



Community Engagement Report

250 Terminal Avenue
Temporary Housing with Supports
Nanaimo, BC

February 2024

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Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this Community Engagement Report is to provide an overview of community engagement that took place regarding BC Housing’s temporary housing with supports development at 250 Terminal Avenue in Nanaimo, B.C. This report details how community members were engaged and key themes that emerged from the sessions.

Background

HEART and HEARTH

Many people experiencing homelessness are living in unsafe conditions in encampments throughout multiple communities in British Columbia.

To address these challenges, BC Housing is working with partners to provide people sheltering outdoors and living in encampments with better access to a range of support services, new shelters, and housing options through new programs.

The programs are funded by the Province of B.C. under the [Belonging in BC Homelessness Plan: Homeless Encampment Action Response Teams \(HEART\) and the Homeless Encampment Action Response Temporary Housing \(HEARTH\)](#). The HEART and HEARTH program is guided by a shared commitment by all partners to prioritize the health, physical safety, cultural safety, and dignity of people sheltering outside.

Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Nanaimo

In January 2024, the Province and the City of Nanaimo signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that formalizes their shared commitment to implement better homelessness response actions.

The MOU clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Province and the City in the implementation of HEART and HEARTH programs. The MOU’s objectives are to prioritize the health and safety of people sheltering outdoors and to create new temporary housing options to transition people indoors. This includes the rapid development of new shelter and housing options, as well as a more coordinated approach to outreach and provision of support services. Through the MOU, the City of Nanaimo has committed to bring forward available land and expedite land-use decisions for new shelter and supportive housing projects with the Province, through BC Housing.

250 Terminal Avenue

The temporary supportive housing at 250 Terminal Avenue is first opened in 2019. In 2024, the BC Housing renewed funding for this site, called Newcastle Place, under the Province’s HEARTH program.

As residents of Newcastle Place move to new permanent supportive housing at Cornerstone (285 Prideaux Street), units will then be re-opened to provide up to 50 more beds while we provide supports and services to people transitioning from shelters to permanent housing. Island Crisis Care Society will continue to operate the temporary housing with supports at Newcastle Place.

Engagement Goals

- To share information about the proposed temporary housing with supports, the planning process, and associated timelines;
- To build awareness about the importance and need for temporary housing in Nanaimo; and
- To listen and respond to questions and concerns from community members about the development.

Engagement Overview

BC Housing held two online Neighbourhood Dialogue Sessions on Tuesday, February 27 and Thursday, February 29, 2024. A total of 32 people attended and representatives from BC Housing and the City of Nanaimo participated in both events.

BC Housing notified neighbours and community members about the two dialogue sessions via direct letter mail.

Neighbourhood Dialogue Session: February 27, 2024

The first online session, held on February 27, 2024, was hosted on Zoom with **7 attendees**. The event consisted of a brief online presentation and video ([Appendix A](#)), followed by a question-and-answer period facilitated by a third party contractor ([Appendix B](#)). The speakers' panel included:

- BC Housing's Regional Director for the Vancouver Island Region, Jennifer Fox
- BC Housing's Development Manager, Jose Wong
- Island Crisis Care Society's Executive Director, Violet Hayes
- Newcastle Place's Program Manager, Sandra Fox
- One staff member from the City of Nanaimo
- 2 facilitators from Monogram Communications

Common themes from the attendees' questions included:

- Concern regarding the history of Newcastle Place
- Safety and security
- Zoning and building
- Measurements of success
- Resident transition support into the new temporary housing

More detailed questions are listed in ([Appendix B](#)).

Neighbourhood Dialogue Session: February 29, 2024

The second online session on February 29, 2024 was hosted on Zoom with **15 attendees**. The event consisted of the same presentation and video followed by another facilitated question-and-answer period. The presentation and panel was the same as the first event but with additional representation from the City. Common themes from the attendees' questions referenced similar questions and concerns from the first session.

More detailed questions are listed in ([Appendix C](#)).

