

Province of British Columbia

STRATEGIC PLAN 2008/09 – 2010/11



FEBRUARY 2008

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GREAT GOALS FOR A GOLDEN DECADE

1

Make B.C. the best educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.

2

Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness.

3

Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk and seniors.

4

Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none.

5

Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.

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Vision

*To be a prosperous and just province,
whose citizens achieve their potential
and have confidence in the future.*

GOVERNMENT'S CORE VALUES ARE

- **Integrity:** to make decisions in a manner that is consistent, professional, fair, transparent and balanced;
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** to implement affordable public policies;
- **Accountability:** to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and the credibility of government;
- **Respect:** to treat all citizens equitably, compassionately and respectfully; and
- **Choice:** to afford citizens the opportunity to exercise self-determination.

Letter from the Premier

2008 is an historic year for British Columbians. This year British Columbians will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Crown colony of British Columbia, marked by year-long celebrations across the province.

British Columbia has a lot to be proud of this year. Our economy is the strongest that it has been in the last 31 years and our unemployment rate is the lowest it has been over that same period.

British Columbia is taking a proactive and aggressive approach to climate change by legislating targets for greenhouse gas emissions. We continue making progress on forging a new relationship with First Nations, as evidenced by the passage of the historic Tsawwassen and Maa-nulth First Nations treaty legislation in the legislature.

We are focusing on making changes that will strengthen the health care system under the *Canada Health Act*, based on input received from thousands of people across the province through the Conversation on Health. We are continuing to work on improving our competitiveness and productivity, to take advantage of our strategic position as Canada's Pacific Gateway.

In 2010 we will be hosting the first Olympic Games that have been built based on the principles of sustainable development. The 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games will benefit everyone in British Columbia, fostering the development of sustainable, economic, social, cultural and sport legacies. Millions of people will be travelling to our province or watching the Games from the comfort of their homes, which will provide an unparalleled opportunity to showcase British Columbia to the world.

This strategic plan sets out our vision for British Columbia and identifies the government's priorities over the next year. Further detail on each Ministry's role in these priorities can be found in individual Ministry Service Plans and Annual Service Plan Reports. By working to implement this vision, we will move forward in achieving government's Five Great Goals. Together we can show everyone that we really do live in the best place on earth.



Honourable Gordon Campbell,
Premier

Our Vision for the Future

- *British Columbians unified in the fight against climate change.*
- *Communities that are environmentally sustainable and socially responsible.*



Environmental Sustainability

Living smart starts with the environment. British Columbia is globally renowned for its breath-taking natural landscapes and abundance of resources, but we also face pressures. As with everywhere on earth, we are experiencing the effects of climate change. Climate change is a threat that cannot be ignored; we must act to preserve our environment. There is an opportunity for us to begin a new way of living. With the proper tools, we as British Columbians can make choices about how we all can live in concert with the world around us, reducing our impacts on our environment.

The Province is being proactive and aggressive with its response to climate change. We have enacted legislation that binds us to reaching a 33 per cent reduction in emissions by 2020. It also requires that realistic, economically-viable interim targets for 2012 and 2016 be set by the end of 2008, and further establishes an emission reduction target of 80 per cent below 2007 levels by 2050. A Climate Action Team has been created to offer expert advice on the most credible, aggressive and economically-viable targets possible for 2012 and 2016.

Legislation will be introduced this spring that will allow for the creation of market mechanisms requiring hard caps on greenhouse gas emissions. We will be working with our partners in the Western Climate Initiative to create the framework for the cap and trade system. We have also become part of the

International Carbon Action Partnership that will open the doors to international collaboration and partnership, giving B.C. access to a global trading market.

As stewards of this province, we have a responsibility to manage our natural resources in a way that ensures they both meet our needs today and the needs of future generations. The BC Energy Plan, released in February 2007, sets us on a course to make our province energy self-sufficient by 2016 while taking responsibility for our natural environment and climate. This energy plan will see the province move to eliminating or offsetting greenhouse gas emissions for all new projects in the growing electricity sector.

Under our new energy plan, all new electricity produced must have zero net greenhouse gas emissions, and all existing thermal power generation will be required to have zero net greenhouse gases by 2016. We have set the ambitious target that 50 per cent of BC Hydro's incremental resource needs will be achieved through conservation by 2020. In order for these targets to be met we need some new and innovative ideas; that is why we are investing \$25 million into the Innovative Clean Energy Fund. This fund will encourage the development of clean energy and energy-efficient technologies. Making environmentally-friendly choices, new ideas and leadership are key in the fight against climate change. The Province will seek

legislative approval for \$94.5 million to create the Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions which will bring together top scientists, researchers, governments and the private sector to develop innovative climate change adaptation and mitigation solutions.

Climate change is a reality today, and we must learn to adapt to our changing environment. Over ten years, the Province will invest \$100 million in new flood protection across British Columbia. Our changing climate has implications to how we sustain our natural resources as we have learned from the mountain pine beetle epidemic, which has infrequent cold winter weather as one root cause. Improving our understanding of the nature of climate change, and using that knowledge to inform our sustainability policies and practices, is essential.

