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Vancouver Agreement renewed for second five-year term

BACKGROUND

Signed on March 9, 2000, the Vancouver Agreement is an urban development initiative of the governments of Canada, British Columbia and Vancouver. The first focus is the city's Downtown Eastside because of the serious economic, social and public safety challenges found in the community, which is Canada's poorest neighbourhood.

The goals of the Vancouver Agreement are:

- To increase economic development in the Downtown Eastside.
- To improve the health of area residents.
- To increase public safety.

Four strategies, each with an array of projects and initiatives, were developed to achieve these goals.

1. Economic development and job creation.
2. Dismantle the area's open drug scene.
3. Turn problem hotels, particularly those that offer single-room-occupancy housing into safe, clean places to live.
4. Make the community safer for the most vulnerable, particularly women, youth and children.

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- The Vancouver Agreement represents a new way for governments to work together and with community and business groups.
- Since March 2000, the Agreement has created innovative partnerships between government agencies and with community groups and business in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.
- Initially, the Agreement did not have designated funding. Government partners collaborated to contribute and leverage funding for projects that addressed the community's economic, social and public safety challenges.
- In order to best support community projects and economic development initiatives to improve living conditions in the Downtown Eastside, departments and ministries from the three levels of government worked together to avoid duplicating government services and funding and support for community projects.
- As work continued through 2001-2002, a strategic plan was developed and a small secretariat established to coordinate the increasing number of Vancouver Agreement initiatives and task teams.
- In April 2003 in order to implement the strategic plan, the federal and provincial governments announced they would each contribute \$10 million to the Vancouver Agreement.
- This funding was in addition to staffing resources, and coordination and financial support for projects in the spirit of the Vancouver Agreement from many ministries and departments. The City of Vancouver contributes heritage preservation incentives and increased program funding from its Downtown Eastside capital fund, as well as in-kind goods and services and dedicated staff resources.
- Vancouver Agreement funds complement other available funding sources for projects that address one or more of the Agreement's goals. Generally, projects include community and/or business partners.

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