



For immediate release
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CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF GRANT MAKING AT THE REAL ESTATE FOUNDATION

VANCOUVER – This year marks the 20th year of grant making at the Real Estate Foundation of BC. Between 1988 and 2007 over 120 communities received more than \$48 million in grants to support community well-being. From Tofino to Fort St. John, Invermere to Terrace the Real Estate Foundation is helping communities move forward on initiatives related to affordable housing, sustainable land use planning, and environmental stewardship and conservation.

With a mission “to support sustainable real estate and land use practices for the benefit of British Columbians” the Real Estate Foundation of BC is one of only two such organizations in Canada. In 1985, after considerable work on the part of the real estate industry, the Foundation was established by an act of the provincial government. Funding for the many and diverse land use-related projects supported by the Foundation’s mission comes from the interest earned on “unassigned” trust deposits held by real estate agents. “Nationally, there is considerable envy that we have this institution in BC,” says Robert Laing, CEO of the BC Real Estate Association. “It has allowed our province to lead other provinces in terms of dealing with sustainability issues, housing affordability, professional development, and stewardship and conservation of our land base.”

Julie Caron was one of the Foundation’s first Governors in 1985. Today, seeing the results of almost 1400 grants to organizations throughout BC, she admits to feeling “a certain amount of pride when I look at what I was involved in starting. I couldn't imagine the impact the Foundation could have. It's been fun to watch it change and grow and I'm excited that the Real Estate Foundation is celebrating 20 years of grant making.”

“The structure of the Real Estate Foundation of BC is such that we are able to build on the ground-breaking work of previous Governors,” says recently elected Foundation Chair, J.T. (Jack) Hall. “Secondly, we’ve brought in some new, energetic, and very talented people. They are increasing our capacity. This is very important, given the rapidly changing land use and real estate context facing BC’s communities. We’re seeing increasing pressures with respect to affordable housing, with respect to the impact on the landscape of our settlement choices, we’re seeing the effects of climate change—to name a few of the issues that the Foundation is concerned with. They all represent challenges—and opportunities for the Foundation to contribute to solutions and better quality of life in our communities and neighbourhoods.”

The Foundation is always looking for innovative proposals addressing land use and real estate issues. “We do not want to miss a good opportunity to work with a potential partner,” says Executive Director Tim Pringle. Thoughtful letters of inquiry describing such initiatives are encouraged.

For more information, visit www.realestatefoundation.com.

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BACKGROUND: GRANTS IN BC REGIONS

The following examples give a brief overview of how the Real Estate Foundation is investing in community quality of life across the province. In several cases, the examples offer only a limited view of the range of initiatives the Foundation has supported in the region. Regional districts are listed in alphabetical order—scroll through to find your locale.

Be sure to check out our 20 year video and timeline at www.realestatefoundation.com.

ALBERNI-CLAYOQUOT

Like many BC communities, Tofino has been experiencing a shortage of housing that is affordable for residents and seasonal employees. In 2003 the District of Tofino received a \$10,000 grant to help them develop an “Attainable Housing Strategy”. Strategy recommendations included creating a District-owned housing authority; adding units to the rental housing stock; and establishing a housing fund. Since that time, the Tofino Housing Corporation was created. It is working toward the development of affordable housing on a district lot in town.

BULKLEY-NECHAKO

The Bulkley-Nechako region has been on the Real Estate Foundation’s radar for several years with grants going to Smithers and Vanderhoof groups to help improve the quality of life for local residents. Nechako View Seniors Home Society received grants in 2003 and 2005 totalling \$125,000 for their construction of affordable housing for local seniors. Over the years Smithers organizations have undertaken research to help the community deal with a changing and aging population, as well as the land use impacts of economic growth such as mining. In addition to the \$75,000 awarded for research since 1995, \$30,000 was awarded for completion of the Railway Avenue Perimeter Trail in 2004.

