



**PRESS RELEASE**



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## **Housing Development Benefits Low-Income Urban Singles**

**VANCOUVER, British Columbia, June 19, 2003** — A new 81-unit residential development in the Downtown Eastside will benefit low-income urban singles who have successfully completed rehabilitation and those wishing to live in a drug- and alcohol-free environment.

The development at 361 Heatley Ave. is the first formal drug- and alcohol-free housing development in Canada. The tenants must agree to maintain a drug- and alcohol-free environment. It also provides commercial space on the main floor that will be used to open a thrift store and a warehousing and sorting operation.

The development was made possible through contributions from the federal and provincial governments under the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement, as well as the City of Vancouver and the Union Gospel Mission.

"The Union Gospel Mission project is a prime example of how working together can benefit all Canadians," said Steven Mahoney, Secretary of State responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. "Partnerships are a positive step in achieving supportive, affordable housing for those in our society who need it most."

"The Government of Canada is working in partnership with the provincial government and other groups to bring quality affordable housing to people in B.C said Stephen Owen, Secretary of State (Western Economic Diversification) (Indian Affairs and Northern Development). "Successes like this are key to developing strong communities, not just here in B.C., but throughout Canada."

"This development is a great example of what can be achieved through strong, effective partnerships that bring together multiple levels of government, the private sector and the non-profit community," said George Abbott, Minister for Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services. "The provincial government is committed to supporting strong communities and ensuring this development continues to help the people of the Downtown Eastside for many years to come."

"This development will provide much-needed housing options for individuals who have successfully completed drug and alcohol rehabilitation or those who might otherwise be homeless or living in substandard housing," said Vancouver-Burrard MLA Lorne Mayencourt. "This is a very progressive approach to addressing some of the challenging issues facing the Downtown Eastside. I am confident it will fast become an integral part of this community."

"This is another important step we are taking to provide options to people in the Downtown Eastside," said Vancouver City Councillor Tim Stevenson. "Safe, secure, affordable housing is at a premium in this neighbourhood. This development not only provides much-needed housing; it provides a supportive environment for those who have completed drug and alcohol rehabilitation and want to make a positive change in their lives."

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"We appreciate the opportunity given to us by the governments of Canada and British Columbia, and the City of Vancouver, to make this development a reality," said Union Gospel Mission president Maurice McElrea. "Our goal was to create a residential development that would make a difference to the people of this community. I am very honoured to say that we have succeeded."

Under the Canada-British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement, the Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp., will contribute \$88.7 million over the next five years towards affordable housing in B.C.

The provincial government, through BC Housing, will provide \$29.7 million annually to subsidize the costs of units built under this agreement, as part of a larger strategy to provide a range of housing options for vulnerable British Columbians.

Visit the province's Web site for online information and services.

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## **BACKGROUNDER**

### **The Union Gospel Mission**

The Union Gospel Mission started in 1940 and exists to provide hope to the hungry, hurting and homeless in Greater Vancouver through its multi-faceted ministries. These include drug and alcohol recovery programs, adult education programs that help people achieve their Grade 12 equivalency or GED, and English as a second language.

The Orchard, a 75-unit townhouse complex in Surrey, offers lower-income families and individuals clean, safe and affordable housing. The Cordova Street Mission in Vancouver shelters up to 36 men and women daily in the Downtown Eastside. Union Gospel Mission serves over 200,000 meals each year and is part of a family of 270 rescue missions that reach out to broken people in inner cities around the world.

### **Development Facts**

Location: 361 Heatley Ave., Vancouver

Number of units: 81

The development consists of housing for lower-income urban singles and commercial space on the ground floor. The Union Gospel Mission has leased the ground floor commercial space and will use it to operate its thrift store, warehousing and sorting operation.

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As part of the tenancy agreement, residents must agree to maintain a drug- and alcohol-free environment. This formal policy is the first of its kind in Canada.

### **Partnership contributions**

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. contributed \$1.215 million toward the capital costs of this project.

The provincial government, through BC Housing, will contribute approximately \$7.4 million in operating subsidies over the next 35 years.

The City of Vancouver purchased the land, valued at \$1.2 million, and is leasing it to the Union Gospel Housing Society at 75 per cent of market value.

The Union Gospel Mission contributed \$175,000 in capital towards the development.

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