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## 'A significant step forward': Iveson commends \$24.8M investment to battle homelessness

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The Lauderdale Homes duplexes are being redeveloped into 37 affordable housing units.

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EDMONTON -- Officials from all three levels of government announced a plan Wednesday morning to invest \$24.8 million into supportive housing in Edmonton.

The money will go toward three City of Edmonton supportive housing sites in Inglewood, Terrace Heights and Westmount, totaling 130 units.

"For Indigenous peoples and those at risk of homelessness," said Ahmed Hussen, federal minister of families, children and social development, during a virtual news conference.

"Homeward Trust will operate the three projects and provide supports to residents."

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A seniors housing project called Lauderdale Terrace will also receive \$6.9 million.

The GEF Seniors Housing project will see the Lauderdale Homes retirement residence at 103 Street and 129 Avenue go from 12 duplex units to 37 affordable housing units for low-income seniors.

The first 10 units are expected to open in September.

Twelve of the 37 units will be dedicated to senior women at risk of homelessness and senior women supporting adult children with developmental disabilities.

"The fourth project Lauderdale Terrace will be headed by GEF Seniors Housing," Hussen said. "We know it's not easy and we know that they're facing trying times during one of the biggest health crisis in history."

The \$6.5 million being provided by the Government of Alberta will ensure the Westmount project of five supportive housing developments, or 210 units, will be completed by March 2022.

"These projects are going to be really, really critical in the work that we need to do to make that number that we've seen increase for the first time in 15 years in our community in terms of homelessness, pivot, and course correct and get us back on track," said Homeward Trust CEO Susan McGee.

Mayor Don Iveson called ending homelessness "a top priority" for the city to help recover from the pandemic, adding it is "crucial" all levels government are committed to the cause.

"Prior to COVID-19, Edmonton was already facing a critical shortage of 900 units of supportive housing for individuals with complex medical needs, histories of trauma and mental health issues," he said. "The pandemic has exacerbated these issues, and the costs of reacting to them, which is why there is no time like the present to pivot to prevention strategies."

The Government of Canada's \$1 billion Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) is helping support 3,000 permanent, new affordable housing units across Canada.

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Artistic rendering of Ingleswood Supportive Housing project. (City of Edmonton)

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