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# MEDIA ADVISORY

**Community Services Department**  
1100 Patricia Boulevard, Prince George, BC V2L 3V9

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October 6, 2008

## Community delegation to look at innovative housing strategy

A small delegation of community stakeholders will be traveling to Portland, Oregon on October 8, 9 and 10 to investigate a unique sustainable housing initiative in that city.

The primary objective of this trip is to learn how another mid-sized North American city has incorporated the principles of *Housing First*, a very successful anti-homelessness initiative, into its community development. It will also provide insight into how a similar housing strategy might be applied within the context of the City of Prince George's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP).

"We have the opportunity to redirect our focus and resources on long term strategies to achieve sustainable housing that produces positive results for people and their communities," said Mayor Colin Kinsley, who will participate in the delegation, along with a multi-sectoral group of community stakeholders. "This will offer us a chance to see first-hand an initiative that shows real promise in helping find solutions to homelessness."

*Housing First* is an approach to ending homelessness that centers on providing homeless people with housing quickly and then providing services as needed. Sustainable housing strategies based on the principles of *Housing First* are being introduced successfully in a number of cities across North America. In just two years, Portland has found permanent housing for 1,500 chronically homeless individuals.

The City of Prince George is developing an innovative housing strategy as part of its ICSP. This process has resulted in the identification of the opportunity to research methods and strategies associated with the Portland experience.

Representatives involved in the implementation of the City of Portland's housing strategy will be available by phone to media interested in finding out more about the success of the initiative in that city. Please consult the attached list for contact information.

Members of the Prince George delegation will provide an initial report on the results of the trip to Portland at a media briefing during Homelessness Action Week, October 13-17. A full report will be provided to Prince George City Council at a later date.

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For more information, and to get in contact with the Portland representatives, contact:  
Chris Bone  
Social Policy Facilitator  
City of Prince George  
Phone: 250-614-7882  
Cell: 250-612-8556

## Sustainable housing delegation to Portland, Oregon

### The Initiative

A small delegation of community stakeholders will be traveling to Portland, Oregon on October 8, 9 and 10 to investigate a unique sustainable housing initiative in that city. The primary objective of this trip is to learn how another mid-sized North American city has incorporated the principles of *Housing First*, a very successful anti-homelessness initiative, into its community development. It will also provide insight into how a similar housing strategy might be applied within the context of the City of Prince George's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP).

### The Issue

Homelessness is one of our most serious socioeconomic issues and impacts all parts of our community and our economy. Research has shown that it would cost less to provide every homeless person in Canada with stable, supportive housing than to continue doing what we are doing now.

- People who are homeless are more likely to access costly health care services.
- People who are homeless spend more time in jail or prison which is tremendously costly.
- Decreased health and more time spent in jails or prisons means that homeless people have more obstacles to contributing to society through their work and creativity.
- Emergency shelter is a costly alternative to permanent housing. While it is sometimes necessary for short-term crises, it too often serves as long-term housing.
- Homeless children also face barriers to education. Because many homeless children have such poor education experiences, their future prospects may suffer. This makes the effects of homelessness much longer lasting than just the time spent in shelters.

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### What is Housing First?

*Housing First* is an approach to ending homelessness that centers on providing homeless people with housing quickly and then providing services as needed. It is being introduced successfully in a number of cities across North America.

The difference between the *Housing First* approach and traditional emergency shelter or transitional housing approaches is that it is “housing-based,” with an immediate and primary focus on helping individuals and families quickly access and sustain permanent housing. The foundation of *Housing First* is:

- There is a focus on helping individuals and families access and sustain permanent rental housing as quickly as possible and the housing is not time-limited.
- A variety of services are delivered primarily following a housing placement to promote housing stability and individual well-being.
- Such services are time-limited or long-term depending upon individual need.
- Housing is not contingent on compliance with services – instead, participants must comply with a standard lease agreement and are provided with the services and supports that are necessary to help them do so successfully.

For more information on *Housing First*, go to <http://www.endhomelessness.org/section/tools/housingfirst>

## What would a delegation to another city accomplish?

- Seeing first-hand the programs in action, being able to ask questions directly of those involved will help determine the applicability of the model for Prince George.
- By involving a multi-sectoral group of community stakeholders, a common understanding can be developed.
- The delegation can serve as a catalyst to bring service providers, government, and the business community together to establish a shared vision for a sustainable housing strategy, and a shared commitment to take action.
- The delegation will also provide an opportunity to generate important community education and discussion about an issue that is fundamental to building a healthy, vibrant and sustainable community in which all citizens are treated equally and have equal opportunity.

## Why Portland?

In 2005 the City of Portland implemented a 10-year housing strategy based in part on *Housing First* principles. The vision reflects a focus on housing the most chronically homeless, streamlining access to existing services in order to prevent and reduce other homelessness and concentrating resources on programs that offer measurable results. Portland successfully and permanently housed 1,500 chronically homeless in the program's first two years.

## Who will be participating?

The delegation will have a cross-section of key stakeholders involved in the development of a sustainable housing strategy in Prince George.

Participating agencies include:

- City of Prince George
- Northern Health
- Prince George Native Friendship Centre
- Ministry of Housing and Social Development
- Community Partners Addressing Homelessness
- Downtown Prince George
- RCMP
- BC Housing

## The big picture

Any attempt to battle homelessness is only as strong as the community that supports it. It must be part of a greater effort to improve the lives and well-being of all those who call the community home.

