

Moving forward on the iconic Grouse Grind

The pandemic has really reminded us all how important nature is to our physical and mental well-being. In that regard, I was very happy to announce recently that the Government of Canada is investing more than \$1.3 million in improvements to the trails and facilities associated with the world-famous Grouse Grind.

Through joint federal, provincial, and municipal funding, we are supporting the Grouse Mountain Regional Park trail improvements project, managed by Metro Vancouver, which will improve the overall access, experience and safety for all park users.

The existing plaza area on the main trailhead will be expanded so that families and hikers of varied experience can enjoy the Grouse Grind and other nearby trails. This expanded trailhead will accommodate public gatherings, programs and events that everyone will welcome again, post-COVID-19.

Three new secondary trailheads, additional signage, kiosks and viewpoints will help ensure a safe and pleasant experience for park users. Approximately 2,900 m of what's known as the BCMC Trail, just to the east of the Grind, will be reconstructed and realigned to improve access and safety.



Additionally, COVID-19 has heightened the necessity for investment in pandemic-resilient infrastructure projects, like retrofitting schools or upgrading hospitals and long-term care homes, to facilitate compliance with social distancing requirements. Our Government is working closely with provinces, municipalities, partners, and stakeholders to get projects built quickly that make a positive difference in the lives of Canadians in these trying times.

Here in British Columbia, we have invested over \$4.2 billion through our infrastructure plan towards 525 projects across the province – projects that are strengthening communities like ours, where we live, work, and raise our families.

Like the Grind, there is no way to go but forward. Through our historic Investing in Canada plan, we are delivering on our promise to build sustainable, resilient communities that are working to manage the COVID-19 pandemic – and they're also rising to meet the challenge of climate change. Keeping Canadians safe means recognizing the fundamental link between our well-being and a healthy environment.

In The Community



Enjoying the art from a distance on the North Van Pride Art Walk.

Visiting local businesses as they adjust to COVID-19 and re-open.



"Mr. Bannock" continues to serve delicious Indigenous cuisine.

Our constituency office is open by pre-arranged appointment. Please call to book a time should you wish to visit. All services are available by phone, email and virtual platforms.



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FALL 2020



North Vancouver Constituent Update



“Building back better” after Covid-19

Perhaps because I am a father, there is nothing more important to me than the work I do to assure we leave the world a better place for our kids.

Earlier in the summer, I was pleased to participate in a virtual townhall, organized by a group of equally committed North Vancouver parents and youth concerned about the impact of climate change.

Marian Hakze is one of those parents. Some months ago, Marian joined *For Our Kids* – a growing, grassroots network of parents from across the country committed to working collectively to advocate for action on climate change.

“As a parent, I could no longer ignore the terrifying scenarios – extreme weather, severe and frequent fires, food and global insecurity – predicted in the near and long term. I knew I could not say to my children that I didn’t know, didn’t care or didn’t do anything to stop climate change.”

– Marian Hakze

The focus of the townhall was “A Green and Just Recovery” – how we look to build back from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the past number of months, the focus of federal and provincial governments has rightly been on mitigating the health and economic impacts of COVID-19. However, we are now in a phase of gradual and cautious re-opening, contemplating what recovery can and should look like. It’s an opportunity to take a step back and consider the type of society we ideally want to work to create.

ACCELERATED ACTION

Certainly, there are numerous issues that COVID-19 has highlighted – such as medical supply chains and the state of care homes – that will need to be addressed going forward.

However, it is crystal clear that any recovery must address the twin crises looming like slow-moving locomotives coming down the track – climate change and the global decline in biodiversity. These threats will have devastating impacts if not addressed aggressively and soon. The choices we make as we consider how best to recover and “build back better” must account for continued and accelerated action on climate and biodiversity issues.

These critical issues have been priorities for this government since it was elected in 2015. However, I think most everyone recognizes that more action is urgently required – a fact this government recognized in our commitment to exceed Canada’s current Paris target and to achieve a net zero carbon emissions status by 2050.

Short-term measures that will enable Canada to begin the task of building back better are certainly vital, but I would caution against placing our focus only on short-term actions. Short, medium and long-term actions and initiatives in tandem are required in Canada and around the world to achieve the net-zero future that scientists tell us we must.

CON’T





Some crucial initiatives are already underway – including phasing out coal-fired electricity generation by 2030, investing in zero-emission vehicle infrastructure and purchase incentives to make it easier for Canadians to reduce their transportation emissions, and developing net-zero energy building codes to ensure new homes are ready for a low-carbon future. We do, though, need significant additional action in areas that produce the greatest volume of our domestic emissions: transportation, industry, buildings and power generation.

WE ALL MUST PLAY A PART

What will change this is continued growth in public support demanding aggressive climate action – the kind of public mobilization and unity of cause that we have seen in the inspiring ways Canadians have come together to deal with COVID-19.

To be effective, such action will require imagination, commitment and collaboration between all levels of government, Indigenous leaders, the private sector, environmental activists and individual Canadians – including grassroots groups like For Our Kids.

At the end of the day, climate change should not be a partisan issue – it is a science issue. We will need strong, active voices pressing governments at all levels to do more.

The pandemic is teaching us much about what Canadians are capable of doing together in times of crisis. Let’s re-commit to meeting the challenge of the climate crisis with that in mind.



Linking youth to the jobs they need

The Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) program is an important, annual federal program with broad support, providing employers with incentives to hire young people in supervised, professional settings at entry-level in community service, non-profit and charitable organizations and small businesses.