Sustainable Buildings and Transportation Infrastructure

In British Columbia, 38 per cent of our emissions are from transportation. To reach our goals we must reduce these emissions. To address this, we will be introducing legislation this spring requiring the adoption of California tailpipe emission standards to be phased in between 2009 and 2016. British Columbia will also adopt California's low-carbon fuel content standards. This is a beginning, but we can do more.

We want to lead the world in accessible green public transportation. The new \$14 billion Transit Plan will double transit ridership by 2010, through increased choice for people around the province, with new fleets, green technology and new innovative services like RapidBus BC.

Changes to the building code are being made to make buildings built in B.C. more environmentally sustainable. Our new Green Building Code will implement the highest energy efficiency standards in the country. New buildings in B.C. will cost less to heat while substantially reducing their impact on the environment and the climate. People will be able to make green choices when building their homes, mitigating some of the future impacts on our environment.

The Province is committed to having all new government buildings being built to a minimum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) gold standard or equivalent. Also, we are requiring that all ministries and Crown agencies be carbon neutral by 2010.

Smart Communities

British Columbia communities want to ensure that the future remains bright for the coming generations. They have demonstrated their commitment to climate action through participation in the Green Cities Project. In 2007,



seven communities were the first recipients of the Green Cities awards for their outstanding commitment, leadership and action in a range of environmental sustainability issues. The \$2.5 million awards program commits \$500,000 a year, for five years, for leading green communities.

Further cementing their commitment to climate action, over eighty communities to date have signed the Climate Action Charter. In addition to a goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2012, local governments pledged to measure and report on their community's greenhouse gas emissions profile and work to create compact, more energy efficient communities.

People want to make smart choices that reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, and that

conserve water and energy. This spring, greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies and targets will become a legal requirement of all official community plans and regional growth strategies. Having the ability to live in affordable housing close to where you work, shop and have fun with your friends and family is the true meaning of community. We all want to spend more time with those close to us and less time commuting to and from work. Reducing urban sprawl benefits our climate and at the same time lets people enjoy life more.

The future is bright in British Columbia, we all need to work together in making environmentally sustainable choices, to become the greenest jurisdiction in the world — we owe it to ourselves, and to our families.



Our Vision for the Future

- *British Columbians celebrating diversity with an appreciation of what we have in common.*
- *First Nations people and their communities continue to benefit from a new relationship with the province, founded on respect, recognition and reconciliation.*



First Nations

New Relationship and Transformative Change Accord

In this year of celebrating the history of our Province, we must remain conscious of the consequences of our past relationship with Aboriginal people. This relationship has been characterized by conflict, litigation and a failure to reconcile our differences. More recently though, the Province has embarked on a new relationship with First Nations based on mutual respect, recognition, and reconciliation. The Transformative Change Accord, signed by First Nations, the Province, and Canada in 2005, is focusing efforts on closing the socio-economic gaps in health, education, housing, and economic opportunities. Improving our relationship and working together to improve the socio-economic conditions benefits us all.

As a result of province-wide needs and capacity assessment for Aboriginal housing, strategies are being developed to address the housing needs in partnership with First Nations, Métis Nations and the federal government. In 2007, over \$50 million was granted to support the allocation of 292 units at 13 housing developments in 10 communities across the Province under the Aboriginal Housing Initiative.

In November, 2007, the Province introduced historic legislation that recognizes participating First Nations' jurisdiction over education on First Nations land in British Columbia and supports First Nations student achievement

and lifelong learning. The legislation implements the Education Jurisdiction Framework Agreement, signed in July, 2006, by the Province of B.C., the First Nations Education Steering Committee and Canada. The agreement, and subsequent federal enabling legislation, recognizes First Nations' power to make laws over education on their own lands. B.C.'s legislation formally recognizes that right and enables boards of education and independent schools to enter into education agreements with participating First Nations. There are now 36 Aboriginal enhancement agreements between Aboriginal communities and school districts aimed at improving the educational experience and success of Aboriginal students in British Columbia.

Education is one of the most effective tools a society has to assist the disadvantaged, and in addition it fosters economic growth.

Dr. Sharpe
Centre for the Study of Living Standards, Canada

In 2007, \$65 million was committed to implementing the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy. The Aboriginal Youth Internship Program was launched in May, 2007, within the public service to encourage

The introduction of Tsawwassen First Nation's treaty settlement legislation in the provincial legislature is a welcome and historic event and a significant milestone along the path of treaty-making in British Columbia. They have shown a treaty is achievable.

Jack Weisgerber
Acting Chief Commissioner
of the BC Treaty Commission

the introduction of young Aboriginal professionals to the British Columbia public service. Since then, 15 Aboriginal youth have been hired and placed in nine different government ministries for work experience.

Recognizing the importance of preserving Aboriginal languages, over \$3 million was directed towards language preservation and the FirstVoices project, with a focus on providing young children opportunities to learn their Nation's language.

In the summer of 2007, British Columbia signed Canada's first-ever Tripartite First Nations Health Plan with the goal of improving the health and well-being of First Nations in British Columbia, closing the gaps in health between First Nations people and other British Columbians, and ensuring First Nations are fully involved in decision-making regarding

the health of their peoples. The challenging work of implementing this plan is now before us and we are fully committed.

