

British Columbia News

Doors open to new homes for people in need in Abbotsford

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/19343>

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Abbotsford - New modular homes with around-the-clock staffing and services in Abbotsford will offer hope to people experiencing homelessness.

“There are too many people in the community that don’t have the comfort and security of an affordable home — something that everyone deserves,” said Bob D’Eith, MLA for Maple Ridge-Mission, on behalf of Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. “Many people will no longer have to worry about where they’ll sleep each night and they will have access to the support services they need to help them break the cycle of homelessness.”

Located at 1640 Riverside Rd., the newly completed three-storey modular apartment building features 44 units, including eight units designed for people with disabilities. Each unit is private, with a washroom and kitchenette. The ground floor includes a commercial-grade kitchen, common dining area, laundry facilities and support service rooms.

“On behalf of the City of Abbotsford, I’d like to thank the Province for its continued investment in Abbotsford,” said Henry Braun, mayor, City of Abbotsford. “This new facility is an important part of supporting the most vulnerable individuals in our community.”

Lookout Housing and Health Society will operate the building and provide residents with meal programs, life and employment skills training and access to health and wellness support services. The modular building is located next to the existing year-round 40-bed shelter on Riverside Road, which is also operated by the society.

“Lookout is very pleased to operate 44 units of new housing for vulnerable people living in Abbotsford,” said Shayne Williams, CEO, Lookout Housing and Health Society. “In the past year we served over 200 individuals at the Riverside Shelter; however, given the lack of affordable housing opportunities, we were only able to move 37 people into homes in the local community. This new supportive housing initiative will provide the community of Abbotsford greater housing opportunities for those most in need, supporting individuals as they move towards greater independence.”

B.C.-based manufacturer Metric Modular was selected by the Province to manufacture the modular units in Abbotsford, and several other modular projects in B.C., supporting jobs and local economies.

Provincial investments in the past 18 months are supporting the construction of 4,700 new supportive homes for people experiencing homelessness throughout B.C.

Delivering affordable housing is a shared priority between government and the BC Green Party caucus and is part of the Confidence and Supply Agreement.

People will start moving into the new homes in mid-April 2019. A second modular housing project on Livingstone Avenue, which will provide 39 units, will start welcoming people in May.

- The Province invested \$7.6 million for the building and will provide an annual operating subsidy of approximately \$1 million.
- The land for the supportive housing project is being leased to BC Housing from the City of Abbotsford.
- Through the Building BC: Rapid Response to Homelessness program, the Province is investing \$291 million to build 2,000 homes around the province and providing annual operating funding to provide 24/7 staffing and support services. More than 1,100 of these homes are complete.
- The Building BC: Rapid Response to Homelessness program is expected to create more than 2,000 jobs throughout the province, which includes 1,400 direct jobs and another 650 jobs in supplier industries.

Learn More:

Building BC: Rapid Response to Homelessness program: <https://www.bchousing.org/partner-services/Building-BC/rapid-response-homelessness>

For a map of the modular projects, visit:

https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Building_BC_Rapid_Response_Homelessness_Map.pdf

To find out what the Province is doing to improve housing affordability, visit:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/bc-government-addressing-housing-affordability-challenges>

Read Homes for B.C., government's 30-point plan to address housing affordability for British Columbians: bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2018/homesbc/2018_Homes_For_BC.pdf

A backgrounder follows.

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Backgrounders

Services and supports provided for modular housing

All new modular housing buildings in the province have around-the-clock staffing to help young people, people with disabilities, seniors and others in critical need of housing.

The Province is providing annual operating funding to help those with the highest housing needs to build new beginnings. Experienced non-profit housing providers will provide support to tenants based on their assessed needs.

Services and supports provided to young people, seniors, people with disabilities and others who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless, include:

- meals;
- connecting residents to community supports, such as education and employment opportunities, and health and wellness services, including mental-health and addiction treatment programs;
- individual or group support services, such as life skills, community information and social and recreational programs;
- case planning and needs assessment;
- other supports designed to assist residents in meeting their personal and housing goals, including culturally specific programs;
- help accessing income assistance, pension benefits, disability benefits, obtaining a B.C. identification card or establishing a bank account;
- support for residents to learn how to operate and maintain a home; and
- no-cost laundry services, either on- or off-site.