Let's Talk Housing BC Webpage

BC Housing created a [dedicated webpage](#) to share information about the temporary housing with supports at 250 Terminal Avenue. The page invites public feedback through BC Housing's Community Relations email address (communityrelations@bchousing.org).

BC Housing Community Relations Email

Contact information for BC Housing's Community Relations inbox was included on all notification and presentation materials so community members and key stakeholders could ask questions, provide input on the project, and receive responses from BC Housing staff.

A follow-up message after each Neighbourhood Dialogue Session was delivered from the BC Housing Community Relations email to thank all participants who RSVP'd and to encourage any further questions or concerns that BC Housing and the City of Nanaimo could address in more detail. BC Housing will continue to monitor emails from dialogue participants as well as the larger community and welcome questions and feedback through the Community Relations inbox throughout the entire project.

Engagement Outcomes

The tools used effectively engaged neighbours. The Neighborhood Dialogue Sessions were appreciated by the community and were able to cover many questions and address many concerns from neighbours. While there was some opposition expressed, there were also expressions of support. Specifically, information-sharing about the details of how residents will be selected (via a shelter-to-homes model), helped mitigate various safety concerns.

BC Housing and the City of Nanaimo will continue to post updates to their respective webpages and look for future engagement opportunities with residents.

Appendices


Appendix A: February 27 and 29, 2024 Presentation

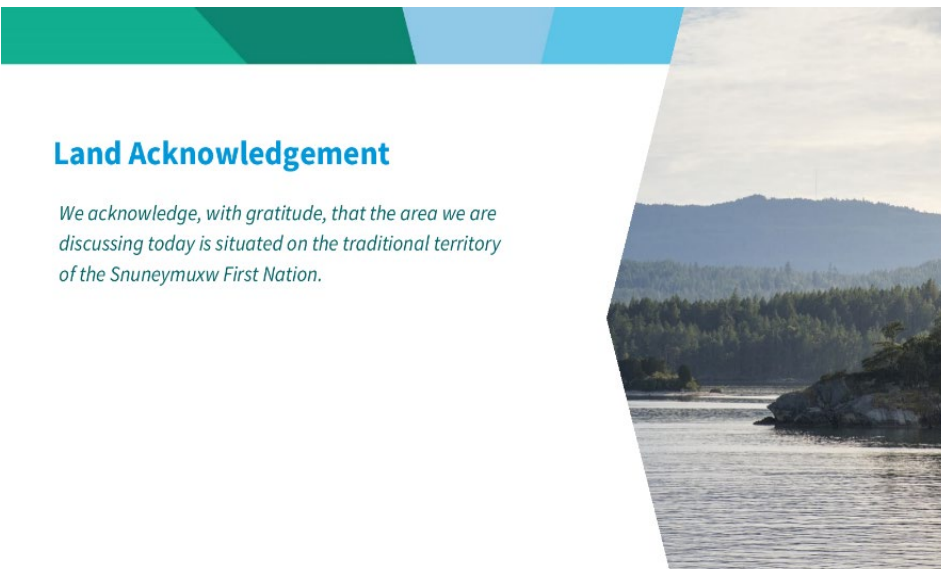
Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oK57o3WjDzg&t=768s>

A banner with a dark teal background and a decorative top border of green and blue geometric shapes. The text is centered in white.

Virtual Dialogue Session
250 Terminal Avenue, Nanaimo


Tuesday, February 27, 2024
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

 BC HOUSING

A banner with a white background and a decorative top border of green and blue geometric shapes. The text is on the left, and a photograph of a river and forest is on the right.

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge, with gratitude, that the area we are discussing today is situated on the traditional territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation.

A photograph showing a river flowing through a forested area with mountains in the background under a cloudy sky.

