

# \$1.6-million child care facility coming to Canal Flats <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

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## EXCERPTS

A new licensed child care centre with capacity for 40 children will be built in Canal Flats after \$1.6-million in approved grant funding.

Receiving \$970,000 from the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM) and \$639,000 from the B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development's (MCFD) Childcare B.C. New Spaces Fund, the project is now a reality with a 0.25-acre land donation from the Columbia Lake Holdings Ltd.

The grant and land donation mean the licensed child care facility will be fully funded and supported without the need for municipal funds. A letter of intent has been signed with Tamson Developments Inc. to construct the facility.

"This is an absolutely great day for the Village of Canal Flats," said Mayor Karl Sterzer. "Licensed child care is a proven major need in our community."

"There's 40 total spaces, 16 after school spaces, 24 for kids that are younger than school age which includes up to 9 toddlers," Sterzer noted to MyEastKootenayNow.com. "As young parents, single or together, it gives that opportunity for those families to flourish and for our economy to grow."

Fully licensed, the facility will be able to offer provincial child care subsidies to parents, and will be designed to accommodate infants, toddlers, and after-school care.

"Making sure parents have access to quality, affordable child care close to home is critical to helping families flourish and economies grow," said Katrine Conroy, Minister of Children and Family Development. "We are so proud to support the construction of this new child care facility in Canal Flats that will provide local children with a foundation for lifelong learning for many years to come."

"The village has set an ambitious target to get our population back up to 1,000 people," noted Sterzer. "An amenity like this will only help us reach these goals."

Upon construction, the Village of Canal Flats has committed to operating the centre for at least 15 years. Earlier in 2020, a Child Care Needs Assessment was completed by the Village of Canal Flats, indicating the need for the facility and the importance of operating as a break-even service for the community.

"We are not in a position to go out to our constituents and add that kind of tax burden to them so to have that support from the Province, and to have those monies come here to give us that leg up, it just absolutely means everything," said Sterzer. "I'm just proud to partner with the Province on this and I'm super excited for the possibilities that it creates."

Canal Flats said the facility will be located near the Grainger Road and Burns Avenue intersection in the community. Construction is anticipated to break ground in early August, with the facility looking to open by fall 2021.

"The centre will be designed around inclusivity and, when open, will offer specialty services to new parents and families of new Canadians, celebrate local Indigenous culture, and offer supports for children who may be in need of it," said the Village. "The Village of Canal Flats would like to thank all of the people and organizations who have helped get this project to this stage. We look forward to a successful project and child care centre in Canal Flats."

**Region:** British Columbia <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** spaces <sup>[4]</sup>

investment <sup>[5]</sup>

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