operations and land or improvements used principally as an outlet for the sale of a finished product to a purchaser for purposes of his or her own consumption.

Railway operations require a high level of municipal service support including fire services and infrastructure support and therefore they should not be excluded from taxation.

Likewise Industrial Parks are a heavy burden on city infrastructure through heavy trucking in movement of the product and should likewise not be excluded from taxation.

**REQUESTED ACTION:** That the province repeal section 5(e) and (f) of the *Assessment Act-Prescribed Classes of Property Regulation B.C. Reg. 438/81* to create fair taxation from railway operations and industrial parks.

## The British Columbia Social Procurement Initiative

Social procurement is an emerging best practice that governments and other larger purchasers can use to unlock additional social value from their existing purchasing. Social procurement outcomes can be linked directly to strategic and social planning goals, and this added social value can support economic development, recovery and resilience.

The British Columbia Social Procurement Initiative (BCSPI) is a low-cost, high-value collaborative learning program that provides local governments and institutional purchasers with the training, support and expertise required to integrate social procurement practices into their existing procurement spend. For a population-based annual membership fee, participants get access to a full suite of professional development and training, expert coaching support, resources & templates, case studies, supplier engagement resources, impact measurement tools and more.

After a successful 2-year pilot in the Vancouver Island and Coastal region, BCSPI has been supported by the BC Government to expand province-wide, and membership is now available to all local governments and institutional purchasers across the province.

For more information visit the BCSPI website at [bcspi.ca](http://bcspi.ca) or contact Rob Fisher, Program Manager at [rfisher@scalecollaborative.ca](mailto:rfisher@scalecollaborative.ca) or (250) 886-3063 to discuss membership opportunities.

## United Way Rising to the Challenge Report



United Way British Columbia released in March of this year a new study that explores and assesses how community agencies across B.C. worked to support older adults to stay safe at home during COVID-19.

Commissioned by the United Way's Healthy Aging Office in partnership with the Community Based Seniors Services Leadership Council, the study was undertaken by Dialogues in Action who gathered data to measure the effectiveness and responsiveness of the province-wide, community-led response to support seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic. The report entitled *Rising to the Challenge: How BC's Community-Based Seniors' Service Agencies Stepped Up During COVID-19*, highlights how a network of community agencies across the province pulled together to keep older adults safe at home.

[uwlm.ca/news/rising-to-the-challenge](http://uwlm.ca/news/rising-to-the-challenge).