We will continue working with First Nations to develop a comprehensive strategy for Aboriginal children's services in British Columbia. Children's needs should be the priority, that is why the Province has embraced Jordan's Principle. We will work with the federal government to ensure that the needs of Aboriginal children are put first. The Province is making changes to better serve the children, youth and families of British Columbia.

Economic and community development are important contributors to social development. Through the First Nations Forest Strategy, so far this fiscal year, over \$7.6 million annually and a total of 3.45 million cubic metres of wood have been committed to, in 27 agreements with First Nations. Additionally, in 2007, a First Citizens' Forum was held on

The Tsawwassen treaty means many things to many people. In my view, one of the important things this treaty achieves is a new relationship between Tsawwassen, British Columbia and Canada. It achieves reconciliation.

Kim Baird
Chief, Tsawwassen First Nation

Aboriginal Cultural Tourism in Kamloops. The Province has committed \$5 million over the next four years to help build a culturally rich and sustainable Aboriginal tourism industry throughout British Columbia.

A new relationship with First Nations also requires more effort to reconcile our differences. In 2007, the Province and the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations negotiated the settlement of the 150 year land claim on lands that included the grounds of the B.C. legislature. As well, the Province finalized the removal from view of the four murals in the B.C. legislature.

Treaty Negotiations

The Province remains committed to concluding treaties as a full and formal expression of reconciliation. This year, the British Columbia treaty process reached an historic milestone with the conclusion of treaty negotiations and the introduction of modern treaty legislation with the Tsawwassen First Nation, near Vancouver, and the Maa-nulth First Nations, representing five First Nations on Vancouver Island.

Government is continuing to work with other First Nations communities and the federal government to conclude more treaties in 2008, and prepare for the implementation of those treaties that have been finalized. British Columbia is committed to fast-tracking treaty negotiations and participating at a common

table on treaty policy issues, as recommended by First Nations. This commitment will result in benefits flowing to First Nations earlier in the process.

Relationship with Canada

We are committed to growing a new relationship with Aboriginal people in British Columbia and to this end, we support the federal government's acceleration of the settling of specific claims. We will continue to press for the need to have the federal government at the table on social and economic development initiatives as well. The federal government is participating with British Columbia on our First Nations Health Plan and we will continue to explore the ways in which this could become the model that helps close the gap in all areas.

The Maa-nulth treaty is an expression of our vision of the future. It is a vision that permits us to see a future filled with opportunities. It is a vision that removes the crippling institutions of our colonial era... It is a vision that permits us to move forward and leave the pain of the past behind.

Charlie Cootes
Uchucklesaht Tribe Chief Councillor

Our Vision for the Future

- *British Columbians leading healthy, active lifestyles.*
- *A first-rate public health care system.*
- *British Columbians have access to services that provide them with housing options.*



Healthy Living and Sustainable Health Care

A first-rate publicly-funded health care system helps to define us as Canadians.

Furthermore, good health is a fundamental building block to leading a happy and productive life. It is important to all of us that we have a sustainable, accessible, publicly-funded health care system. As a society we need to be sure that everyone has access to health care, and that we have a comprehensive system in place to help those who may need greater assistance, such as seniors, children and persons with disabilities.

Our current system faces challenges that we must meet in order to keep health care sustainable within the framework of the *Canada Health Act*. Increased costs for new technologies and medications, increasing use of medical services and our aging population have helped to contribute to our health care budget growing by several billion dollars over the last seven years. Currently, nearly 45 per cent of total government ministry spending is on health care and that number has the potential to substantially increase over the next 10 years due to the increased cost pressures. This government believes that strengthening our health care system is possible, and that the key component to strengthening the system is to ensure the public has input into the decisions concerning health care and health care services, and can make healthy choices that can prevent long term health issues.

The Conversation on Health

The Conversation on Health was a year long discussion that gave the citizens of British Columbia the opportunity to have their voices heard and to engage in meaningful debate about how our health care system can be strengthened under the *Canada Health Act*. Over 10,000 people from all walks of life gave their ideas and suggestions. The results of the conversation showed that British Columbians want a sustainable public health care system that focuses on preventative health, and ensures access to high-quality health care and health care providers. People want a health care system that is proactive not reactive. They want improved access, choice, quality and accountability in public health delivery.

As referenced extensively in the Throne Speech, a number of initiatives will be implemented to improve choice, quality and accessibility in health care to ensure the health care system will be there for our children and future generations.

Healthy People, Healthy Communities

Part of being proactive about our health is getting out and being active, allowing us to enjoy the beautiful scenery that British Columbia has to offer. The LocalMotion program, providing \$40 million over four years, was created to help communities build

Did you know?

- British Columbians enjoy the longest life expectancy in all of Canada.*
- Less people in B.C. are overweight than in any other province.*
- British Columbians have the lowest rate of tobacco usage in all of Canada.*



greener more active environments, giving them the ability to make healthier choices. These projects include walkways, bike paths and greenways and promote senior-friendly and disability-friendly communities. To date \$18.9 million has been provided to 27 communities across B.C. under this program.