This summer presented a sobering reality for young job seekers – there were far fewer jobs. With COVID-19, many places young people might look for work weren’t open or were barely operating. But in fact, there was still significant demand for young workers – particularly from service organizations maintaining essential programs.

With changes to CSJ – emphasizing additional flexibility and extending timeframes, allowing organizations to consider taking on employees into the fall as they re-opened, or on a part-time basis – more jobs became available.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

I took time to visit organizations that employ CSJ students. I heard from some of the 125 young workers and saw directly how CSJ made a difference for 79 employers and benefitted the community. Some of these included:

- Edible Garden Project’s Loutet Farm. CSJ employee Haley helped run twice-weekly produce markets, after studying sustainable development and social enterprise in the Global Stewardship Program at Capilano University.

“I wouldn’t have [had] a full-time position without this grant; this is definitely relevant to my interests and field of study,”
– Haley, EGP

- St. Andrews United Church. Rebecca managed communications and outreach, which helped the church assure that people in the community knew about the support programs it has to offer during this stressful time.

Ensuring a Safe Restart for Our Communities

Earlier this year, Canadians rallied to flatten the curve in collective efforts against COVID-19. While the process from province to province differed, all parts of the country worked hard to address critical issues, and all parts of the country made significant progress in bringing the spread of the virus under control.

However, beyond simply reducing transmission rates of the virus, there was a need for a thoughtful, Canada-wide plan as to how we could safely restart our economy in a manner that would enable us to move forward and prevent increased infection rates.

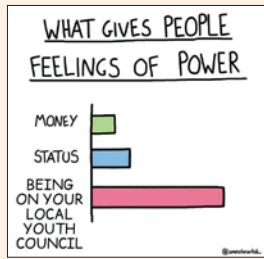
In mid-July, the Government of Canada announced the “Safe Restart Agreement” with the provinces and territories, committing \$19B in federal funding to be invested in protecting the health of Canadians and getting people safely back to work.





Providing a voice for young people

Our 2019/20 Constituency Youth Council (CYC) had a year like never before. Despite new and unforeseen challenges brought about by COVID-19, our North Vancouver CYC took it in stride, coming together on a non-partisan basis to discuss public policy issues and provide advice and input. Engaging and listening to young people about issues of significance to them is an important part of the role of an MP. I really encourage young people to engage in the political system to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are heard and are reflected in policy decisions.



Each year one of the main goals of the Youth Council is to research and complete a report on a topic of their choice. With COVID-19, the Council decided to focus on how the pandemic affected youth mental health, and how treatment options and access to treatment may have shifted.

The council created a survey, posing several questions pertaining to youth mental health distributed via social media platforms. Examples of the questions included:

- Has the interruption caused by the pandemic resulted in people not continuing with their treatment?
- Has your school made any effort to provide mental health education or information about available resources?
- Has the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected your course of treatment?

CYC Report excerpts:

"We looked into whether schools put effort into providing health education or providing resources...we discovered that 67% of people who participated in the survey said that they felt their school didn't really provide information regarding mental health education or accessibility to it, while 87% of people who participated said they'd want their school to do more to raise awareness of mental health resources. Many of the participants expressed concerns about a lack of understanding the steps for receiving help for mental health-related problems."

"There has been an increased paranoia revolving around the 'reintegration of individuals into social environments and a certain level of fright and stress' which will prevent an effortless transition into our [pre-COVID] lifestyles...Once the outbreak reaches its end, the physical and technological aspects (material culture) of our lives would [revert back] rapidly while the non-material culture would resist change and take a longer time to adapt."

This year's CYC did meaningful work on an important subject. I was very pleased to see the engagement, thoughtfulness and creativity that went into their efforts. I certainly hope that each member considers the work of the Council as time well spent, and that each has gained something through the experience.

The Constituency Youth Council is an inclusive, supportive environment, welcoming young people living, working or studying in North Vancouver, between the ages of 15 and 24.

Please visit jonathanwilkinson.libparl.ca to apply any time.

- Reckless Shipyards E-Bikes. Oscar, who studies business at Cap U, was involved in every aspect of the e-bike operation, from repairs to administration.
- North Shore Connexions Society, fostering an environment of inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities. I met with three of four CSJ employees. Jodie, heading into her Master's in Public Health, worked on safety protocols for workers and participants. Darius, in Kinesiology, led physical activities for Connexions participants via Zoom. Aysa, studying Commerce, did administrative work for the society.

POSITIVE IMPACT

During difficult times, we must ensure learning and work opportunities for young people. These are formative experiences, that help us to move successfully through life. The Canada Summer Jobs Program, more flexible and responsive this year, has had a positive impact for many North Vancouver youth.

This Safe Restart Agreement includes federal investments in several critical areas, including:

- helping municipalities deliver key services, including public transit;
- increasing testing and contact tracing;
- additional support for provincial and territorial health care systems, including challenges related to mental health, substance abuse, and homelessness;
- securing personal protective equipment for frontline healthcare workers and businesses;
- supporting the most vulnerable, including seniors in long-term care facilities and nursing homes;
- ensuring safe childcare is available so parents can return to work; and
- supporting people who do not have paid sick leave.

In late August, the federal government followed this \$19B commitment with an additional \$2B to provinces and territories to help ensure that schools can be safely re-opened. This commitment translates to \$242M here in BC.

While education is indeed an area of exclusive provincial jurisdiction, our government heard the concerns of parents across the country (including here in North Vancouver) that more should be done to ensure our kids and educators would be safe, and to ensure that parents could return to work without significant concern. The federal government thus provided assistance to provinces and territories for the resources required to make this happen.

The safe and efficient return to school is an important step in restarting our economy and helping parents get back to work.