

**From the WISH Drop-In Centre Society**  
***For Immediate Release***  
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## **Vancouver Agreement and Ministry of Public Safety/Solicitor General Join in Three-Year Funding Agreement for Mobile Access Project (MAP)**

*Vancouver, BC* – The Mobile Access Project (MAP) van will be on the streets of Vancouver again after the successful negotiation of a funding agreement between the BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and the Vancouver Agreement partners (an urban development initiative including the government of British Columbia and the City of Vancouver).

MAP, an overnight van now in its sixth year of providing safety and services for women survival sex workers living and working on the streets of Vancouver, has been off the road since June 13, 2009 due to lack of funding. The partners to the Vancouver Agreement and the BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General confirmed their commitment today to a year-to-year contract for MAP, approved for the next three years.

“Allies of MAP have rallied to urge funding for this service, which offers women respite in the overnight hours when they are most vulnerable out on Vancouver streets,” says Kate Gibson, Executive Director of the WISH Drop-In Centre Society. “We are thrilled to have these levels of government come together to support this essential service.”

“Funding provided by the Government of BC and the Vancouver Agreement partners tells women working on the streets of Vancouver that they matter,” adds Jeanne Legare, Chair of the WISH Board of Directors. “It tells them that we must stand up to the violence they face and that we must do everything in our power to stop it and to protect the health and safety of all women in our communities.”

MAP began in 2004 as a partnership between the WISH Drop-In Centre Society, the Prostitution Alternatives Counselling and Education (PACE) Society and the Vancouver Agreement Women’s Strategy Task Team, responding to a call by current and former sex workers for mobile health and safety services for women working on the streets of Vancouver.

Since 2004, MAP has provided an outreach van from 10:30 pm to 5:30 am, seven nights a week, with a route that takes it as far east as Boundary Road, south to Marine Drive and on through the Broadway, Fraser and Kingsway corridors, Vancouver East industrial areas, the Downtown Eastside and Davie Street. Staffed by a driver, a support worker and a peer-support worker, the van provides resources, health supplies, crisis intervention and important links to shelter, emergency services, support and reporting of ‘bad dates’ or predators.

MAP is scheduled to be back on the road by early September, a welcome presence sorely missed since June. “The van literally saves lives and reduces the environment of violence and high-risk behaviours on the streets at night,” says Gibson. “The loss of Lisa Arlene Francis, whose body was found in the Fraser River July 23, 2009, has been a tragic reminder of the continuing dangers of the survival sex trade. The return of the MAP van is an important step in providing realistic alternatives to some of the most vulnerable women in our society.”

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