



Community Engagement Summary Report

Nanaimo – 1850 Boxwood Road
Complex Care Housing (CCH) Project

February - April 2025

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INTRODUCTION

This report provides a summary of the community engagement sessions for a proposed Complex Care Housing (CCH) project at 1850 Boxwood Road in Nanaimo, B.C.

This CCH project is a partnership between BC Housing and Island Health, and will deliver 22 permanent, affordable studio homes with voluntary, person-centred health, cultural and social supports. These supports will include:

- Integrated health care supports provided by Island Health
- 24/7 staffing and wraparound services offered by a qualified, non-profit housing operator (to be selected), including life skills development, wellness checks, employment assistance, and community connection programs

BC Housing has initiated community engagement to provide accurate and transparent information to residents and businesses, respond to community questions and gather feedback that will assist with integrating the CCH project into the neighbourhood.

REZONING APPLICATION

This project requires rezoning from the City of Nanaimo. BC Housing submitted a combined Rezoning and Development Permit application on February 18, 2025.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Project Webpages

Information about the project was published on the City of Nanaimo's [What's Building webpage](#) and on BC Housing's [Let's Talk Housing BC](#) webpage on February 28, 2025.

Neighbourhood Letter

On February 28, 2025, BC Housing mailed a letter (**Appendix A**) to neighbours within a 200 m radius of the CCH site at 1850 Boxwood Road (**241** addresses). This letter included:

- An introduction to the CCH project, project partners and the services to be provided
- A project description and summary of municipal processes required
- A link to BC Housing's project webpage and direct email address for questions
- An invitation and RSVP link to two small group information sessions on April 2, 2025
- An invitation to a community open house on April 3, 2025

Interest-holder Email and Invitation

On March 3, 2025, BC Housing sent an email (**Appendix B**) to **44** interest-holders and affected parties including local businesses, agencies, schools, community service organizations, Snuneymuxw First

Nation, Nanaimo Fire Rescue Station #2, BC Ambulance and the Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce.

This email included:

- An introduction to the CCH project, project partners and the services to be provided
- A project description and summary of municipal processes required
- A link to BC Housing's project webpage and direct email address for questions
- An invitation and RSVP link to two small group information sessions on April 2, 2025
- An invitation to a community open house on April 3, 2025
- An offer to interest-holders to book meetings with BC Housing Community Engagement at a time and date of their choosing, either virtually or in-person.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS INBOX

As of this report, 1850 Boxwood Road CCH project has received **one** email to BC Housing's Community Relations inbox (communityrelations@bchousing.org). The email, from a local resident, was supportive of the project, and encouraged BC Housing to increase the size of the project to more than 20 units of housing to meet local need.

EVENT SUMMARY – SMALL GROUP INFORMATION SESSIONS

Event Name and Date:	Small Group Information sessions – Wednesday, April 2, 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 5-6 p.m. – Session #1○ 7-8 p.m. – Session #2
Location	Oliver Woods Community Centre, 6000 Oliver Road, Nanaimo
First Nations Territory:	Snuneymuxw First Nation
Organizers:	BC Housing Project and Community Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trudi Beutel, Senior Communications Advisor• Maggie Sheeshka, Communications Specialist• Jennifer Giesbrecht, Manager
BC Housing Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jennifer Fox, Regional Director• Elsabe Fourie, Development Manager• Jerry Michael, Coordinated Access and Assessment Manager• Maggie Sheeshka, Senior Communications Specialist• Trudi Beutel, Senior Communications Advisor
Other Event Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Christy Wood, Manager, Social Planning, City of Nanaimo• Lisa Brinkman, Manager, Community Planning, City of Nanaimo• Lisa Murphy, Director of Mental Health and Substance Use, Island Health• Adam James, Principal, Ryder Architecture

