

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **NEWLY RENOVATED SOCIAL HOUSING OPENS IN NEW WESTMINSTER**

New Westminster, BC – The Governments of Canada and British Columbia officially opened the Russell Housing Centre (formerly College Place Hotel), which will provide emergency shelter and supportive housing for adults at risk of homelessness in New Westminster.

“Canada’s Economic Action Plan is stimulating the economy and creating jobs during the global recession here in British Columbia and across Canada,” said Senator Yonah Martin on behalf of The Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and Minister Responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). This is a good way to get the local economy moving and put construction workers and trades people to work quickly, as well as improving the quality of existing social housing, giving a hand-up to those families who need it most.”

“The Province is committed to providing increased access to safe, affordable, supportive housing for our most vulnerable people and that is why we’ve provided \$10.4 million for the purchase and renovation of the Russell Housing Centre,” said Harry Bloy, MLA for Burnaby-Lougheed. “Combining emergency shelter with transitional housing under one roof is an effective method to help break the cycle of homelessness here in New Westminster and across British Columbia.”

The Russell Housing Centre is a designated heritage building that has been renovated to provide 40 Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotel units and 15 shelter beds and will provide emergency shelter and social housing for adults at risk of homelessness in New Westminster. Through the amended Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement, the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia are contributing \$1.1.M for repairs and renovations to the 40 SRO units.

“This development makes a significant contribution to the City’s continuum of housing; enabling our locally homeless population to access quality shelter and support services. It also preserves an important piece of the City’s heritage,” said New Westminster Mayor Wayne Wright.

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BC Housing



Lookout Emergency Aid Society manages and operates the Russell Housing Centre. The Centre will be open 24 hours, 365 days a year and will provide such basics as shelter, food and laundry, but also support and assistance to men who are without a home. Tenants will receive life skills training, programs on cooking and nutrition, budgeting, and basic hygiene, gaining the necessary skills to move towards living independently.

“Helping people identify and plan around their challenges, linking them to needed services will help prevent them from becoming homeless again.” said Karen O’Shannacery, executive director of Lookout Emergency Aid Society. “Our long-standing partnership with the Province and BC Housing has played a pivotal role in the creation of many of Lookout’s supportive housing developments.”

The Housing Renovation Partnership is a result of a \$365-million joint investment under an amendment to the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement, which includes funding through Canada’s Economic Action Plan and by the Government of British Columbia. The Housing Renovation Partnership will provide \$177 million for renovation and retrofit of social housing. Under terms of the agreement, the provincial and federal governments will provide matching contributions of \$88.82 million. Overall, the Economic Action Plan includes \$2 billion for the construction of new and the repair of existing social housing, plus up to \$2 billion in loans to municipalities for housing-related infrastructure.

Canada’s Economic Action Plan builds on the Government of Canada’s commitment in 2008 of more than \$1.9 billion, over the next five years, to improve and build new affordable housing and help the homeless. It provides \$850 million under the Affordable Housing Initiative to provinces and territories for the renovation and retrofit of existing social housing, to improve the quality of existing social housing for low-income seniors, single parent families, recent immigrants and Aboriginal households.

The Province of British Columbia’s \$14-billion capital infrastructure program is creating up to 88,000 jobs, helping to build vital public infrastructure in every region of the province and stimulating local economies across B.C.

For more information on this and other measures in Canada’s Economic Action Plan, visit [www.actionplan.gc.ca](http://www.actionplan.gc.ca). To find out how CMHC is working to build stronger homes and communities for all Canadians, call CMHC at 1-800-668-2642 or visit [www.cmhc.ca/housingactionplan](http://www.cmhc.ca/housingactionplan).

Through Housing Matters BC, the Province is addressing a range of housing needs, from homelessness to affordable rental housing and homeownership. In 2009, the provincial housing budget is \$450 million, more than three times as much as in 2001. To find out more about affordable housing in B.C., visit [www.bchousing.org](http://www.bchousing.org).