CAPITAL

With a very low vacancy rate and high property values, Victoria faces a range of affordable housing challenges. Over the last 20 years the Real Estate Foundation has approved over \$2 million in grants to local non-profit organizations to provide shelter for homeless and hard-to-house individuals, women in transition, seniors, and people who, although working, cannot afford decent homes for themselves and their families. Recipients of Foundation support include the Victoria Cool Aid Society, Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group, Our Place Society, Pacifica Housing Advisory Association, Victoria Women’s Transition House Society, and Habitat for Humanity Victoria. Among the many other innovative projects the Foundation has funded in the Capital Region are two active research chairs at the University of Victoria. The Chair in Environmental Law and Policy (\$512,000) and the Professorship in Aboriginal Justice (\$100,000) serve not only the local area, but are leaders throughout British Columbia and beyond.

CARIBOO

Over the past ten years, Cariboo communities have undertaken a handful of planning projects intended to make them more sustainable. From Williams Lake’s downtown enhancement plan and Imagine Williams Lake initiative to 100 Mile House’s housing needs study and trails linkage plan; from the Quesnel Downtown Association’s downtown revitalization action plan to the Cariboo Regional District’s project to support environmentally responsible lakeshore development—local people are working to promote the sustainable use and conservation of land. Over a quarter million dollars in grants from the Real Estate Foundation of BC have assisted these and other projects in the Cariboo region.

CENTRAL COAST

In 2006 two projects in the Central Coast area were awarded grants under the Real Estate Foundation's Communities in Transition program. Bella Coola Valley Sustainable Agricultural Society received \$47,800 to undertake a soil survey, micro-climate analysis, and land use survey to support the development of sustainable agriculture initiatives. Heiltsuk Tribal Council received \$20,000 to assist with development of a community development strategic plan. The Foundation supported these projects for their contributions to sustainable land use planning in local communities.

CENTRAL KOOTENAY

Everyone wants comfortable, affordable housing. Over the years, Nelson non-profits have provided a range of solutions for youth, families, and single adults, and the Real Estate Foundation has helped, investing \$275,000 in three Habitat for Humanity projects, Nelson District Community Resources Society's Ward Street Place, and Nelson Community Services Society's facility for youth. Castlegar and Nakusp organizations have benefited from Foundation grants for housing too. Supporting sustainable community plans and informed development, the Real Estate Foundation has also assisted the City of Roseland and Selkirk College, awarding \$100,000 to the College for the BC Regional Innovation Chair in Rural Economic Development.

CENTRAL OKANAGAN

Non-profit housing and mapping of sensitive ecosystems are two areas where Real Estate Foundation grants are making a difference in the Central Okanagan. Over \$1.6 million has gone toward the development of transitional and long-term housing for people in need. Among the local organizations that have received Foundation grants are the Society of Hope, Crossroads Treatment Centre Society, John Howard Society of Central and South Okanagan, New Opportunities for Women Canada, Bridges to New Life, and Peachland Senior Citizens Home Society. With sustainable land use in mind, the City of Kelowna, Regional District of Central Okanagan, and District of Lake Country have undertaken studies to inventory and map sensitive ecology and inform land use planning and property development decisions. Foundation support for these initiatives exceeds \$140,000 to date.

COLUMBIA SHUSWAP

Enabling seniors to stay in their home community after their ability to maintain a house and yard has diminished is a goal of many seniors' housing groups. The Abbeyfield House Society, St. Paul's Golden is no exception, and in 1999 the Real Estate Foundation approved a grant of \$30,000 to help them develop a supportive housing facility. Salmon Arm organizations have also received grants for their land use related initiatives, including: Salmon Arm Economic Development Corporation for a Housing Needs Evaluation (\$12,500); Columbia Shuswap Regional District for watershed and foreshore mapping of Shuswap Lake (\$24,000); and Committee for a Strong and Sustainable Salmon Arm to conduct a real estate market analysis of the downtown, and hold a design charrette (practical community visioning exercise) and public open house (\$21,000).