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jaimi Yra, Project Manager, Altus Group <p>Facilitators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natalie Hill – Principal, Spur Communication • Zack Bulick- Director of Engagement, Spur Communication
Event Audience:	<p>Interested parties, neighbours and wider community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 241 letters with invitations mailed to neighbours within a 200 m radius of the project site
Number of Attendees:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-6 p.m. – Session #1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 7 RSVPs / 6 attendees (two community members, two neighbours and two people representing a nearby business) • 7-8 p.m. – Session #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 0 RSVPs / 0 drop-ins / session closed at 7:15 pm
Event Summary:	<p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To mitigate barriers to success and increase community understanding of the proposed 20-unit Complex Care Housing project at 1850 Boxwood Road. <p>Format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Group Information Sessions allow neighbours a place to have an in-depth, one-hour discussion about the CCH with the project team. Pastries, coffee and water served. <p>Tone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group information session attendees came with a willingness to listen and ask questions. • Conversations were cordial and respectful, but all attendees were vocal in their concern about the location of this project.
Further Information and Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let's Talk Housing BC webpage: Nanaimo – 1850 Boxwood Road Let's Talk Housing BC • Presentation: 1850 Boxwood Rd Nanaimo - Small-Group Information Session

EVENT SUMMARY – COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

Event Name and Date:	1850 Boxwood Road Complex Care Housing (CCH) Community Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Open House – Thursday, April 3, 2025 • 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Location	Community Open House Beban Park Social Centre, 2300 Bowen Road, Nanaimo
First Nations Territory:	Snuneymuxw First Nation
Organizers:	BC Housing Project and Community Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trudi Beutel, Senior Communications Advisor • Maggie Sheeshka, Communications Specialist

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jennifer Giesbrecht, Manager
BC Housing Staff	<p>BC HOUSING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jennifer Fox, Regional Director • Sarah Smith, Director, Regional Development • Elsabe Fourie, Development Manager • Jerry Michael, Coordinated Access and Assessment Manager • Johanna Stauffer, Regional Operations Manager • Emily Kendy, Senior Communications Advisor • Maggie Sheeshka, Senior Communications Specialist • Jennifer Giesbrecht, Manager, Project and Community Engagement • Trudi Beutel, Senior Communications Advisor
Other Event Representatives	<p>Island Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lisa Murphy – Director of Mental Health and Substance Use • Tracy Hamilton – Regional Clinical Initiatives Lead <p>City of Nanaimo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christy Wood – Manager, Social Planning • Caleb Horn – Planner, Current Planning • Jeremy Holm – Director, Planning and Development <p>Architects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adam James – Principal, Ryder Architecture • Annabelle Blyton – Ryder Architecture <p>Development Consultant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jaimi Yra – Project Manager, Altus Group <p>Facilitators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natalie Hill – Principal, Spur Communication • Zack Bulick- Director of Engagement, Spur Communication
Event Audience:	<p>Interested parties, neighbours and wider community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 241 letters with invitations were mailed to neighbours within a 200 m radius of the project site • 44 email invitations were sent to interest-holders and affected parties
Number of Attendees:	<p>Community Open House – 18 attendees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notable guests included, Paul Manly, a Nanaimo city councillor, members of the not-for-profit organization Island Crisis Care Society (ICCS) and a representative of the Newcastle Community Association.
Event Summary:	<p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To mitigate barriers to success and increase community understanding of the proposed 20-unit Complex Care Housing project at 1850 Boxwood Road. <p>Format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Open House – Drop-in style event for community members to view presentation boards and ask questions of project team. Pastries, soft drinks and water served.
Further Information and Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let's Talk page: Nanaimo – 1850 Boxwood Road Let's Talk Housing BC • Presentation: Poster boards from Community Open House

WHAT WE HEARD – SUMMARY

Topics

General & Safety Concerns

- Perception that the building may attract crime or undesirable behavior in the area
- Concerns about:
 - the location of the smoking area and whether smoke will affect nearby properties or children (mitigation strategies such as locating the smoking area farthest away from the public path were also discussed)
 - loitering and unwanted visitors around the building and in the neighbourhood
 - site proximity to a childcare facility and the safety of children
 - visitor traffic and the management of non-resident access
 - community upkeep and potential for graffiti or improper waste disposal in and around the neighbourhood
 - increased visibility of homelessness, public substance use and social disorder