Obesity is a serious problem in North America, and part of combating that problem is making healthy lifestyle choices such as eating healthy foods and maintaining regular physical activity. To encourage healthy eating the government will act to ban the use of trans fats in the preparation of foods in schools, restaurants and food-service establishments by 2010.

British Columbians in general are among the healthiest people in the world but we need to be proactive in order to counter this increasing health risk. ActNow BC launched a province-wide nutrition program that encourages British Columbians to make healthy eating choices.

Children need to learn about healthy living from an early age, which is why we are requiring 30 minutes of daily physical activity for all students, and having junk food removed from schools. We want to create a new culture of health for our children. By removing junk food and mandating physical activity for all K-12 students, British Columbia will have the highest school health standards in Canada. To help teach children about healthy eating and

experience B.C. grown produce, the School Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program has been expanded to include 364 schools. The “Walking School Bus” and “Bicycle Train” programs will be developed to give young students the opportunity to enjoy the fresh air while getting physically fit.

Chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, now affect approximately one in three British Columbians. Government has implemented a number of initiatives such as the Primary Health Charter that will help patients with a planned approach to health care.

British Columbians want better access to health care. An essential component in delivering health care services is having enough qualified professionals to deliver them. The province’s medical school has doubled the number of undergraduate first-year medical student spaces at UBC from 128 in 2003, to 256 as of September, 2007. The Ministry of Health has also worked with the Ministry of Advanced Education to expand nursing seats, with more than 3,347 new nursing seats since 2001 — an increase of 82 per cent. While training new professionals will help us in the longer-term we also need an infusion of talented people in the present; that is why we are speeding up the recruitment process for foreign-trained nurses to work in B.C.

The \$100 million Health Innovation Fund was created to encourage innovative ideas

on how to improve patient access and care across British Columbia. Money from the fund has been allocated to the six health authorities for 29 major projects and several smaller projects that focus on innovations such as reducing emergency room waiting times. Investments and innovative ideas and solutions will help lead British Columbia to a sustainable health system.

We have an aging population in British Columbia. Within the next ten years there will be more seniors than school age children, and almost one-in-four British Columbians will be over 65 in twenty-five years.

Shirley Bond
Minister of Education

In July 2007, we announced \$6.3 million for a new health care centre in Lytton to improve acute care and community health services in the region. The Lytton health care centre is being designed to meet the health care needs of seniors, local Aboriginal communities and Lytton residents in one facility. It is one innovative example of how we can meet our commitments on health care, our new relationship with Aboriginal people, and seniors.

Cancer has touched the lives of many people in our province. Working towards a cure is what everyone wants. The Terry Fox Research Institute, a national organization, will locate its headquarters in Vancouver and focus on translational research, producing practical solutions for cancer patients within three to five years.

Positive Aging

Seniors built this province, and are an integral part of the social and economic life of our communities. With a rapidly aging population, we are working to support our older citizens to remain healthy, independent and engaged.

The *Aging Well in British Columbia* report from the Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues provides a useful framework to support seniors in this province, now and in the future. We have already made great strides in many areas, as outlined in the *Report on Progress* issued in July 2007, such as extending the eligibility for Home Owner Grants to low-income



seniors and lowering the eligibility age for the Property Tax Deferment program.

Through a focus on age-friendly communities, the Province is working to create environments that promote the health and wellness, independence and participation of older people. We are also creating practical tools to help seniors remain healthy, such as the Healthy Eating for Seniors Guide, which recognizes the importance of nutrition to our health and well-being.

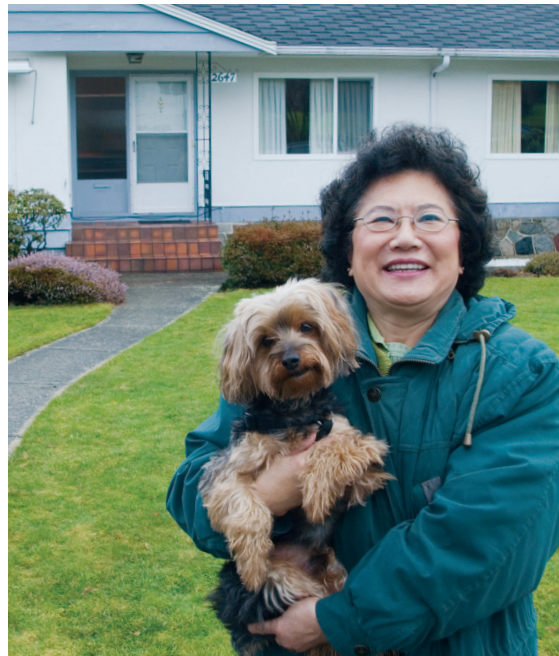
Action in these areas will support our older citizens to age in place, and also help to ease some of the pressure on our health care system. It is imperative that the province continues to plan for an aging population, and we remain committed to building the best system of support for seniors in Canada.