Introductions

- **Jennifer Fox** – BC Housing, Regional Director, Vancouver Island Region
- **Jose Wong** – Development Manager, BC Housing
- **Violet Hayes** – Executive Director, Island Crisis Care Society (ICCS)
- **Sandra Fox** – Newcastle Place Program Manager, ICCS



For our time together

We commit to:

- Come together in the spirit of community
- Share information openly and transparently
- Balance time for sharing information and answering questions



We ask that all participants:

- Use respectful, people-first language
- Ask brief, genuine questions and allow space for answers
- Consider there may be people experiencing homelessness present



Meeting details

Mute and chat functions

- All participants will be muted/unmuted by the facilitator
- Chat messages will only appear to the facilitator

Q&A

- Q&A time after the presentation
- Type questions into the Zoom Q&A
- This session is not being recorded

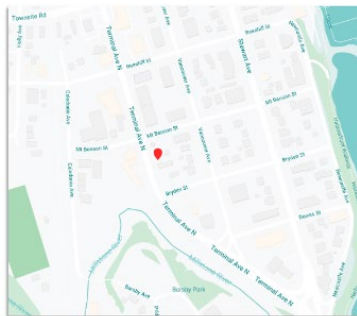


Topics for today

- Temporary Housing at 250 Terminal
- What's happening
- Looking ahead
- Community wellbeing
- How it will work
- Q&A



What's happening



Current residents of Newcastle Place will move to permanent supportive housing at Cornerstone (285 Prideaux) in the coming weeks.

50 units at Newcastle Place will then be re-opened to welcome long-term shelter guests while we work to develop permanent housing on the site.



Future plans

Open House
March 11, 2024
6-8 pm

Beban Park
Social Centre,
2300 Bowen Road



Funding under HEARTH

People experiencing homelessness are living in unsafe conditions.

- HEART and HEARTH is a new program designed to help people living outdoors and in encampments with better access to support services, shelters, and housing.
- HEART AND HEARTH supports coordinated, multi-agency outreach to people living outdoors and in encampments.
- 250 Terminal Temporary Housing is funded through BC Housing's HEARTH program.



Staff and security on site



The most important security feature for everyone is staffing:



- The site is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to provide support for residents and manage the building.
- Staff will be available to respond to any concerns from neighbours.
- ICCS will have staff on site 24/7 which does not include kitchen and janitorial staff who also help ensure safety on-site during their shifts.
- Key contacts available on the *Who To Call / When to Call* info sheet

Community and resident safety

- Security cameras
- A fenced property with controlled access for the security of the participants.
- Regular sweeps of the property and the immediate area by staff and residents.
- Residents will sign and be expected to abide by a Program Agreement that addresses expectations about appropriate and respectful behaviour.



Supports to help people prepare for housing

People living in the 50 temporary units at Newcastle Place will have access to:

- Daily meals
- Skills training
- On-site laundry
- Support navigating the housing system

Residents will have access to pre-employment and employment skills training and work placement program, through Project Rise.

"Never once in my life did I think I'd become homeless. My mom passed away and I just couldn't go on.

Newcastle Place took me in over three years ago and they became my new family. They made sure that I received anything I needed."

Renee
Resident at Newcastle Place



Project Rise



Shelter as a Gateway to Housing



COORDINATED ACCESS & ASSESSMENT

Shelters (98 beds in total)
 Unitarian Shelter (25 beds)
 New Hope Centre (24 beds)
 St. Peters (35 beds - winter)
 Samaritan Place (14 shelter beds for women)

HEARTH Temporary Housing
 250 Terminal
 1300 Island Highway
 Other Sites TBC

TRANSITION TO NEW SUPPORTIVE & SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

Housing with supports
 Haven Transition House - Fall 2025
 355 Nicol - Opening 2025
 250 Terminal (Perm) - Opening 2027
 Other housing TBC

Subsidized housing

Market rentals with supported rent supplements

Questions

Please ask your questions in the Q&A function.

We also welcome questions and comments by email:
communityrelations@bchousing.org

Visit the project webpage:
letstalkhousingbc.ca/Nanaimo



Appendix B: February 27, 2024 – Summary of Questions and Responses

Project Success Indicators: Neighbours wanted to understand the specific metrics and outcomes defining success, particularly in terms of housing stability and resource connectivity.