Location and Development

- Questions about:
 - why this site was selected over other options, particularly vacant or existing buildings
 - fencing height, site privacy and visibility into/out of the property
 - whether the City's Community Amenity Contribution policy was waived and how the City balances these policies
- Perception that neighbours had little influence over the site choice or were provided the ability to provide input into site location.
- Desire to understand the land-use and rezoning process and whether there will be a public hearing
- Concerns:
 - that the development does not meet the community's expectations for land use on the site
 - about property values decreasing and effect on character of the neighbourhood
 - about perceived changes to city planning standards for density, parking and amenity contributions

Operations and Resident Supports

- Confusion/questions about the population to be housed and how tenants will be selected
- Questions about:
 - whether people with complex needs will be appropriately supported
 - eviction and incident policies, disruptive behaviour management
 - substance use and whether it will be allowed in the building
 - on-site staffing levels
- Concern about how people with different support needs will live together successfully

Communications and Engagement

- Criticism of the 200 m radius for engagement promotion, concern that this excludes many neighbours who pass the site regularly
- Dissatisfaction with insufficient notice/publicity of the open house and information sessions
- Comments that the community was expecting more comprehensive consultation and transparency about the project earlier in the process

ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

The combination of direct neighbourhood and interest-holder communications, a publicly accessible webpage, small-group sessions and an open house gave community members ample opportunity to learn more about the need for Complex Care Housing in Nanaimo and the important role this project plays in helping meet that need and to provide feedback on this proposed project.

In total, we reached out to **285** neighbours and interest holders – by either direct mail or email – with project information and direct invitations to our Small Group Information sessions, Community Open House, or both. These invitations resulted in **24** people attending an engagement session in person to ask questions or voice concerns about the Boxwood CCH project. As of this report's writing, our Let's Talk Housing BC webpage for this project has logged **179** site visits.

Overall, BC Housing and our project partners aimed to produce communications and project information that was simplified in format and language to provide equitable, accessible and inclusive opportunities for learning, asking questions and voicing concerns.

The format of the sessions allowed BC Housing and partners to build relationships with neighbours and the surrounding community to open the lines of communication about the project and its ongoing development.

Site security

During the Small Group Information Session specifically, neighbours shared questions and concerns about safety and security. The project site shares a corner of its back lot line with a commercial property that includes a private daycare. Additionally, the daycare's muster point is along the property line's back fence which served as a point of concern for some community members. It is important to note that the elevation difference between the rear neighbor (elevated) and this proposed project (lower elevation) ranges between 7 and 9 m, depending where you are standing on the site.

Thanks to our engagement sessions, BC Housing and the architect were able to share that BC Housing Design and Construction Standards apply Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) practices in all building projects. These include security measures such as fenced grounds, a single point of entry, fob access, 24/7 staffed reception, security cameras and lighting. BC Housing was also able to share that many supportive housing sites have been operating near schools for 10+ years with no issues and with support from the community.

Regarding overall security at the site and for the surrounding neighbourhood, BC Housing and the project partners were able to discuss these concerns openly with neighbours. We shared that housing staff would be on site 24/7 to support residents and provide a point of contact for neighbours and were willing to work with residents and the surrounding community on an ongoing basis to address any concerns.

Site maintenance

Regarding community concerns over cleanliness and property maintenance, engagement participants were assured that BC Housing will work together with the non-profit operator, once chosen, to be good neighbours. We will manage and maintain the Boxwood property as a good neighbour would, while the City of Nanaimo will provide maintenance to public spaces near the property.

As a good neighbour, we will share a direct phone number for the housing with neighbours when it is available. We will also continue working with residents, staff and the surrounding community on an ongoing basis to address any concerns about cleanliness on the property.

