

May 14, 2019

**Local economic development partnership determined to keep momentum going from
Canada's Smart Cities Challenge**

Victoria, BC — The South Island Prosperity Partnership (SIPP) team gathered together with its members and supporters at the Songhees Wellness Centre to await the announcement of the winners of Canada's first-ever Smart Cities Challenge. The Hon. François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, revealed the winners via live-stream from the National Arts Centre in Ottawa today.

The two \$10 million prizes, for which Greater Victoria was in the running, were awarded to Guelph and Nunavut. Other winners include Montreal and Bridgewater in the \$50 million and \$5 million categories respectively. Greater Victoria's submission focused on improving transportation and mobility in the region.

Bruce Williams, Interim CEO of SIPP, views the results of the competition as an opportunity and challenge. "SIPP was one of only 20 finalists chosen from among 200 applicants from across Canada. We received \$250,000 in federal funds to develop our local resident's ideas around improving mobility, and we now have the chance to move some of these projects forward based on what we've learned throughout the process."

Ken Armour, Esquimalt Councillor and Chair of SIPP's Partners Committee, talked about the work that lies ahead. "SIPP's members are excited to spring into action and get started with the work for which we have already laid the foundations. Of course, \$10 million would have been a big boost, but we have every intention of building on this incredible momentum. We're seen as a leader in Canada in certain areas—particularly around new approaches to governance and collaboration—that will help us with accelerating the next steps."

SIPP announced it has forged a partnership with Esri Canada to help build a data-sharing platform that will bring local governments on the South Vancouver Island together with third-party collaborators like BC Transit, BC Ferries, and other private transportation companies like U-Bicycle Canada, Modo Car Co-operative, and many others.

Dan Ruscheinski, Senior Director of Sales and Marketing for Esri Canada, one of SIPP's private sector members and partners, said "There is something special happening in the South Island

Region. SIPP's partnership model and focus on regional sharing and collaboration is sparking a new way of approaching projects and we are being noticed internationally for our efforts."

Christina Clarke, SIPP Board member and Executive Director of Songhees Nation, spoke about a Memorandum of Understanding that was signed with Camosun College, forming the agreement to develop and test an Indigenous-focused transit solution. "We're working with local Nations and the college to develop some pilot projects with the goal of better connecting their residents and their young people to education and economic opportunities. This is an important issue for our region with 10 First Nations that are often less able to capitalize on our region's strong economy."

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ABOUT SOUTH ISLAND PROSPERITY PARTNERSHIP

The South Island Prosperity Partnership (SIPP) is the economic development organization for Greater Victoria, B.C., comprised of 50+ members, including 10 local governments, seven First Nations, three post-secondary institutions, seven industry associations and non-profits, and more than 30 major employers, all working together to bolster our region's economic and social prosperity. This will happen by catalyzing the creation of high-quality, household-sustaining jobs, so that more families can afford to live, work and build a life here.

SIPP's mission is to facilitate and promote the development of a strong, regionally diversified economy on South Vancouver Island. www.southislandprosperity.ca