COMOX VALLEY

The Real Estate Foundation has provided financial support to a small number of organizations in the Comox Valley for about 20 environmental stewardship and conservation projects during the past decade. Comox Valley Project Watershed Society, Comox Valley Land Trust, Comox Valley C.A.R.E., and Millard/Piercy Watershed Stewards have worked to involve the public, and municipalities and regional districts in their efforts to protect the natural capital of the area even as a quickly growing population introduces a growing amount of economic capital to invest in

land development. In addition to the \$280,000 devoted to supporting environment-related land use projects, the Foundation has supported three of the local Habitat for Humanity affiliate's recent builds to the tune of \$141,000.

COWICHAN VALLEY

Among the organizations working to improve the quality of life for all ages of Cowichan Valley residents is the handful of non-profits funded by the Real Estate Foundation. The Foundation has invested just under \$200,000 for public education about local wetland ecology, unique community visioning and planning projects, and non-profit housing that serves seniors and adults with developmental and physical disabilities. Grant recipients include Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society, O.U.R. Community Association, Village at Providence Farm, Cowichan Valley Association for Community Living (now Clements Centre Society), and Abbeyfield Houses Society of Duncan.

EAST KOOTENAY

In recent years an influx of people to the East Kootenay has increased the demand for housing that is attainable for low and modest income earners. The District of Invermere is addressing the issue, in part, with a housing review and needs assessment, which it will use to plan future development. The Real Estate Foundation funded the initiative with a \$20,000 grant. Further south, the Fernie Family Housing Association created Tom Uphill Manor to provide affordable housing for seniors and physically disabled individuals (\$100,000 grant). These projects exemplify community initiative, as do several endeavours to conserve the natural ecology that draws many people to the area. Wildsight's Lake Windermere Project and the East Kootenay Conservation Program are among the environment-related land use projects for which the Foundation has awarded grants totaling \$200,000.

FRASER-FORT GEORGE

The Village of Valemount discovered the Real Estate Foundation in the late 1990s, receiving two grants to help them explore solutions to the land use challenges associated with pending resort development. Also, in consideration of the importance of Golden Years Lodge for housing local seniors, the Foundation approved funding in 2003 to assist with needed improvements to the facility. Since 1990 Prince George based organizations have received about \$2.5 million in Foundation grants to research, educate, and carry out on-the-ground projects intended to make area neighbourhoods and communities more sustainable. From Habitat for Humanity Prince George to the University of Northern BC to the BC Northern Real Estate Board to the North Central Municipal Association, many local non-profit organizations are contributing to community well-being in the region.

FRASER VALLEY

As Fraser Valley communities continue to grow and change, local non-profits are bringing their expertise to help shape that growth. In 2006 the Real Estate Foundation awarded SFU Surrey a grant of \$400,000 for research and education on land use and development issues in the Valley. The Fraser Valley Real Estate Board has been involved in several initiatives to improve community well-being and realtor competence, receiving over \$300,000 in grants since 1992. Most recently the Board has been developing a community issues forum on illegal drug operations. Affordable housing is also an issue from Surrey to Chilliwack, with Spirit Bear Center, Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society, the Salvation Army, and Phoenix Society using \$400,000 in Foundation funds for their housing projects, which offer shelter and support. This is just a small number of the many well-considered projects in the Fraser Valley for which the Real Estate Foundation has approved funding over the past 20 years.

KITIMAT-STIKINE

Affordable housing and alternative transportation have been main themes of Real Estate Foundation grants in Kitimat-Stikine communities. From the Village of Hazelton's Hwy 62 walking trail and the City of Terrace's Grand Trunk Pathway master plan to seniors' housing developed by the Terrace Elks Lodge 425 and the Tahltan Band Council in Telegraph Creek, the Foundation has provided over \$350,000 for local projects. During the past ten years, Foundation funding has also been awarded to Ksan House Society, Terrace Economic Development Authority, Dr. R.E.M. Lee Hospital Foundation, and Northwest Community College in Terrace; Roche View Lodge Society in Hazelton; and the Bear River Salmonid Enhancement Society in Stewart.