Municipal processes

Community Open House attendees expressed a strong interest in the municipal processes guiding this project and whether land-use changes were happening without meaningful public consultation. In response to these queries, City of Nanaimo representatives indicated that although final rezoning is a decision that rests with City Council, the public can request to speak as a delegation at City Council to express their support or opposition to any project.

What CCH is and isn't

These communications and engagement efforts also enabled BC Housing and project partners to clarify the kinds of care that would be provided, and to whom, in this building. During our engagement sessions, representatives were able to clarify that this project is not a shelter. Rather, this project will offer stable housing with onsite services for people with overlapping needs, such as mental health or substance use challenges, functional needs, brain injuries, intellectual or developmental disabilities, trauma, chronic illnesses, mobility impairments and other health-care challenges. Island Health will offer on-site health services in addition to the supports provided by a non-profit housing operator.

Future engagement commitments

During these engagements, project partners assured community members we would continue to connect with them at milestone points along the development timeline for this project. This will include sharing construction information by email or letter and organizing an opportunity (either virtual or in person) to meet the non-profit housing operator when selected.

Appendix A: Letter to neighbours within 200m



February 21, 2025

Complex Care Housing Proposal

1850 Boxwood Road, Nanaimo

Hello Neighbour,

We are writing to share that BC Housing is working with Island Health on a proposal to build approximately 20 units of Complex Care Housing (CCH) at 1850 Boxwood Road. This project is an important part of our continued effort to address and prevent homelessness and improve access to health services, including mental health and substance-use services, in Nanaimo.

BC Housing plans to submit a rezoning application to the City of Nanaimo in February 2025. If approved, these new homes would give people facing or at risk of homelessness, and who have complex health challenges, a better chance at leading healthy, stable lives. The rezoning process would take 6-12 months. A development permit and a building permit would also be required.

About the Building

The proposed three-storey building at 1850 Boxwood Road would have approximately 20 studio homes with kitchenettes and private bathrooms. There would also be a central kitchen, communal dining and amenity spaces and clinical spaces for residents to receive on-site health care services. The building would be designed to provide a welcoming, home-like atmosphere that fits into the local neighbourhood.

What is Complex Care Housing?

The CCH program provides deeply affordable homes with voluntary person-centered health, cultural and social supports. These supports are available to residents under one roof and in their own home, for as long as they need. CCH is for people who require additional support to manage their health needs, including those with mental health and substance-use challenges, brain injury, disabilities and chronic illness. The program provides deeply affordable homes with voluntary person-centered health, cultural and social supports. These supports are available to residents under one roof and in their own home, for as long as they need. Residents would be adults (19+) of all genders, including seniors.

Services and Supports

BC Housing would select an experienced non-profit housing operator through a fair and open process to manage the building and provide support services to residents, including daily meals, life skills training, and social, cultural and recreational programs. Health services would be delivered in partnership with Island Health and would include primary care, nursing, and specialized mental health and substance use care. Staff would be on site 24/7 to support residents and provide a point of contact for neighbours.

Small-Group Information Sessions with Neighbours

We are inviting neighbours of 1850 Boxwood Road to join us for in-person small-group information sessions (max. 15 people each) to learn more about the proposed project, meet project partners and ask questions. The following two sessions are identical. RSVP to the session that works best for you.

INFORMATION SESSION #1:

- **Date:** Wednesday, April 2, 2025
- **Time:** 12:00 – 1:00 pm
- **Venue:** Oliver Woods Community Centre (F Hemlock Room) 6000 Oliver Rd, Nanaimo
- **RSVP:** Boxwood-Road-Nanaimo-Info-Sessions.eventbrite.ca

INFORMATION SESSION #2:

- **Date:** Wednesday, April 2, 2025
- **Time:** 6:30 – 7:30 pm
- **Venue:** Oliver Woods Community Centre (F Hemlock Room) 6000 Oliver Rd, Nanaimo
- **RSVP:** Boxwood-Road-Nanaimo-Info-Sessions.eventbrite.ca

Please note each session is limited to 15 people to ensure meaningful participation. RSVPs will be first come, first served. Should there be a demand for an overflow session, we will do our best to accommodate.

