



VIA EMAIL

Ref. 67449

April 19, 2024

His Worship Simon Yu and Council
Mayor of the City of Prince George
1100 Patricia Boulevard
Prince George BC V2L 3V9
Email: simon.yu@princegeorge.ca; mayoradmin@princegeorge.ca

Dear Mayor Yu and Council:

I am writing to confirm the commitments of the Province to move forward with the City of Prince George and key partners to continue the implementation of the HEART and HEARTH programs.

I recognize this work can be complex and challenging for all partners involved but am heartened that we share a commitment to supporting unhoused people in Prince George to come inside and access the supports they need to become stably housed, which will benefit the entire community. I am aware of the questions and key concerns raised at the community engagement sessions facilitated by BC Housing in March, including regarding safety concerns regarding ongoing encampments in the area.

I would also like to acknowledge the work and efforts of the City of Prince George to partner with the Ministry of Housing and BC Housing to implement the HEART and HEARTH programs and expand the spaces and supports necessary to reduce homelessness and prevent future encampments.

Regarding the Provincial commitments, I can confirm the funding through BC Housing to support the opening of the HEARTH 397 3rd Ave site for 43 units with the intent that this site will be used as transitional housing ("HEARTH 397"). This is in addition to the Provincial investments to secure 45 existing and 96 new HEARTH beds at the Knights Inn and North Starr Inn and Suites for people at risk of, or currently experiencing homelessness.

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**Office of the
Minister of Housing**

Website:
www.gov.bc.ca/housing

Mailing Address:
PO Box 9074 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E9
Phone: 236 478-3970

Location:
Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC V8V 1X4
Email: HOUS.Minister@gov.bc.ca

To move forward, I can assure the City of Prince George Mayor and Council that the Province commits to:

- Working with BC Housing to select a qualified operator for HEARTH 397 that will support residents as they take the necessary steps towards housing, which may include health, employment and community program referrals. These units are transitional housing under the HEARTH program framework.
- At the start of operations, ensuring that a minimum of three staff members on site at HEARTH 397, 24/7. These staff will be experienced in supporting vulnerable populations and have established relationships with vulnerable populations in the local context. Staffing levels may need to be adjusted, at the discretion of BC Housing, based on operational requirements;
- Address site security at HEARTH 397 with a full fence, controlled access to the parking area and pedestrian residences. Cameras and lighting will also be put in place for security purposes, with necessary revisions made to site security at HEARTH 397 at the discretion of BC Housing, based on operational requirements;
- Work with the City and BC Housing on a joint communications plan with coordinated timing and key message sharing.
- Data and information sharing in accordance with privacy legislation and policies; and subject to BC Housing policies and operational requirements; for example weekly HEARTH and Encampment Response Plan transition-phase reports with numbers of people supported, including offers and moves into shelter and housing, and the number of housing units available and in development.

I would like to further acknowledge the City's request for provincial information sharing regarding the intent to seek an application to the courts to close the Lower Patricia Encampment to overnight sheltering following offers of suitable alternative shelter and housing to the occupants. I understand that, following the closure of the Lower Patricia Encampment, it is the City's intent to remediate and close the site to permanent sheltering.

Thank you again and I look forward to continuing to work together to support unhoused people in the City of Prince George and prevent future encampments through access to shelter, housing and supports.

Sincerely,



Ravi Kahlon
Minister of Housing

pc: Chief Dolleen Logan, Lheidli T'enneh First Nations
Chief Leah Stump, Nazko First Nations