Supports for Those Most Vulnerable

Breaking the cycle of homelessness is vital for the well-being of our society. British Columbia's Housing Matters strategy looks to do just that — break-the-cycle through increased funding for emergency shelters, expanding homeless outreach services, providing rental supplement units and by the development of new supportive housing. Since 2001, the budget for this strategy has more than tripled to \$404 million, with nearly 90 thousand households being supported.

Through the provincial homeless initiative over 4,000 housing units have been committed to across the province and 18 single room occupancy hotels were acquired in Vancouver, Victoria and New Westminster. Emergency shelters will now be open 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week to provide better services and assistance for those who are homeless. In addition, outreach services have been expanded to connect homeless people to housing and support services.

Many people suffering with mental health disabilities face severe challenges. This government is committed to new mental health care options and facilities to ensure that they get the care they need until they are well.



Our Vision for the Future

- *British Columbia as a premiere destination and capital for Asia-Pacific commerce and culture.*
- *British Columbia businesses and our local economies prosper through improved trade and investment.*



Canada's Pacific Gateway

The province is on the way to realizing the goal of being recognized internationally as North America's capital for Asia-Pacific commerce and culture. In 2007, the Government released the Asia-Pacific Initiative, laying the groundwork for establishing British Columbia's role as Canada's Pacific Gateway. The plan identifies actions British Columbia must take in five key areas: British Columbia's Asia-Pacific identity, Asia-Pacific trade and investment relations, world class gateway infrastructure, a workforce with Pacific Century skills, and finally, British Columbia as an Asia-Pacific services destination.

Asia-Pacific Identity

To establish strong economic linkages with Asia, we must build a sustained presence in Asia and ensure Asian business leaders are aware of the many advantages British Columbia has to offer. It is important that we continue to build and sustain strong personal relationships between British Columbia and our Asian partners. An increasing number of successful missions to the Asia-Pacific have been led by the province, and in 2007, the province established full-time representatives in China and Japan, who will work to advance our province's interests and business development opportunities.

The launch of the BC Alumni Ambassador Network by the Premier in Hong Kong, in

November 2007, the development of an Asia-Pacific Business Leaders Network in 2008, the BC Canada Pavilion in Beijing, showcasing the province's industry, culture and innovation at the 2008 Olympic Summer Games, and the new B.C.-Asia twinning relationships involving local governments throughout the province are all evidence of B.C.'s blossoming Asia-Pacific identity.

Trade and Investment Relations

We want to see British Columbia businesses and our local economies prosper through improved trade and investment relations. This will be accomplished partly by continuing to leverage the momentum gained by projects already underway.

British Columbia and the Korea International Trade Association have now signed a Memorandum of Agreement to promote economic co-operation regarding trade and investment. Extensive business networks are being developed in the province's traditional resource sectors and demonstrate our value as a preferred business partner in Asia. The Province will work to expand the existing network of British Columbia trade and investment representatives in the Asia-Pacific region and will provide valuable local market knowledge to British Columbia companies in identifying new trade and investment opportunities.

Closer economic and social connections with the Asia-Pacific have helped shape our history and will only become stronger in the future.

Premier Gordon Campbell



World Class Gateway Infrastructure

It is no secret that in order to meet the ambitious targets we have set for our province, significant road, rail, port and airport infrastructure development projects and supply chain initiatives must be undertaken. In 2007, the province celebrated several impressive milestones, demonstrating that we are committed to building a reliable supply chain infrastructure to meet the demand for British Columbia's products and services in Asia and facilitating trade between Asian factories and the lucrative North American market.

Rural Communities

Infrastructure investments across the province are essential to create Canada's Pacific Gateway. That is why 66 per cent of the B.C.'s Transportation Plan is dedicated to rural communities.

CN Railway has ordered 65 new locomotives and announced the opening of a \$20 million intermodal distribution centre in Prince George. The Kicking Horse Canyon \$300 million Park Bridge along the Trans-Canada has been opened. Also, we celebrate the grand opening of the new \$170 million Fairview Container Terminal in Prince Rupert as a major milestone to position British Columbia's northern gateway as the fastest route for

Asian manufacturers to access the lucrative U.S. mid-west market.

Annual road improvements in the Peace Country are ensuring increased oil and gas revenues, and improving safety for communities. In the Okanagan, the new five-lane William R. Bennett Bridge will open in 2008, eliminating the largest traffic bottleneck in B.C.'s Interior. We are upgrading roads in the Cariboo and the North as we deal with the mountain pine beetle infestation. And our investments in B.C.'s regional airports are producing new economic benefits, enhancing both travel and tourism.

Port infrastructure investments also remain a priority. Phase 2 expansion of the new Prince Rupert container terminal has already begun and expansion plans for Deltaport's third berth continue.

The Urban Picture

Infrastructure funding is also critical in the lower mainland. \$375 million has been invested in terminal upgrades in Vancouver and an additional \$300 million has been committed through an agreement among all levels of government, rail and port companies for projects along the Roberts Bank Rail corridor. The Vancouver International Airport officially opened the completed \$200 million International Terminal expansion. The Federal government is working to

amalgamate lower mainland port authorities to form a single Canada Port Authority. Across the province, investments in our gateway infrastructure are benefiting communities. A number of key projects currently underway include, road infrastructure investments on the South Fraser Perimeter Road connecting Deltaport and Tsawwassen ferry terminal to Highway 1; the new Golden Ears Bridge and the twinning of the Port Mann Bridge; and highway improvement projects which support the Northern Corridor.