Response: One key indicator of success in the HEARTH program is when we are able to offer people a transition from community shelters into housing (including temporary housing with supports). This, importantly, frees up indoor spaces for people currently sheltering outdoors. Within our housing programs, another key indicator of success is connecting residents with the supports and resources they need to maintain stable housing. Whether that means long-term supportive, social/affordable or market housing depends on the resident and their individual needs.

Eviction Protocols: Clarification was requested on how any security and safety risks would be addressed, including reporting methods, intervention strategies and involvement of law enforcement.

Response: BC Housing and Island Crisis Care Society are committed to being good neighbours. The safety of residents, staff and the surrounding community is our priority.

Safety and security features include three staff onsite 24/7 and regular maintenance/sweeps of the property. Residents will also sign a Program Agreement that addresses expectations about appropriate and respectful behaviour. We will share a direct phone number with neighbours and commit to addressing any issues quickly and collaboratively. If any major disturbances were to occur, we would involve the RCMP as in any other neighbourhood.

Community Engagement and Security: There was a request to explore community engagement methods and the potential need for on-site security measures, with a focus on maintaining positive relations with neighbours and addressing safety concerns.

Response: BC Housing, ICCS and all Newcastle Place residents are committed to being good neighbours. ICCS will have three staff on site 24/7. If concerns or problems occur with specific residents on the project property, the operator will work with the person to find solutions. Key contacts are available on the *Who To Call / When to Call* info sheet provided to neighbours. The security and safety of residents, staff and the surrounding community is a priority. As with any other residence, major disturbance or violence issues would involve the RCMP.

Additional safety features include:

- A fully fenced site
- Security cameras
- Controlled access in and out

- A no-guest policy day and night

Unit Modifications and Agreement Status: Neighbours requested details regarding the state of unused units, refurbishment efforts.

Response: There are currently 28 spaces not being used at Newcastle Place. ICCS has kept these locked on site. ICCS staff do checks twice a day on empty rooms to ensure the shared bathrooms are locked and that the room entrances remain closed off.

Appendix C: February 29, 2024 – Summary Concerns and Responses

Permanent Housing Plans: Neighbours asked about plans for moving new residents from 250 Terminal HEARTH into permanent housing, as well as uncertainty surrounding the timeline and availability of suitable permanent housing options.

Response: People staying long-term in local shelters will be able to move to Newcastle Place after current residents move to new permanent supportive housing at Cornerstone (285 Prideaux Street). We expect three more local supportive housing projects to be completed between 2025 and 2027. Future available homes will be allocated as buildings are completed and applicants' needs and eligibility are assessed. Rent supplements may also be used to help people move into private market housing.

Substance Use: Neighbours wanted clarification on whether the new housing facility will enforce sobriety and what rules will be in place. They also wanted to know what programs and supports there will be for residents with substance use issues.

Response: We do not prevent people from moving indoors if they use substances. After a person can access a warm bed, washrooms and meals, they are in a much better position to improve their well-being, including accessing health care and substance use treatments. If residents choose to use substances on site, staff will use a harm-reduction approach, including supervised consumption. This is an important and life-saving health care practice, especially during the current toxic drug crisis. Staff can also link people to mental health and substance use recovery services as is appropriate based on the resident's care goals.

Capacity of Housing Facility: Questions were raised about the rationale behind accommodating 50 individuals in one site, exceeding "recommended capacity" of 35. Concerns were raised about the feasibility and operational challenges associated with larger housing developments.

Response: BC Housing has numerous supportive housing buildings across Vancouver Island with more than 30 units that are operating well, and which have integrated into the community. This includes Samaritan Place at 702 Nicol Street in Nanaimo, which has 52 units and 14 'bridge to housing' beds for shorter stays. Given the growing homelessness crisis and the challenges finding appropriate land to build supportive housing, BC Housing has a responsibility to maximize the number of units available to bring people indoors, while respecting a municipality's Official Community Plan and zoning bylaws.