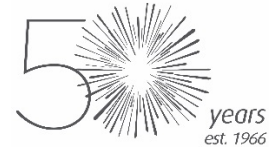




Making a difference...together



Media Release

For Immediate Release

May 16, 2016

CRD, B.C. Government Build Alliance in Housing First Initiative

Victoria, BC-The Capital Regional District (CRD) and the B.C. Government have entered into a partnership 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 for some of the region's most vulnerable residents.

The B.C. Government \$30 million equity contribution stems from the Provincial Investment of Affordable Housing (PIAH) Program, where the B.C. Government is reinvesting proceeds from the transferring of properties owned by the Provincial Rental Housing Corporation (PRHC) to non-profit housing societies.

"Our investment will help vulnerable people in the region find a safe, affordable place to call home," said Rich Coleman, Minister of Natural Gas Development and Minister Responsible for Housing. "That is one of the reasons why we will continue to partner with non-profit societies, government agencies, the private sector and community organizations to invest and build long-term affordable housing for people in need."

"As a common priority for the region, the CRD Board unanimously supported the Housing First Initiative at the December Board meeting," says Board Chair Barbara Desjardins. "This partnership is an important milestone recognizing the financial and health support services needed to support the goal to sustainably reduce homelessness in the Capital Region by 2018. The CRD Board asked our CAO to work with the CEO of BC Housing and CEO of Island Health to formulate a multi-lateral agreement to leverage the contributions of these three agencies and a more streamline delivery process through a regional partnership."

"Stable housing is a critical first step to successfully and effectively supporting individuals living with health care and mental health and substance use needs," said Dr. Brendan Carr, President and CEO, Island Health. "Island Health is pleased to continue our work with the CRD and BC Housing to provide health care services through innovation, teaching and research as part of our mission to create healthier, stronger communities."

CRD, BC Housing and Island Health have been working with the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (GVCEH) to advance the Housing First Initiative and complete the process mapping of the housing continuum and associated health support services. The GVCEH will work together with the partners on the development of the RHF Community Plan and will provide expertise in engaging street-involved people in ensuring their perspective is represented.

“This is a historic moment for the region,” said Lisa Helps, Mayor of Victoria. “The Coalition to End Homelessness looks forward to continued collaborative work to develop and implement the Regional Housing First Initiative and to help ensure that the most marginalized in our community get the housing and health supports they require.”

Celebrating 50 years! The CRD delivers regional, sub-regional and local services to 13 municipalities and three electoral areas on southern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. Governed by a 24 member Board of Directors, the CRD works collaboratively with First Nations and all levels of government to enable sustainable growth, enhance community well-being, and develop cost-effective infrastructure while continuing to provide core services to residents throughout the region.

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Backgrounder

The debt servicing costs for the CRD's \$30M capital contribution will be funded by reallocating existing annual contributions for housing to pay for longer term debt servicing associated with this commitment.

The CRD equity contribution stems from the Regional Housing Trust Fund (RHTF) which has been providing seed grant funding with an annual requisition of approximately \$1 million. This will be augmented by the contribution of a dividend from the CRD's Housing Corporation (CRHC).

The CRD's contributions to this initiative will all now be part of the regional role the CRD has in land banking and housing for public and private housing programs. This equates to a revenue neutral outcome for most municipalities. Municipalities that did not previously participate in the RHTF, Langford, Colwood and Juan de Fuca, will see a phased in increase to cover the cost of this important regional initiative.

The multi-lateral agreement will result in the construction of new projects that are evaluated according to a business case, with the capacity to be effectively managed and meet pressing housing needs. Prior to issuing a call for proposals, the parties will complete process mapping of the housing continuum and associated health support services to determine how clients move through the housing continuum and access health support services to ensure the efficient use of resources.

In October 2015, the City of Victoria Council submitted a Notice of Motion to improve health outcomes through a Regional Housing First Strategy. CRD staff worked closely with the provincial government to contribute through its ministries and agencies sufficient funding for the social and healthcare support services to complement the projects that receive capital funding from the CRD and BC Housing.