

Media Release



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Coalition Releases Community Plan to Address Chronic Homelessness in the Region

Today the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (Coalition) releases, “Community Plan – Phase 1”. This five-year plan will improve the existing housing and support service system and will guide new investments made through the \$60 million Regional Housing First Program.

“It’s great to see this plan rolled out and to guide how the Regional Housing First money can create the greatest value in the community,” says Victoria Mayor and Coalition Co-Chair Lisa Helps. “This plan wouldn’t have come to be without the joint commitment of the Province, the CRD and Island Health and we are very grateful for the courage and leadership shown by these key partners.”

This Community Plan envisions a region without homelessness and outlines the steps required to achieve this vision. The Plan sets out a clear path forward for the community and makes 10 key recommendations for implementation in 2016/17 and 2017/18 to enhance the region’s existing housing and support services system.

“Through the plan development it became clear there’s been amazing work done in support of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness” says Coalition Community Co-Chair Ian Batey. “But in listening to people with lived experience of homelessness, service organizations and funders, it also became obvious there are significant opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of existing programs through better system coordination, service integration and client prioritization.”

The objectives of the Community Plan are to:

1. House 175 individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in existing supportive housing through enhanced system coordination, service integration and client prioritization;
2. Procure 133 units of new-build supported housing for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness through the Regional Housing First Program; and,
3. Procure 133 units of new-build affordable housing for individuals wishing to exit existing supportive housing and require access to affordable housing to do so through the Regional Housing First Program.

Next steps are for the Plan to go the Capital Regional District Finance Committee (September 7, 2016) and CRD Board (September 14, 2016) for information. After this, a September 2016 Expression of Interest (EOI) will be issued through the Regional Housing First Program. The EOI will be guided by recommendations in the Community Plan – Phase 1. Project approvals are expected to take place in later in the fall 2016.

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Backgrounder

The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness is a coalition of diverse stakeholders including service organizations, non-profit societies, the faith community, people with lived experience of homelessness (past or present) and members of the general public who share a vision of a region without homelessness.

The Regional Housing First Program is a partnership between the B.C. Government, the Capital Regional District (CRD) and Island Health. The B.C. Government and the CRD are partnering to provide capital funding up to \$30 million each for a total of \$60 million to fund affordable or supportive housing projects across the region. Island Health is a partner in the agreement and may provide health support services and align its mental health and addictions service planning to support some of the region's most vulnerable residents.