

Province pledges \$9M towards maritime centre

Bethany Lindsay, North Shore News

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THE provincial government made a \$9-million commitment to North Vancouver's proposed national maritime centre on Friday, in a surprise announcement by Premier Gordon Campbell at a North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce luncheon.

The announcement was a departure from the province's declaration in February that their support would be contingent on a matching pledge from the federal government.

"It's fantastic news," said Darrell Mussatto, Mayor of the City of North Vancouver. Although the mayor said he had been told confidentially about the dollar amount of the province's support, nothing was officially confirmed before Friday.

"I did not know going into that meeting whether they were going to make that announcement or not. We had our fingers crossed," Mussatto said. "Now we're extremely happy."

The \$9-million pledge is the first instalment of the province's contribution to the centre's estimated \$90-million capital costs. Mussatto said it would go towards detailed plans for the museum, as well as initial construction costs.

Capital costs for the centre will be split equally by the city, the province, and the feds, should they choose to contribute. Federal support is still be needed to make the centre a reality.

Much of the city's contribution to the project is in land and buildings, including a handful of heritage shipyard buildings on the waterfront. Three historic shipyard buildings were demolished earlier this spring to bring down the costs of the proposed centre, amidst public outcry about the sanctity of heritage structures.

A boatload of cash

Province grants \$9 million

Frank Luba, The Province

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Premier Gordon Campbell fulfilled a promise from the February throne speech, supporting the National Maritime Centre by announcing a one-time grant of \$9 million for the North Vancouver project Friday.

The centre is to be the anchor tenant of the Pier, the City of North Vancouver's ambitious redevelopment of its waterfront.

Envisioned on the city's website as being approximately 80,000 square feet of building space plus atrium potential, the centre will provide year-round activities.

Those activities will include interactive and educational exhibits about the Coastal First Nations and the Arctic, a wide variety of programs about everything from shipbuilding to ocean trade and immigration, along with a training centre for maritime activities such as boating safety and restoration.

Campbell is an enthusiastic supporter of the centre, which will require the participation of the federal government and the private sector.

"It really is saying to ourselves, 'How do we bring together the province, the municipality, the federal government, the private sector to make sure we take advantage of the incredible asset that we have there and build, I think, a better understanding of our history,'" he said.

That history is especially pertinent this year, the 150th since B.C. was founded as a Crown colony.

"The maritime industries were a big part of our province as we grew from a fledgling province to become a major economic engine," said Campbell.

The City of North Vancouver's contribution to the project is the land, existing buildings and rezoning.

Mayor Darrell Mussatto said the provincial money would be used for preparing the soil and more detailed planning.

"It will really enable us to move forward," said Mussatto, who has been to Ottawa to discuss the project with Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs Rona Ambrose.

Mussatto, who hopes the centre can open in 2011 or 2012, said the total cost is expected to be between \$60 million and \$100 million.

fluba@png.canwest.com

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NORTH VANCOUVER

Maritime centre gets \$9-million boost

Allison Cross, Vancouver Sun

| The city will receive \$9 million towards a new National Maritime Centre for the Pacific and the Arctic to honour British Columbia's maritime roots, Premier Gordon Campbell announced Friday.

The city will use the money to prepare the facility's site in a historic shipyard in lower Lonsdale and plan its development. North Vancouver will donate the land and it will be considered a publicprivate partnership.

The centre will feature educational programs and exhibits and be open year-round. Revenue from retail outlets, rental fees, trade shows and admission is expected to keep the centre running.

The provincial grant is from money earmarked for arts and culture projects outlined in the 2008 budget speech. The project's future depends on matching dollars from the federal government.