

**MARCH 19, 2019**  
**PRE-BUDGET LOCK-UP**  
**OTTAWA**



Ontario Trails was pleased to have been invited to participate in the pre-budget lock-up in Ottawa today. This in itself was significant because most of our work at the National Level has been on behalf of trails, but through two other non-governmental organizations, the National Trails Coalition and The Canadian Trails Federation

As a representative of these groups, Ontario's rural, remote, first nations and recreation communities Ontario Trails was pleased to hear about significant investment in recreation and infrastructure areas by the federal government in today's budget.

The federal budget 2019 "**Investing in the Middle Class**" contains subsections that provide broad funding opportunity that could be applied to trails through a variety of services areas.

**Building Strong Communities** proposes a one time top up of \$2.2 billion through the Federal Gas Tax Fund. These funds would be used to address priorities of municipalities and first nations communities.

The \$2.2 billion commitment doubles the government's commitment to municipalities in 2018-19, where these funds are targeted for roads, transit and recreational spaces. Ontario Trail is seeking detail on the source and distribution method for these monies.

**The Canadian Experiences Fund**, page 113 of the Budget Book establishes a \$58.5 million over 2 years to support businesses and organizations seeking to create, improve or expand tourism related businesses or expand tourism related infrastructure - the fund has wide focus, on accommodation, indigenous tourism and inclusiveness to name a few.

This section of the budget includes 2 supplemental program areas with targets;

- A) Destination Canada will receive \$5 million for a marketing program to help Canadians discover lesser known areas of the country; and
- B) A Seventh Economic Strategy Round Table to bring together government and industry leaders to identify economic opportunities and sector growth targets.

Both of these supplemental programs allow for national level trail marketing and the opportunity to define trail tourism and trail tourism support systems at the national level.

**New Horizons Seniors Program** funding will support projects that improve the quality of life for seniors by creating opportunities for seniors to be active in their communities. The funding sees a total investment of \$100 million, or \$20 million a year for 5 years

**The Enabling Accessibility Fund** will invest another \$77 million to improve the safety and accessibility of community spaces.

**Advancing Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.** The budget targets specific investment streams that would work to “support First Nations, Inuit and Métis nation entrepreneurs and businesses through existing programs to support more indigenous entrepreneurs and more ambitious projects” - such as trails and “up to 100 million to establish an Indigenous Growth Fund to foster investment in Indigenous led business.

**Universal High Speed Internet,** the federal budget commits a substantial investment of 5-6 billion through 2030 to ensure 50/100 mbps to 95% of Canadian homes and businesses by 2026, “where delivering high speed internet to every Canadian, especially in more rural and remote areas to help business growth,” where these could be trail businesses or outdoor tourism related, including the promotion of existing trail systems or trail products to the global traveller.

**The Canadian Training Benefit** establishes a Training Credit a non-taxable benefit for workers from 25-64 enabling an annual training expenditure of \$250.00, with a lifetime maximum of \$5,000.00 This benefit could be used to affect participation in trail training and certification courses. This credit is backed by a \$1.7 billion investment over a period of 5 years.

Ontario Trails looks forward to working with our partners to ensure that the funds described in the budget are made available and applied as quickly and as effectively as possible.

Regards,

Patrick Connor, CEO Ontario Trails.