



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 20, 2024

**Urgent Call for Provincial Action:
The Village Model Offers Immediate, Scalable Solution to Homelessness Crisis**

VANCOUVER – As British Columbia Mayors gather at the Union of BC Municipalities conference in Vancouver, conversation is happening around a proven solution that offers an immediate path forward to address the worsening homelessness crisis: The Village model of supportive housing, first implemented in Duncan during the COVID-19 pandemic. Built with strong community partnerships and support from BC Housing and the Province of BC, The Village currently provides safe housing for 34 previously unsheltered individuals and has helped at least 9 individuals successfully transition to market housing, residential treatment, or conventional supportive housing. With individual sleeping units and shared communal spaces, this model has been in place for over 3 years. This innovative approach, integrating vital support services, has transformed the lives of residents while easing the impacts of social disorder on surrounding communities, first responders, and local businesses.

A Proven Solution That Works—Now

The Village model has been a transformative, game-changing solution. Beyond housing, residents benefit from essential services such as peer outreach, mental health support, neighborhood monitoring, sanitation, and incident response. This comprehensive approach has resulted in improved physical and mental well-being for residents, enhanced community safety, and measurable reductions in the social and economic impacts of homelessness, particularly in the area surrounding The Village.

The Village and other similar sites, such as Victoria's Caledonia Place (formerly Tiny Town) and Port Alberni's Walyaqil Tiny Home Village, as well HEARTH Village being established in Campbell River, are among the first to adopt this out-of-the-box response, proving that real change can happen quickly and efficiently. In 2023, BC Housing launched the Homelessness Encampment Action Response Temporary Housing (HEARTH) program, designed to provide rapid housing solutions for entrenched encampments. While The Village has been provided temporary operating funding through the HEARTH program, this model of supportive housing must be expanded and scaled up as a long-term solution. It is more than a temporary response to encampments; it is a critical cost-effective solution to address the overwhelming homelessness crisis impacting communities across the province.

We Cannot Wait—Immediate Action Needed

In 2023, the Union of BC Municipalities passed a unanimous resolution asking the Province to incorporate The Village model of as part of the supportive housing continuum and provide a mechanism for this model to receive continued funding from BC Housing. We urge the Province to act immediately and to secure ongoing, sustainable funding for a province-wide expansion that will help meet the unique needs of communities.

Every day without action means more lives are lost, more pressure is placed on healthcare systems, and more frontline workers experience burnout. The economic and social costs to communities continue to mount. The evidence is clear: The Village model saves lives, restores dignity, and alleviates strain on essential services.

A Scalable, Cost-Effective Solution

The Village model is uniquely positioned to scale quickly, providing housing for up to 60 individuals per site—particularly those who struggle to thrive in conventional multi-unit supportive housing. This model can be implemented swiftly and cost-effectively, offering housing at a tenth of the cost of conventional supportive housing construction. Sites can be operational in just a few months rather than multiple years. Furthermore, the units can be repurposed if not needed in the future for supportive housing.

The units can be built to the BC Building Code with similar lifespans to traditional multi-unit supportive housing. More than 10 years of operating costs for a site can be funded from the millions of dollars in savings from construction costs.

Mayors Request Immediate Provincial Commitment

“The Village model enables small numbers of our residents to create community, re-learn employment and social skills, in a supportive environment that focuses on dignity, safety and responsibility. Examples around the province are working, and have stabilized and strengthened Villagers and their surrounding neighbourhood. The Village model is a successful path out of homelessness, and is worthy of our support.”

- Mayor Marianne Alto, Victoria

“Inspired by the leadership of Mayor Staples and the successes that we have seen in Duncan, Campbell River City Council successfully advocated for a similar partnership with BC Housing. Later this fall 40 temporary housing units will open in Campbell River, operated by Lookout Housing Society and funded through the HEARTH program. This project will offer safe, indoor shelter to people experiencing homelessness in Campbell River and support a healthy and safe community for all by alleviating issues in our downtown.”

- Mayor Kermit Dahl, Campbell River

“As mayors, we’ve seen the devastating impact of homelessness on individuals and communities. The Village model works - it saves lives, cuts costs, and provides pathways to stability and healing. Every day we delay means more lives lost and greater strain on our systems. We have the solution and the data to prove it. The Province must act now to make this model a permanent part of our housing strategy.”

- Mayor Michelle Staples, Duncan

“This is a commonsense approach that will relieve some of the tide of human misery we see in our streets and give hope to others.”

- Mayor Leonard Krog, Nanaimo

For more information about The Village model and its impact on housing solutions in BC, please contact the following:

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Background

- **Overview:** The Village model provides individual sleeping units with shared communal spaces for dining, gathering, and washroom facilities. It offers immediate, scalable housing solutions, while integrating comprehensive support services tailored to residents' needs, many of whom face significant barriers to other housing options.
- **Cost Effective Operations:** The operating cost per resident of The Village is comparable to traditional multi-unit buildings, with the provision of more robust programming and wrap-around supports.
- **Cost Effective Construction:** The construction costs for the individual sleeping units are significantly lower than the est. \$500,000 per unit for traditional multi-unit buildings. Depending on the specifications and amenities provided on site, the cost is \$15,500 for shorter lifespan, less robust structures, up to \$45,000 per unit for 170 sq ft structures that fully meet the BC building code and have a 50-year lifespan. Additional costs for servicing, site prep, and stand-alone office/washroom buildings add approximately \$21,000 per unit. A 40 unit site can be operated for over 15 years with the construction cost savings. **These costs are based on local manufacturing costs.*
- **Speed of Construction:** It takes a minimum of two years to construct a traditional multi-unit supportive housing site, even when using prefabricated units. Construction completion of The Village takes 3-6 months from order to delivery, including site prep and utility installations.
- **Land Space Requirements:** The number of units at The Village is less per land area than multi-unit construction; however, the construction cost savings would far outweigh the addition land purchase costs.
- **Immediate Cost Savings for Other Agencies:** While some cost savings to other agencies would be realized over time (e.g. reducing RCMP calls for service or hospital visits), The Village immediately resulted in improved efficiency of healthcare outreach service delivery and decreased visits to the hospital of some residents prior to the village by an average of 75%.
- **Neighbourhood Integration:** The Village model includes a strong peer programs, resident and staff neighbourhood monitoring, street clean-up, open communication with neighbours, and an active Community Advisory Committee.