Pacific Century Skills

By 2020, British Columbians can expect 255,000 new jobs and \$76 billion in annual trade gain. The demand for skilled workers is already increasing and we need to work hard now to ensure that B.C. has the workforce capacity to accommodate robust economic growth.

The Province has started working to address skills shortages. 7,000 new apprenticeship seats are being made available through the Industry Training Authority in British Columbia. We will support regulatory bodies working hard to improve foreign credential recognition and licensing so that people who are trained to do the work will be able to do so in British Columbia.

Promoting British Columbia as a place to live and work is also important and the Work BC

website is one way that we are helping to insure that the British Columbia advantage is well known throughout the world.

The arrival of new people to British Columbia increases and strengthens our provincial labour force. The Province is working with political leadership in the Asia-Pacific region to facilitate the process for recruitment and selection of foreign workers entering the province. We are working to accelerate immigration for qualified, skilled workers and experienced entrepreneurs under the expanded Provincial Nominee Program.

There are a growing number of initiatives aimed at increasing skills, cultural and business linkages with Asia-Pacific. Negotiations for a Labour Market Development Agreement and plans for an international job fair and marketing campaign are only a few examples.

Asia-Pacific Destination

We need not look far to identify projects underway that build on British Columbia's reputation as a world renowned tourism, education and services sector destination for Asia.

The Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre expansion will more than triple the available space and serve as the international broadcast centre for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. The Centre contributes to the larger vision of establishing British Columbia as a destination of choice

for premier international conferences, meetings and collaborations—bringing experts, researchers and leaders together in our province.

We are working hard to build on the reputation of British Columbia's quality education system. International agreements have been reached between British Columbia and Zhejiang and Hubei provinces in China for educational cooperation.

This year, Simon Fraser University obtained provincial and private sector contributions in

the amount of \$3 million to endow a Chair in Asia Economics at the University. The first of its kind in Canada, the Chair will attract the best scholars to British Columbia on a rotational basis to work on current issues that affect British Columbia–Asia relations and economics. Economic relations between British Columbia and India will further be strengthened with a \$1.25 million investment for a new Regional Research Chair at the University College of the Fraser Valley.

KEY MARKETS IN ASIA-PACIFIC

China

The fastest growing economy in the world, China is at the centre of evolving global supply chains that are reshaping the world's economy. China's rapid growth holds enormous promise for our province's primary resources and services sector.

Japan

British Columbia's second largest export market and longest-standing trade partner in Asia. Japan's investment in advanced technology, and research and development offers opportunities for our province as a partner in global innovation.

India

The world's most populous democracy, India's young, well-educated professionals are positioning the country as a world leader in the knowledge economy. Building on its vibrant Indo-Canadian community, British Columbia is poised to expand ties to India in life sciences, ICT and education sectors.

Southeast Asia

With a regional economy half the size of China, Southeast Asia's six major economies (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) offer a wide range of opportunities for our province's companies, from resource development and environmental services.



Our Vision for the Future

- *British Columbians are among the most competitive on the world market.*
- *British Columbians have unlimited opportunities to grow skills, training and knowledge.*
- *British Columbians excelling in a knowledge-based economy.*



Competitiveness and Productivity

British Columbia is a job-creating machine. In 2007 the unemployment rate was the lowest that it has been in three decades and the number of new jobs is on the rise. Indeed, since December 2001, the economy has created 111,200 new jobs, one of the fastest growth rates among Canadian provinces. Our economy grew by 3.1 per cent in 2007 and is forecast to grow by 2.8 per cent in 2008.

British Columbia's new major projects inventory reached a new high in 2007 with 804 major capital projects, worth an estimated \$124.2 billion between January and March 2007 alone. Experts expect the construction sector will continue to be a "pillar of growth" over the next two to five years, and the mining industry will benefit from record exploration activity.

The growth that the province is experiencing is not without its challenges, however. There are job openings to fill and a widely recognized shortage of highly-skilled people that businesses will continue to need in order to grow and expand. Add to this the pressing need to adapt to an increasingly knowledge-based economy, and the need for focused planning and leadership becomes obvious.

British Columbia's Strategy to Deal with the Challenges

To continue to be competitive in the world, the Province will need to provide British

Columbians with the opportunity to excel in terms of skills, training and knowledge. British Columbia's strategy to deal with the challenges necessarily focuses on labour, literacy, post-secondary, the public education system, skills training, immigration, sector development and new technologies and innovation.

Successful labour agreements in the province have helped ensure positive labour relations. In 2007, public sector workers worked with governments to find solutions that were constructive, flexible and innovative. The province will continue to be attentive to labour needs and respond to emerging issues.