KOOTENAY-BOUNDARY

As communities grow and residents age, their needs change. The Real Estate Foundation has been able to assist both Grand Forks and Christina Lake by funding housing needs studies that provided information to help the communities plan for and develop appropriate housing. For some people, market housing is unaffordable and non-profit organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity Boundary Society, step in to help. The society has received \$89,500 from the Real Estate Foundation to assist with four family housing projects. Seniors housing has also benefited, with \$125,000 going to Grand Forks Abbeyfield and Abbeyfield Greater Trail Society. As the local organization offering ongoing education to realtors, Kootenay Real Estate Board has received \$45,000 to help bring qualified instructors to the region.

METRO VANCOUVER

From shelters and transition housing in Langley, New Westminster, and North Vancouver to sustainable neighbourhood planning in Surrey and Maple Ridge to sensitive ecosystem mapping on Bowen Island, the Real Estate Foundation has assisted numerous non-profits in Metro Vancouver with their land-related projects. Schools and faculties at the University of BC, Simon Fraser University, Douglas, Langara, Kwantlen, and Capilano College, and BC Institute of Technology have also benefited from Foundation funding, receiving \$4.6 million in grants for research and education programs intended to help communities and real estate practitioners make informed decisions about how we use and conserve land. A handful of the many exciting projects the Foundation has been involved with includes Covenant House construction, BCIT's green roof technology program, Light House Sustainable Building Centre, the BC Land Summit conference, SFU's City Program, and the work of the Design Centre for Sustainability at UBC.

NANAIMO

Non-profit organizations in the Nanaimo region have long been interested in maintaining the integrity of local ecosystems. The Real Estate Foundation has been able to provide financial assistance for some of this work, supporting the Nanaimo Area Land Trust in 1997 for the meeting that launched the Land Trust Alliance of BC; the Community Fisheries Development Centre in 2002 for stream inventory and mapping; and Georgia Strait Alliance in 2007 for the *Clean Marine-BC* project. Meeting the housing and shelter needs also concerns local citizens. Habitat for Humanity Nanaimo and The Salvation Army, Nanaimo Ministries received Foundation grants for their building projects, which serve families and individuals in need of a hand. During the past 20 years, the Real Estate Foundation has awarded \$600,000 in grants to Nanaimo area non-profits for their community-minded initiatives.

NORTH OKANAGAN

North Okanagan region organizations have been awarded \$1.25 million in grants from the Real Estate Foundation during the past 20 years. Vernon & District Hospice Society (now North Okanagan Hospice) received almost half this total, with two \$600,000 grants for construction

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then expansion of the facility. Other significant projects in the area include sensitive ecosystem inventories (SEI), which offer the municipalities of Vernon and Coldstream information to consider when making decisions about property development. Allan Brooks Nature Centre, initiator of some SEI projects, has received six Foundation grants totaling \$323,000. The Foundation also contributed to the construction of Abbeyfield House of Armstrong Spallumcheen and City of Enderby's riverwalk interpretive signage, among other worthy initiatives in the region.

OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN

There are many organizations working to protect sensitive ecosystems in the Okanagan-Similkameen region. Their commitment to the sustainable use and conservation of land is a strong fit with the Real Estate Foundation's funding mandate. South Okanagan-Similkameen Conservation Program, Osoyoos Desert Society, Oliver & District Community Economic Development Society, and Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen have all received Foundation support for their environmentally conscious research and planning work. Affordable housing is also of concern in the Okanagan-Similkameen, as it is throughout BC. Naramata Seniors' Housing Society, Habitat for Humanity South Okanagan, and South Okanagan Women in Need Society have received Foundation grants for their construction and renovation projects. A total of over \$450,000 in grants has been awarded to non-profits in the region.

PEACE RIVER

The Real Estate Foundation awarded organizations in the Peace River region \$151,000 since 1995. Abbeyfield Houses of Fort St. John received \$100,000 in 2007 to develop supportive housing for seniors. In 2005 Moberly Lake Community Association took the initiative to create a community watershed plan with the support of a \$25,000 Foundation grant (which matched the regional district's contribution). Northern Lights Community College offers assistance to students enrolled in the Land & Resource Management or Geography programs, based on a \$10,000 grant. And last but not least, the Northern Lights Real Estate Board has received over \$16,000 to help with continuing professional education for its realtor members.

