

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**February 28, 2019**

### **South Island Prosperity Project and Camosun College collaborate to improve transportation for First Nations on Southern Vancouver Island**

**Victoria, BC** — The South Island Prosperity Project (SIPP) has teamed up with Camosun College to create and deliver new transportation options for First Nations communities on Southern Vancouver Island.

Representatives from SIPP and Camosun College gathered at the Songhees Wellness Centre on Wednesday to sign a Memorandum of Understanding. The MOU outlines how SIPP and Camosun College will develop a business case to enable better transportation opportunities, including increased accessibility to post-secondary institutions in the region, First Nations-run education centres, and other such destinations.

Bruce Williams, SIPP Interim CEO, spoke to the importance of the initiative and its potential to make a positive difference in the region. “There are ten First Nation communities and 17,245 Indigenous people on South Vancouver Island. Only two of the ten communities are in any reasonable proximity to access to education and career opportunities off-reserve. The other eight are rural, remote, and not well-served by transit. There is a real need for improvement for reasons including safety, access to healthcare and education, engagement with our shared economy. SIPP is proud to partner with Camosun College to help improve connectivity for these underserved areas.”

Geoff Wilmshurst, Vice-president Partnerships at Camosun College said “Camosun’s relationship to South Island First Nations is immensely important to our success as an institution. We know that many of our Indigenous students struggle to find reliable and affordable transportation options to attend programs at Camosun and the other post-secondary schools in the region. Therefore, it is imperative that we work toward solutions that will meet those needs. Our partnership with SIPP is an important piece to solving that transportation puzzle and we are extraordinarily pleased to play in role in that.”

Camosun College will recruit and employ a co-operative education student to assist in the development of the plan and SIPP will contribute financial resources to complete the technical requirements.

The initiative, currently dubbed the ‘Indigenous Microtransit Pilot’, began as part of SIPP’s federal Smart Cities Challenge application. If successful in their application, SIPP will be awarded \$10 million to further develop this, and several other, mobility initiatives in the region.

**Media Contact**

Taryn Malcolm  
Marketing & Communications Specialist  
[tmalcolm@southislandprosperity.ca](mailto:tmalcolm@southislandprosperity.ca)  
(778) 676-9755

**ABOUT SOUTH ISLAND PROSPERITY PROJECT**

The South Island Prosperity Project (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 23 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](http://www.southislandprosperity.ca).