

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: 280 McIntosh Road, Kelowna

January 2019

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1. Why was this site chosen?

BC Housing and the City of Kelowna are collaborating on a strategy to meet the urgent need for housing options for people who are homeless in Kelowna. This proposal is one of those options. BC Housing located the property, which was for sale. The City of Kelowna confirmed that the proposed use is consistent with the City's Official Community Plan Future Land Use designation for the property, that the site fits within the City's policy of locating supportive housing across the community, and that the proposal is in alignment with Kelowna's Journey Home Strategy.

Considerations for supportive housing sites include:

- Proximity to community services (commercial services and recreational activities)
- Accessibility to transit
- Adequate lot size
- Connections to utilities
- Compatible land use policies

2. Is this going to be a shelter? What is supportive housing?

Shelters provide access to a temporary bed or mat. The primary focus for shelters is to bring people indoors to get warm, access food, and get the support they need to move into housing. Supportive housing provides a home as well as 24/7 on-site support services. People who live in supportive housing must apply and go through a thorough assessment process. If accepted, they would live in a self-contained studio home with supports provided on-site, to ensure that they can achieve and maintain housing stability. All residents would sign a Program Agreement (similar to a Tenancy Agreement) and would pay rent.

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There are a variety of potential support services. Each resident may require different support. All residents receive individualized case planning to further their life and social skills. Skills training may include employment planning and programs to managing the transition to independence and recovery. Programming space in the building will facilitate training and support food preparation. Other services to residents include outreach workers, wellness checks, connection and referral to community services and support groups. When residents are ready to move onto market housing, staff can help residents to view apartments and liaise with landlords to support stable tenancies.

3. How are we working to create a healthy and safe community in the housing and in the neighbourhood?

BC Housing and the John Howard Society of the Central and South Okanagan (JHSCSO) are committed to being good neighbours. JHSCSO, as future operator, has over 60 years of experience in Kelowna. All supportive housing that we develop across the province provides a safe community both within the building and in the neighbourhood. Supportive housing is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by experienced staff.

BC Housing and JHSCSO will work together to ensure a rigorous tenant selection process that ensures staff can effectively manage the housing and provide the necessary support services for residents. All residents sign a Program Agreement that sets out expectations to be a good neighbour and tenant. Experience has shown that residents of supportive housing take great pride in their new homes and actively work to build a sense of community in their neighbourhood. For an example of supportive housing in Kelowna, read about Cardington Apartments:

www.bchousing.org/research-centre/library/tools-for-developing-social-housing/bk-case-study-community-acceptance-cardington

Similar to other new multi-unit residential developments, planning for the property and building would include an assessment to ensure Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) features are included. The building would be designed to maximize views of parking areas, entrances, sidewalks and other public spaces, and would include security features, such as cameras, fob entry, fencing, gates and lighting. The most important security feature, both for residents and the community, would be the 24-7 staffing.

The JHSCSO would also develop a Community Advisory Committee to discuss any emergent and ongoing issues towards building a safer and healthier community, with representation that may include BC Housing, Interior Health, the City of Kelowna, local RCMP, local service providers, local supportive housing residents and community members at large.

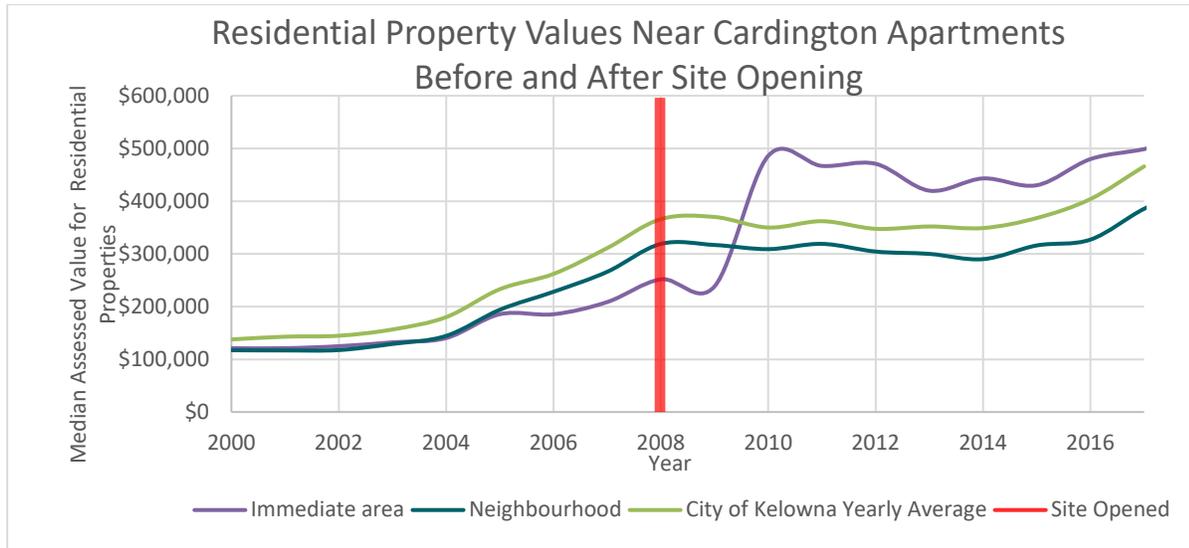
4. How will this affect my property value?

The Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction at SFU published a [study](#) indicating that property values have not declined with proximity to supportive housing. The report looked at 18 different studies and found there was no significant effect on either the sales price of homes in the neighbourhood or on the number of sales. The Housing Ministry also looked at the impacts of seven social housing projects on neighbouring property values. [The study](#) demonstrated that social housing projects have not had a negative impact on the sale prices of

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nearby homes based on a comparison with a control area. BC Housing conducted a case study series on property values for several communities around the province, [view that research here](#). It confirms that the Median Assessed Residential Property Value(s) in the neighbourhood around the Cardington Apartments followed the same pattern as the City of Kelowna overall in the two years pre- and post- opening of the site, with slightly above average growth rates.



Source: Landcor, 2018. Median Assessed Property Values.

5. How will this impact crime in the area?

Our experience with supportive housing is that crime does not increase around supportive housing. Just like any other resident in a neighbourhood, supportive housing residents take pride in their homes and actively work with the 24/7 staff in the building to watch out for unwelcome neighbourhood activity. BC Housing and the John Howard Society of the Central and South Okanagan understand and support the need for and importance of a safe community. See examples: www.bchousing.org/research-centre/library/tools-for-developing-social-housing/bk-case-study-community-acceptance-overview

6. Who would operate this housing? For how long?

The John Howard Society of the Central and South Okanagan (JHSCSO) will be responsible for property and operations management. JHSCSO is an experienced affordable and supportive housing operator in the Central and South Okanagan. For over 60 years, they have supported people from a variety of circumstances and needs, including, but not limited to, homelessness, mental illness, addiction and developmental disabilities.

The housing would be permanent. As a standard practice, BC Housing works with operators on a 3-year contract basis, with options to renew. This allows for continuous improvements and changing needs. Both BC Housing and the John Howard Society of the Central and South Okanagan are committed to providing the needed staffing to make this proposed housing a success.

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7. What is the staffing level?

A minimum of two staff will be on-site 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Additional staff including an operations manager, as well as cooks, property maintenance and support workers, and any additional programming staff, will also support the two 24/7 full-time staff. The manager would be onsite Monday-Friday.

8. What training will staff have?

The John Howard Society of the Central and South Okanagan will ensure that all staff will have the appropriate training and skills necessary to support the clients. The required training, as required by BC Housing, includes, but is not limited to: crisis prevention training; First Aid/CPR; mental health first aid training; domestic violence and safety planning; substance use awareness and safety training; and trauma-informed practice training.

9. Who would live here?

People who apply to live at the housing would need to meet eligibility requirements around income, homelessness and required supports and programming. Residents would be low-income individuals over the age of 19 who live in Kelowna, have history of homelessness, are at risk of homelessness, and who need additional support services to maintain housing. They would be provided support to assist with their successful tenancy, including daily meal services. All residents would pay rent.

The demographic of people who experience homelessness is as varied as any other neighbours. They may be seniors, people with disabilities, people who have employment but no housing, people who are working through mental health concerns and/or substance use. All residents in supportive housing have made a choice to work towards living a healthy, stable life.

10. How would people be selected?

BC Housing and the John Howard Society of the Central and South Okanagan would collaborate with local service providers in a coordinated access and assessment process to ensure an appropriate mix of residents with the right supports live in the housing. Every potential resident would be considered on an individual basis to ensure that the housing and services provided by the program match the support services that they need, such as life skills training, employment assistance, and help with accessing a range of social and health care services.

11. What expectations are made of residents? Are there consequences for behaviour?

Residents will sign a Program Agreement and will be expected to abide by it. The Program Agreement will address expectations about appropriate and respectful behavior especially as it relates to the health and safety of themselves and others. Staff will work with residents and the neighbours to foster good neighbourhood relations. Residents are expected to:

- Treat neighbours and community with consideration
- Not make excessive noise or cause unnecessary disturbances
- Ensure security doors are closed properly and not let any unknown persons into building
- Put garbage in the appropriate bins
- Clean up after pets

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- Not smoke in the common areas, including the front entrance.

JHSCSO may end an agreement at any time if a resident is:

- Engaging or behaving in a manner which is abusive and/or a threat to the mental or physical health or safety of anyone in the building/community;
- Significantly disrupting the quiet enjoyment of other participants and/or neighbours;
- Engaging in wilful vandalism or damage to the building or property.

Operations fall outside the Residential Tenancy Act, allowing the operator to take action quickly if problems arise or where residents need to be relocated to more appropriate housing.

12. Will alcohol and drugs be allowed on-site?

People experiencing homelessness suffer a range of challenges and are not restricted from accessing Supportive Housing due to a substance use issue. Supportive Housing follows an evidence based and internationally demonstrated Housing First model, which aims to end chronic homelessness by first providing stable housing, and then working with the resident to promote recovery and well being.

Tenancies are determined by means of an in-depth and coordinated assessment process that recognizes the importance of a safe and inclusive community. While abstinence is not a requirement to maintain tenancy, substance use is not permitted in public or common areas. To learn more about Housing First, including research and case studies, visit: www.homelesshub.ca and www.housingfirsttoolkit.ca.

13. Will visitors be allowed?

As with all rental housing, residents will be allowed guests. Visitors would need to check in with identification at the front desk with staff. There would be restrictions as to the number of guests and timing of visits.

14. Will people be allowed to loiter around the supportive housing?

Drop-in services will not be provided at this supportive housing, and there should be no reason for people to be loitering outside. Residents living in the housing will have access to a separate outdoor amenity space and the property.

15. Who is going to be responsible for keeping the facility and area clean?

BC Housing and the John Howard Society of the Central and South Okanagan are committed to being good neighbours in developing new supportive housing that is an asset to the community. Giving people stable housing and access to supports will keep them off the street. Both staff and residents will be committed to keeping the property and neighborhood maintained with a daily clean-up, just as any other resident in the neighborhood.

16. When will this be built?

BC Housing anticipates starting construction in spring 2019, with occupancy by fall 2019.