
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture

New energy-efficient building to protect B.C.'s history

VICTORIA – To make the Royal BC Museum's collections and archives more accessible, the B.C. government will build a new collections and research building in Colwood.

"Today we are taking the first major step to modernize the Royal BC Museum," said Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture. "Our government is building a state-of-the-art facility to preserve our history for future generations. This construction project will create jobs for people on Vancouver Island and help support B.C.'s economic recovery."

The 3.2-hectare (eight acre) piece of land at the Royal Bay development in Colwood will include a new approximately 14,000 square-metre facility. It will use mass timber construction and meet CleanBC energy efficiency standards. Building construction will generate more than 950 direct and indirect good-paying jobs.

The proposed facility will house the Royal BC Museum's archives, collections and research department. It will improve research activities by providing dedicated research labs and learning spaces. It will also improve access to the museum's vast collections. The new building will offer learning opportunities for students, both in person and online.

The collections and research building will hold the following collections, as well as the BC Archives:

- birds and mammals
- botany
- fish
- entomology
- history
- paleontology
- modern history

In October, crews will begin preparing the site for construction, including surveying and earthworks. The government will undertake a competitive procurement process in the coming months to select a design-build team to lead the development of the project. Project funding details will be released upon successful execution of the contract with the successful bidder. Government expects the project to break ground in winter 2021 and to be complete in summer 2024.

This is the first phase of the Royal BC Museum modernization project. The main museum and public galleries will remain at the downtown site in Victoria. The B.C. government is committed to redeveloping the museum space downtown and will announce plans in 2021.

Quotes:

Daniel Muzyka, board chair, Royal BC Museum –

“We are thankful to the Province for delivering on its commitment to modernize the Royal BC Museum. We’re excited that this new building will protect the collections and also make them more accessible to the people of B.C.”

Ron Sam, chief of Songhees First Nation –

“Our Nation is looking forward to participating in the modernization of the Royal BC Museum. This project is an opportunity to tell the stories of our people, our history and our culture in the provincial museum in our territory. This is another important step on the path of reconciliation.”

Mitzi Dean, MLA for Esquimalt-Metchosin –

“I am so excited the B.C. government chose Colwood as the new home of B.C.’s treasured collections and archives. I know this project will bring jobs and increased economic activity to our communities and become an iconic landmark.”

Rob Martin, mayor of Colwood –

“The Royal BC Museum is an important part of the fabric of B.C. as holders of the history of our province. Colwood is extremely proud to welcome RBCM’s collections and research building to our community, along with hundreds of jobs and significant construction investment. This will be a valued institution in Colwood for generations to come.”

Quick Facts:

- The Royal BC Museum (RBCM) has been at its downtown Victoria location since 1967 and has not been substantially renovated in over 50 years.
- The Royal BC Museum has more than seven million objects and specimens in its collection and 28 linear kilometres of archival materials, including original artwork by Emily Carr and the Ida Halpern Indigenous languages recordings and records.
- The B.C. government committed to modernizing the Royal BC Museum in the 2019 and 2020 speeches from the throne.

Learn More:

Modernization project link: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/sports-culture/arts-culture/museums-galleries-attractions/rbcm-modernization-project>

View maps of the future location of the Collections and Research Building:

<https://www.flickr.com/gp/bcgovphotos/cwo3J2>

<https://www.flickr.com/gp/bcgovphotos/8zEB04>

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