Improving the literacy levels in British Columbia remains a priority and is critical to the province's continued competitiveness in a knowledge-based economy. In recognition of this, since 2001 ReadNow BC, the Province's literacy strategy, has contributed more than \$125 million in new literacy programs and services.

The Province recognizes the value of early learning as a strong foundation for children to ensure they can be successful, both in school and in life. This government has responded by initiating early learning initiatives, including the establishment of 84 StrongStart BC centres, as part of ReadNow BC, the new provincial literacy plan. Another 316 centres will be added in the next two years, for a total of 400 StrongStart centres

*Increasing the size of B.C.'s workforce
and enhancing productivity are vital
to keep our province thriving.*

Colin Hansen, Minister of Economic Development



that will open across B.C. by 2010. These centres work with parents, pre-school children and caregivers and are designed to help our children and families build a strong foundation for learning. The StrongStart Centres build on our investment of nearly \$1 billion since 2001/2002 on literacy initiatives, such as *Ready, Set, Learn*, a school readiness initiative that helps families get their children ready for school. Finally, the Ministry of Education is developing an Early Learning Framework for children, from birth to five years old, which will set out a vision, principles and key areas of learning for young children in British Columbia.

A modern responsive public education system is critical to both the success of our children and the competitiveness and productivity of British Columbia. We are taking steps to boost student achievement by improving quality, choice and accountability in British Columbia's education system. New "superintendents of achievement" were created to help school boards establish achievement goals based on the provincial performance measures.

A robust system of higher education is critical to the province's economic success and to the well-being of its people. A belief in the fundamental importance of education is at the heart of the Government's goal to make B.C. the best educated, most literate jurisdiction in North America by 2015. We are not called to mediocrity. We are called to be the best. Campus 2020 starts from, and builds on that goal.

Between 2004 and 2010, we are adding 25,000 new student spaces at colleges, university-colleges, universities and institutes across the province.* Our goal is to ensure that students will be able to take their post-secondary education closer to home, and to build their futures in British Columbia.

The increased student spaces will mean new student opportunities, particularly in priority skills areas like technology, health care, business, arts and the forestry, oil and gas, mining and tourism industries. The new seats are also a way to expand the supply of skilled workers in priority areas like technology, health care, and college trades.

Immigration is key to addressing skills shortages in British Columbia and we value the contributions of immigrants to the province.

Changes in the Provincial Nominee Program in 2007 will make it easier for business immigrants to start up new business ventures, giving British Columbia an edge in the global competition for entrepreneurial talent and investment. Since the Provincial Nominee Program was introduced in 2001, over 3,300 skilled and business immigrants plus their dependents have made British Columbia their home. Since introducing the business category in 2002, the program has approved over 330 nominee candidates who have committed to invest over \$450 million and create almost 1,700 new jobs.

In 2007, funding was announced for 17 B.C. regulatory bodies in order to improve their organization's foreign credential assessment

* By 2010 the Province will have funded more than 30,000 additional seats in the public post-secondary system. Our goal of reducing the GPA entrance requirement to B for university undergraduate programs has been met. We're now refocusing our efforts to address areas facing critical shortages, such as healthcare and skilled trades.

and licensing practices. Supporting these regulatory bodies will protect the public, but will also mean that qualified immigrant workers will be able to do the work for which they have been trained.

By making changes to the Provincial Nominee Program, we expect to attract more entrepreneurs and investment into the kinds of innovative and higher value-added sectors that contribute most to sustainable economic development and stronger regional economies.

Minister Colin Hansen

We continue to look for new and innovative ways to support newcomers to the province and have successfully negotiated a \$104.3 million increase in immigrant settlement funding to British Columbia. We will continue to work to ensure new immigrants are supported in their adaptation and integration, including accessible English language classes for adult immigrant students intending to enter the labour market.

While the British Columbia economy continues to perform well, we are reminded of the fragility of the world in which we live and of the strength that can come from working

together. There is no better example than the mountain pine beetle crisis.

The mountain pine beetle outbreak continues to challenge our Province's policy and decision-makers. An important aspect of British Columbia's response to the epidemic has been to ensure the affected regions have strong and diverse economies so that they are able to weather a decline in timber harvesting and manufacturing in the mid-term (15-30 years).

Forestry is important to the history and the future of our province. We will continue to work with industry, communities, labour and other stakeholders to develop strategies that will ensure our forest industry thrives in the decades to come, creating jobs and driving the economies in communities across the province. This year we have committed to appointing a Working Roundtable on Forestry. We will also conduct a review of government's forest regulations and we will provide new financial supports for forestry workers.

The positive business climate in the province, combined with substantial new investments to collect and make available geophysical information, has enabled mineral exploration to increase rapidly.

Mineral exploration activity in the province surpassed the 2006 record and climbed to an all-time high of nearly \$416 million in 2007. This year mineral exploration is up over 1,300

per cent from 2001. With 472 exploration stage projects across the province, British Columbia is steadily gaining a greater share of Canada's exploration activity, providing a tremendous boost to local economies. With four new mines opened in 2007 and eight in the last three years, exploration activities are creating jobs and attracting further investment from the international mining community.

