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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Forests and Range  
and Minister responsible for Housing  
City of Vancouver

### **PROPOSAL TO EXPEDITE NEW SOCIAL AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING**

VANCOUVER – The Province and the City of Vancouver have developed an innovative proposal to expedite the approval of up to 1,200 new social and supportive housing units on 12 city-owned sites, Minister responsible for Housing Rich Coleman and Vancouver Mayor Sam Sullivan announced today.

“It’s a bold move, and we’re aiming to get construction underway on at least six of these sites within a year,” said Coleman. “We announced last month that the Province would pay for the pre-development costs so that we can work quickly with municipal approvals and it’s great to see Vancouver stepping up to help make it happen.”

“Today’s announcement is another important step toward accomplishing the goals and objectives we have identified in Project Civil City,” said Mayor Sullivan. “Thanks to the partnerships we have established with the provincial government, we are delivering compassionate solutions to the social challenges we face. We look forward to more announcements in the coming weeks and months to help eliminate homelessness and reduce public disorder.”

The proposal will be received by City Council at its Nov. 13 meeting for referral to a public meeting on Dec. 12. Once approved, the Province will pay for all necessary professional services, including architects, consultants, lawyers, surveyors, and engineers, as well the costs of permit fees and building permits.

The provincial contribution to pay for pre-development costs is part of a \$41-million commitment to help break the cycle of homelessness that was announced on Oct. 12, 2007. It builds on the provincial housing strategy, Housing Matters BC, which was announced in October 2006. The Province has allocated \$360 million this year towards shelters and affordable housing.

The City will lease the 12 city-owned sites to non-profit operators for a period of 60 years. The non-profit operators will be charged a nominal fee for rent. As well, each development that provides subsidized social and supportive housing will be exempted from property taxes. The Province will issue a proposal shortly calling for non-profit societies to manage and operate the housing developments.

The majority of the 12 city sites were identified as part of the City’s Supportive Housing Strategy, approved by City Council in June 2007. The strategy focuses on providing more safe, secure and affordable housing plus support services in response to the current homelessness situation. Today, Vancouver has an estimated 2,000 homeless people living on the street or in emergency shelters on any given night.

The new units will be social and supportive housing to accommodate the homeless and those at risk of homelessness who are living on the streets or in shelters, and those living in inadequate single room occupancy hotels.

“Supportive housing is an effective way to help break the cycle of homelessness and enables people to regain their dignity and independence,” said Mark Smith, executive director of Triage Emergency Services & Care Society, operator of a range of supportive housing services, including the newly-opened development at Fraser and 39<sup>th</sup> Ave. “Fraser House is a great example of how well-planned supportive housing can integrate into the community and alleviate the concerns local residents may have about homelessness and the related issues that go with it.”

The proposal, outlined in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the City and the Province, provides several opportunities for public input. In addition to the Dec. 12 City Council public meeting, there will be project-specific open houses in the first few months of 2008, where the community can review the proposed designs, building programs and management plans. It is anticipated the first projects will be considered by the Development Permit Board in June, where the public can provide comment. There will also be opportunities for public input for the properties that require rezoning.

The MOU and an accompanying city staff report are available at:  
[http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/councilmeetings/meeting\\_schedule.cfm](http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/councilmeetings/meeting_schedule.cfm) and  
[http://www.bchousing.org/programs/homelessness/municipal\\_approvals](http://www.bchousing.org/programs/homelessness/municipal_approvals).

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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