

## Work begins on the 7th and Fir Supportive Housing Site

Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson and housing minister Rich Coleman broke ground on the \$22.5-million housing development at 1601 W. 7th Avenue on City donated the land, worth about \$32 million.



Once completed, the nine-storey building will provide 62 apartments, as well as appropriate support services for some of the city's most vulnerable citizens. "This is a watershed moment in our commitment to build housing that is accessible and meaningful for people in Vancouver who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless," said Coleman.

Robertson said building new affordable housing is critical in the city's goal of ending street homelessness by 2015. "In the past two years, we have made incredible progress on homelessness, whether it is opening new shelters throughout Vancouver or starting construction on more than 1,500 units of new supportive housing," the mayor said.

The building will be managed and operated by the Katherine Sanford Housing Society together with the MPA Society. Almost half of the new development's 62 units are slated for people struggling with mental-health problems, who will receive "enhanced" supports.

The 7th Avenue development is one of the long-awaited 14 housing projects to be built on city-owned land. Construction on six of them started in 2009, while the province and the city scrambled to secure funding on the remaining eight.

Approximately \$205 million will be paid for by the provincial government, financed mostly by the sale and redevelopment of the Little Mountain housing project, with the rest of the money donated by the non-profit Streethome Foundation.

The 7th Avenue housing site is the first out of the eight to be built, as well as the first to be funded by the Streethome Foundation, which raises money from the private sector to fight homelessness. It is scheduled to be completed in 2012.