We recognize the importance of investing and exploring new technologies and innovation. Through the British Columbia Innovation Council, we provided \$1.7 million to the B.C. Regional Science and Technology Network to support member councils that help build the technology sector outside the lower mainland. The province also provided an additional \$5 million in 2007 to support the commercialization of promising

communication and wireless technologies. Significant progress has also been made on research and pilot projects to find new and innovative ways to stay competitive in the forest industries using salvaged pine.

British Columbia's competitiveness and standard of living depend on productivity growth and our competitiveness internationally—they are key to a thriving economy and the provincial economy is becoming more diverse and more knowledge-based, which means greater reliance on research and innovation for growth. Recognizing that industries like clean technology, life sciences, and engineering, are critical to the growth, competitiveness and continued diversification of the British Columbia economy, we will continue to explore ways to invest in new technologies and innovation.

Early Learning Initiatives: The building blocks for children's future

- **StrongStart Centres** – Help children grow linguistically, physically and socially, and become comfortable in a school-like setting.
- **Ready, Set, Learn** – Provides resources to families and their three-year-olds to help children's readiness for school.
- **ActNow Literacy Education Activity and Play (LEAP BC)** – Encourages literacy, physical activity and healthy eating in preschool-aged children.
- **Success By 6** – A unique partnership with the United Way, credit unions and Government that provides children with the support they need to be physically, socially and emotionally ready to start school.

When we work together, we achieve positive results for communities, for our province, and for our country.



Conclusion

In this year of celebration, we will be looking back into our history. Over the last 150 years, the world has changed a great deal. We have accomplished a great many things as a Province and should be proud of those accomplishments.

But the world is continuing to change, and we will need to respond to those changes. Climate change will require bold and innovative responses. We must continue working with Aboriginal people on a new relationship. We will need to work hard to improve our health care system and ensure our aging population can remain healthy and independent. And we need to be ready for changes in our global economy through creative new initiatives, focusing on education, skills training and immigration.

In just two short years we will play host to the world with the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. This is an exciting opportunity for British Columbians to show the global community what we have to offer. It is an opportunity to come together as a province to showcase the natural beauty of our landscape, our cultural diversity and our history.

As we look forward to the next 150 years, we should be excited about our future. Together, we can achieve anything in this province, and the priorities outlined in this plan will move us in the right direction, towards achieving our Five Great Goals and ensuring that British Columbia remains the Best Place On Earth.



Performance measures for great goals

GOAL 1 – Make B.C. the best educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent	Baseline	Current Status	2015/2016 Target
SCHOOL READINESS • % Kindergarten students entering school “ready to learn”	72.1% (2004/05) Restated	70.4%	85%
STUDENT LITERACY • Program for International Student Assessment Ranking	2 ND in Canada 3rd Internationally	3 RD in Canada 6th Internationally	1 ST in Canada Improve Internationally
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION	79% (2004/05)	80% (2006/07)	85%
POST-SECONDARY COMPLETION	56% (2004) Canadian Average 57%	58.5% (2007) Canadian Average 60.3%	Exceed Canadian Average

GOAL 2 - Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness	Baseline	Current Status	2015/2016 Target
LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH	81 yrs (2004)	81.4 yrs (2006) Highest in Canada	>81 yrs
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIANS • More than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per day	58.1% (2003)	57.7% (2005) 1st in Canada	73%
BRITISH COLUMBIANS WHO ARE OVERWEIGHT	42.3% Lowest % in Canada (2003)	45.2% (2005) Lowest % in Canada	32%
TOBACCO USE	15% Lowest % in Canada (2003)	16% (2006) Lowest % in Canada	13%

GOAL 3 - Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk and seniors	Baseline	Current Status	2015/2016 Target
DISABLED BRITISH COLUMBIANS WHO ARE WORKING • Of those who wish to work	44% (2001) Canadian 41.5%	To be updated in the Summer of 2008	56%
DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN IN AN AGE APPROPRIATE GRADE	86% (2005)	87% (2006)	95%
BRITISH COLUMBIA SENIORS LIVING IN INSTITUTIONS • Seniors 75 or older in health care or related facilities	10.3% (2001) 2 ND lowest in Canada	To be updated in the Spring of 2008	Maintain Canadian 2nd place rank.
GOAL 4 - Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none	Baseline	Current Status	2015/2016 Target
AVERAGE FINE PARTICULATE CONCENTRATION IN MAJOR METROPOLITAN AREAS	Vancouver is 2 ND lowest in Canada (2004)	Vancouver is 2 ND lowest in Canada (2006)	Lowest in Canada
* PROVINCE WIDE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS	Data will be available for use in 2009.		33% below 2007 levels by 2020 2012 and 2016 targets TBD
WATER QUALITY • % Of 30 B.C. water bodies with stable or improving trends	96% (2004/05)	96% (2006/07)	>96%
GOAL 5 - Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada	Baseline	Current Status	2015/2016 Target
NUMBER OF NEW JOBS PER CAPITA	1 ST (2005)	2 ND (2007)	1 ST

* 2012 and 2016 interim targets are currently under development by the Climate Action Team, who will be making their recommendations in July, 2008.



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