POWELL RIVER

Real Estate Foundation grants to Powell River region organizations reflect some of the ways the community is changing, as residents age and people move to and from the area. Over the years, the following non-profits have received about \$170,000 in Foundation support for their initiatives: Powell River Sunset Homes Society (MacGregor Place apartments for seniors), Marine Area Business Association (revitalization planning exercise), Savary Island Land Trust (information sessions on sensitive ecology), Powell River Regional District (growth management and development trends workshop), and Sunshine Coast Real Estate Board (seminars for realtors).

SKEENA-QUEEN CHARLOTTE

In 2007 the Real Estate Foundation awarded \$275,000 to the North Coast Transition House Society for the development of New Hope Haven Transition House. While this is the largest grant the Foundation has approved to a Skeena-Queen Charlotte organization, there have been several other innovative projects in the region with which the Foundation has been able to assist. The Queen Charlotte Heritage Housing Society received three grants totaling \$139,500 to develop supportive housing. Delkatla Sanctuary Society, Masset Economic Development Commission, and Haida Gwaii Marine Resources Group were awarded \$20,000 for their projects. And \$60,000 was approved for initiatives of the North Coast Water Quality & Biotoxin Program, Prince Rupert & Port Edward Development Corporation, and the Prince Rupert City & Regional Archives.

SQUAMISH-LILLOOET

The Sea to Sky region is facing tremendous issues related to growth and development. Smart Growth on the Ground (SGOG) in Squamish is an example of how the Real Estate Foundation is working with partners to help address these issues. Bridging research and practice, SGOG applies sustainability concepts to the development of land and community. The project has led to the Downtown Squamish Concept Plan, approved by Council in October 2005. Follow up activities by the SGOG team include workshops for developers and home builders, bringing SGOG principles into the real world of bricks and mortar. The Real Estate Foundation also approved a grant for the District of Squamish to establish a second homeownership strategy. Other local grants have gone to the Regional Municipality of Whistler for stream inventory and mapping, and to the Whistler Council for Business and the Arts for a conference in the mid-1990s.

STRATHCONA

As in other BC regions, Strathcona is dealing with the impacts of growth and development to the environmental, social, and economic fabric of the community. Over the past several years, local organizations have received \$120,000 in Real Estate Foundation grants to help with their land stewardship, community planning, and non-profit housing projects. Grant recipients include Friends of Cortes Island for the Manson's Landing Planning Charrette; Discovery Coast Greenways Land Trust for land stewardship brochures and community mapping; Willow Creek Watershed Society's watershed development plan; and Campbell River & North Island Transition Society's house expansion and renovation project.

SUNSHINE COAST

Affordable housing is an important part of community well-being. During the past several years, the Real Estate Foundation has supported six Sunshine Coast projects to plan for and implement community solutions. A total of \$213,500 was awarded for Area "A" Seniors Housing Project's Abbeyfield House in Pender Harbour; the District of Sechelt's community visioning charrettes; Sunshine Coast Association for Community Living's Midtown development; and Sunshine Coast Community Services Society's housing plan and implementation. Conserving environmental values in the face of growing population is also a challenge requiring research, public education, and regulation at the local level. The Sunshine Coast Regional District's stream inventory and mapping project provided data for a sensitive habitat atlas, giving the regional district, developers, and interested citizens better information on the "lay of the land" to help guide land use decisions.

THOMPSON-NICOLA

Rural development issues are a concern across the province. In BC's Interior the Real Estate Foundation is supporting the work of the Grasslands Conservation Council of BC, having approved over \$350,000 for GCC initiatives to help communities look at growth in the context of economic and environmental considerations. Thompson Rivers University is also looking at the impacts of changing land uses in grassland ecosystems through the BC Regional Innovation Chair in Cattle Industry Sustainability. The Foundation awarded a \$250,000 endowment grant to assist the Chair's research. These and other environmentally related land use planning initiatives, as well as affordable housing and shelter (e.g., Kamloops Safe House for Youth, New Life Mission), and realtor education (Kamloops & District Real Estate Association), have received over \$1 million in Foundation grants since 1988.