



MAYOR'S OFFICE
OCT 3 2015

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OCT 28 2015

Her Worship Mayor Lisa Helps
City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Dear Mayor Helps: *Mayor Helps:*

I would like to thank you and the Mayor's Task Force on Economic Development and Prosperity for extending an invitation to the *Thinklandia* kick-off event held on September 11, 2015. I applaud your innovative approach for bringing people together to discuss ways to spur economic activity in the city.

I am pleased to see the importance you place on the development of an environment conducive to attracting and retaining business, and contributing to the community's well-being. Victoria City has the advantage of a solid and well-diversified economy on which to build and it plays a key role in contributing to the economic development of the province. Bringing together such an eclectic group of people should provide a compelling base for inspiration and creative planning.

I understand that the City has recently won recognition as one of the top three city destinations in British Columbia and has been named number nine City in United States/ Canada in the 2015 Travel + Leisure World's Best Awards. As well, the Fairmont Empress in Victoria was also named number nine City Hotel in Canada in the 2015 Travel + Leisure World's Best Awards. This kind of world-wide attention is commendable and will no doubt contribute to your ongoing economic work.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you of some economic development initiatives being undertaken by the Government of British Columbia. We are pleased to offer a number of economic development resources and tools through our Employment, Business and Economic Development website at: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/economic-development/funding-and-grants>. Here you will find information useful for community, industry and business economic development, as well as a Funding and Grants database.

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We are continuing our work under the "BC Jobs Plan" (<http://engage.gov.bc.ca/bcjobsplan/>), which supports the sectors described in your draft Economic Action Plan. In addition, we are addressing projected skilled labour shortages through the "BC Skills for Jobs Blueprint" program (<https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Skills-and-Training/B-C-'s-Skills-for-Jobs-Blueprint.aspx>) to ensure we have the right skills for the right jobs in our growing economy. These resources may prove useful components in your overall economic strategy. I was recently made aware of the City's attempt to repatriate British Columbians from San Francisco through a local Come Home to Victoria program, similar to the provincial Come Home to BC initiative. Kudos to you on your efforts.

Thank you again for writing. I look forward to learning more about your economic action plan for the City of Victoria and its outcomes as your work comes to fruition.

Sincerely,



Shirley Bond
Minister