

## Budget may benefit North Shore projects

### Infrastructure fund could apply to sewage plant, Harry Jerome rebuilds

BY JANE SEYD, NORTH SHORE NEWS    MARCH 22, 2013



Local politicians are hopeful the 2013 federal budget will contain infrastructure funding for major North Shore projects including the Harry Jerome Recreation Centre and the Lions Gate Wastewater Treatment Plant.

**Photograph by:** North Shore News, file photo

MONEY for job and skills retraining, and a commitment to share the costs of municipal infrastructure projects marked the highlights of the federal government's 2013 budget on Thursday.

Among the measures announced by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty is the promise of a \$32 billion 10-year "Building Canada" program to support spending on roads, recreation facilities and public transit, starting in 2014, as well as a further \$14 billion for major projects.

On the North Shore, projects like the stalled \$70-million revamp of North Vancouver's Harry Jerome Recreation Centre and a planned \$400 million upgrade of the Lions Gate sewage treatment plant to secondary treatment could both potentially benefit from the infrastructure plan.

North Vancouver MP Andrew Saxton described the announcement as "great news for municipalities."

City of North Vancouver Mayor Darrell Mussatto said he's happy to hear the federal government has "a significant pot of money" still available for local and regional infrastructure projects, but added "the devil is in the details."

The Lions Gate sewage treatment plant upgrade remains a pressing issue for taxpayers, he said, with details on how much senior governments are willing to fork

over yet to be worked out. In order to complete the project by the deadline of 2020, "We're going to need commitments in the next couple of years," he said, adding he's "cautiously optimistic" about the budget announcements.

Saxton hinted the Harry Jerome upgrade could be another project considered for federal money. "In North Vancouver we still have some recreational facilities that could be upgraded and that are looking pretty old and dated. They could certainly use some of these funds," he said.

TransLink officials also praised the announcement of the renewed infrastructure program, which had been scheduled to expire in the next fiscal year, noting federal money has been key to many of the transportation network's big-ticket investments.

Another key theme of the budget was the need to match future skills training with areas of future employment and current labour shortages.

Currently there is a "mismatch" in training and available jobs, said Saxton. "We have a lot of jobs that go unfilled while we still have a lot of Canadians who are still looking for work."

Among the measures announced Thursday are a new Canada Job Grant, which would provide up to \$15,000 towards skills training with \$5,000 from the federal government being matched by the provinces and employers.

The government also promised to promote education in fields where there is higher demand from employers, including science, technology, engineering and skilled trades. It also promised \$70 million over three years to support 5,000 paid internships for recent post-secondary graduates.

The budget also contained a reference to the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy, vowing to "better ensure" that defence purchases create "economic opportunities for Canadians" by developing "key domestic industrial capabilities."

West Vancouver MP John Weston said he was pleased to see measures supporting small businesses in the budget including the extension of the hiring credit.

The budget projects a deficit of \$18.7 million in 2013.

[jseyd@nsnews.com](mailto:jseyd@nsnews.com)

© Copyright (c) North Shore News