Community Open House

We are inviting neighbours, businesses and any other interested parties to join us in-person for a Community Open House to learn more about this project. There will be poster boards featuring information about the proposed development. Subject matter experts will also be on hand from Island Health, BC Housing and the City of Nanaimo to provide more information and answer questions.

- **Date:** Thursday, April 3, 2025
- **Time:** 5:30 – 7:30 pm
- **Venue:** Beban Park Social Centre (Room 1, 2 and 3) 2300 Bowen Rd, Nanaimo
- **RSVP:** Boxwood-Road-Nanaimo-Community-Open-House.eventbrite.ca

Drop-in format; all are welcome. Registration is appreciated to help with planning.

Keep up to date about this project by visiting letstalkhousingbc.ca/nanaimo-1850-boxwood-road. We also welcome questions any time by email to communityrelations@bchousing.org.

Sincerely,
BC Housing

Appendix B: Email to interest-holders



Interested Party Email for CCH, Nanaimo

<SUBJECT LINE> Update - 1850 Boxwood Road, Nanaimo

<BODY> Dear <ORG NAME>,

We are writing to share that BC Housing is working with Vancouver Island Health Authority on a proposal to build approximately 20 units of Complex Care Housing (CCH) at 1850 Boxwood Road. This project is an important part of our continued effort to address and prevent homelessness and improve access to health services, including mental health and substance-use services, in Nanaimo.

BC Housing plans to submit a rezoning application to the City of Nanaimo in February 2025. If approved, these new homes would give people facing or at risk of homelessness, and who have complex health challenges, a better chance at leading healthy, stable lives. The rezoning process would take 6-12 months. A development permit and a building permit would also be required.

About the Building

The proposed three-storey building at 1850 Boxwood Road would have approximately 20 studio homes with kitchenettes and private bathrooms. There would also be a central kitchen, communal dining and amenity spaces, and clinical spaces for residents to receive on-site health care services. The building would be designed to provide a welcoming, home-like atmosphere that fits into the local neighbourhood.

What is Complex Care Housing?

The CCH program provides deeply affordable homes with voluntary person-centered health, cultural and social supports. These supports are available to residents under one roof and in their own home, for as long as they need. CCH is for people who require additional support to manage their health needs, including those with mental health and substance-use challenges, brain injury, disabilities and chronic illness. Residents would be adults (19+) of all genders, including seniors.

Services and Supports

BC Housing would select an experienced non-profit housing operator through a fair and open process to manage the building and provide support services to residents, including daily meals, life skills training, and social, cultural and recreational programs. Health services would be delivered in partnership with Island Health and would include primary care, nursing, and specialized mental health and substance use care. Staff would be on site 24/7 to support residents and provide a point of contact for neighbours.

In- Person Community Open House

We're inviting neighbours, businesses and other interested parties, as well as the greater community of Nanaimo, to join us for an in-person open house. There will be poster boards featuring information



about the proposed development. Subject matter experts will also be on hand from Island Health, BC Housing and the City of Nanaimo to provide more information and answer questions.

- **Date:** Thursday, April 3, 2025
- **Time:** 5:30 – 7:30 pm
- **Venue:** Beban Park Social Centre (Room 1, 2 and 3) 2300 Bowen Rd, Nanaimo
- **RSVP:** <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/1255831619179?aff=oddtdtcreator>

Drop-in format; all are welcome. Registration is appreciated to help with planning.

Community Engagement

BC Housing and our partners are dedicated to being good neighbours. If your organization would like to learn more about Complex Care Housing and the proposal for 1850 Boxwood Road, we will be happy to arrange a meeting. If you are interested, please respond to this email with your availabilities (days/times). We will do our best to accommodate your request whether in-person or virtually.

Keep up to date about this project by visiting letstalkhousingbc.ca/nanaimo-1850-boxwood-road. We also welcome questions any time by email to communityrelations@bchousing.org.

Sincerely,
BC Housing