Prince George, like many cities, is putting renewed emphasis on integrated and collaborative planning. The City's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan is intended to provide a tool to ensure all areas of sustainability – typically, environmental, social, and economic – are considered together in a manner that is integrated and inclusive.

Integrated Community Sustainability Planning is not new. What is new is the global awakening to the fact that we need to do better in an integrated way, not just managing each single issue as it presents itself in a community.

Everything is connected. And everyone needs to be at the table.

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For more information:

Chris Bone

Social Policy Facilitator

City of Prince George

Phone: 250-614-7882/Cell: 250-612-8556





CITY OF PORTLAND, OREGON



Bureau of Police  
Tom Potter, Mayor  
Rosanne M. Sizer, Chief of Police  
1111 S.W. 2nd Avenue • Portland, OR 97204 • Phone: 503-823-0000 • Fax: 503-823-0342  
Integrity • Compassion • Accountability • Respect • Excellence • Service

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Police  
Mayor

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## *Prince George Dignitary Visit Itinerary*

### **Portland Police Bureau**

Central Precinct Desk: (503) 823-0097  
Commander Mike Reese: (503) 793-9307  
Bill Sinnot: (503) 552-6778  
Sergeant Matt Engen: (503) 793-6646  
Officer Jeff Myers: (503) 793-6852

[www.portlandonline.com/police](http://www.portlandonline.com/police)

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[mengen@portlandpolice.org](mailto:mengen@portlandpolice.org)  
[jmyers@portlandpolice.org](mailto:jmyers@portlandpolice.org)

### **Volunteers of America**

Pam Kelly: (503) 235-8655

[www.voar.org](http://www.voar.org)  
[pkelly@voar.org](mailto:pkelly@voar.org)

### **Salvation Army**

Fay Schuler: (503) 731-3916

[www.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.salvationarmyusa.org)  
[fay.schuler@usw.salvationarmy.org](mailto:fay.schuler@usw.salvationarmy.org)

### **Central City Concern**

Ed Blackburn: (503) 200-3884  
Sarah Goforth: (503) 467-4756  
Sonya Ervin: (503) 473-3791

[www.centralcityconcern.org](http://www.centralcityconcern.org)  
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### **Bureau of Housing and Community Development**

Sally Erickson: (503) 823-0883  
Liora Berry: (503) 823-2391

[www.portlandonline.com/bhcd](http://www.portlandonline.com/bhcd)  
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[lberry@ci.portland.or.us](mailto:lberry@ci.portland.or.us)

### **Outside In**

John Duke: (503) 535-3804  
Angie Hurley: (503) 535-3908

[www.outsidein.org](http://www.outsidein.org)  
[jduke@outsidein.org](mailto:jduke@outsidein.org)  
[angie@outsidein.org](mailto:angie@outsidein.org)

### **Portland Business Alliance**

Mike Kuykendall: (503) 552-6766

[www.portlandalliance.com](http://www.portlandalliance.com)  
[mkuykendall@portlandalliance.com](mailto:mkuykendall@portlandalliance.com)

**Community Policing: Making the Difference Together**  
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Police Information Line: 503-823-4636, TTY (for hearing and speech impaired): 503-823-4736 Website: <http://www.portlandpolicebureau.com>



## CITY OF PORTLAND, OREGON



### Bureau of Police

Tom Potter, Mayor

Rosanne M. Sizer, Chief of Police

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## *Prince George Dignitary Visit Itinerary*

### **Wednesday October 8, 2008**

| <u>Time</u> | <u>Location</u>            | <u>Topic</u>                                | <u>Point of contact</u>           |
|-------------|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 0800-0830   | 204 NW 1 <sup>st</sup> Ave | Introduction and Orientation                | Sgt Matt Engen                    |
| 0830-1030   | 204 NW 1 <sup>st</sup> Ave | NLCEP history and creation                  | Ofc Jeff Myers<br>DDA Dave Hannon |
| 1030-1200   | 537 SE Alder St            | Volunteers of America:<br>Drug treatment    | Pam Kelly                         |
| 1200-1330   |                            | Lunch                                       |                                   |
| 1330-1500   | 204 NW 1 <sup>st</sup> Ave | Downtown crime prevention strategies        | Ofc Jeff Myers                    |
| 1500-1630   |                            | Old Town Walking Tour / Program site visits | Ofc Jeff Myers<br>Sgt Matt Engen  |

### **Thursday October 9, 2008**

| <u>Time</u> | <u>Location</u>        | <u>Topic</u>  | <u>Point of contact</u>       |
|-------------|------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 0800-0845   | 11 NW 5 <sup>th</sup>  | Salvation Army Female Emergency Shelter   | Fay Schuler                   |
| 0900-1200   | 8 NW 8 <sup>th</sup>   | Central City Concern:<br>Supportive Housing & Addiction Services                | Ed Blackburn<br>Sarah Goforth |
| 1200-1330   |                        | Lunch   |                               |
| 1330-1500   | City Hall<br>Rose Room | Bureau of Housing and Community Development<br>10 Year plan to end homelessness | Sally Erickson                |

### **Friday October 10, 2008**

| <u>Time</u> | <u>Location</u>          | <u>Topic</u>  | <u>Point of contact</u> |
|-------------|--------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 0800-1000   | 1132 SW 13 <sup>th</sup> | Outside In:<br>IDU Health Services / Syringe Exchange | Angie Hurley            |
| 1030-1130   | 200 SW Market            | Portland Business Alliance                            | Mike Kuykendall         |
| 1130-1300   |                          | Lunch   |                         |
| 1300        |                          | Return to PDX   |                         |

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