

Building a diverse and sustainable economy.

COURTENAY OUTDOOR SPACE TO HELP ESTABLISH DOWNTOWN AS ‘COMMUNITY’S HEART’

New THRIVE project supports flexible public area to draw in visitors and locals for safe gatherings

COURTENAY, 2 December 2021 – A new multifunctional and adaptable parklet in Courtenay will become an important asset to add vitality and support business and recovery efforts in the downtown core, with funding support through the THRIVE Small Capital Program.

This new flexible outdoor area will allow locals and visitors to gather in a central location that can host a range of activities and events. The 4th Street Parklet structure will include modular shelters and seating, as well as photos and interpretive signage that express the history and culture of the area. The multipurpose space will also host food trucks, musicians, merchants and farmers markets, in addition to seating for events and outdoor learning offered by the Courtenay Museum.

“Creating new spaces that attract community members and visitors into the downtown areas is at the core of why we created the THRIVE program,” says Island Coastal Economic Trust Board Chair Aaron Stone. “This is an excellent example of how communities are building on their unique strengths and opportunities to drive future growth into downtown business areas.”

The THRIVE Small Capital Program was launched in late May by the Island Coastal Economic Trust, to help stimulate and promote vitality in downtowns, Main Streets and business districts across the region. One-stop funding support of up to 100% of eligible project costs (to a maximum of \$50,000) is available thanks to a joint collaboration with Tourism Vancouver Island (TVI) and the Vancouver, Coast & Mountains tourism region (managed by Destination BC).

“Throughout the pandemic we heard from the regional tourism organizations that they needed investment to support regional projects. THRIVE Small Capital is an excellent example of how tourism infrastructure will support projects that showcase more of what the region has to offer, strengthen community connection and create jobs in the future,” said Melanie Mark, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport. “Courtenay’s new market street space is an innovative example of how communities are using their ingenuity following the pandemic to build back stronger.”

Led by the City of Courtenay, the 4th Street Parklet project has its roots in the Downtown Courtenay Playbook, which was built through strong community collaboration and engagement. The site is located adjacent to the Courtenay Museum, Native Sons Hall, Sid Williams Theatre, as well as several community-owned businesses, including a café, restaurants and craft brewery. It is also within a short walking distance to many downtown shops, the Puntledge River, and Lewis Park.

“Characterizing 4th Street as a Market Street will help build a unique identity for the City’s downtown and offer much needed benefits to businesses, visitors and residents alike,” says Courtenay Mayor Bob Wells. “We wanted a reusable, cost efficient and durable structure with the ability to rebuild on various site locations. This project meets our design goal of accommodating multiple functions and will be a versatile



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community asset.”

The minimalist project design will incorporate innovative and sustainable elements including eight, free-standing cedar and metal bracket cubes attached to recycled wood decking within an aluminum frame. The cubes can be quickly and easily arranged or reassembled in a multitude of different layouts, which can accommodate various users and events, such as farmers markets, speakers and festivals.

The project is set to get underway shortly.

All applications to the THRIVE Small Capital Funding Stream will now be accepted on an ongoing basis until the program is fully subscribed.

For more information on the THRIVE Small Capital Funding Stream, please visit our website: www.islandcoastaltrust.ca/capital-funding-programs#thrive

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About the Island Coastal Economic Trust

Created and capitalized by the Province of BC in 2006, the Island Coastal Economic Trust (ICET) mission is to create a more diverse and globally competitive Island and Coastal economy. In partnership with local and regional governments, non-profits and Indigenous communities, ICET serves over half a million residents. Funding and support for economic infrastructure and other economic diversification initiatives is delivered through a unique community centered decision-making process. Since inception, ICET has approved more than \$55 million in funding for over 280 initiatives. These investments have leveraged over \$270 million in new investment into the region creating more than 2600 construction phase jobs and 2750 long-term permanent jobs.

For further information:

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