

July 10, 2020

**RE: New supportive housing development in your neighbourhood at 355 Nicol Street**

We have exciting news about new housing for Nanaimo. The City of Nanaimo and BC Housing have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to build new housing in the community over the next few years.

This landmark MOU includes new developments proposed on six sites around the city. It includes three affordable rental buildings with approximately 125 homes for families and individuals. It also includes four purpose built permanent supportive housing developments with approximately 190 homes for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This letter is to inform you that one of these sites is within 100 metres of your home.

This housing is needed to ensure some of Nanaimo’s most vulnerable people can access a basic and fundamental human right: housing. This partnership between the City and BC Housing is a commitment to act on housing needs in Nanaimo. All sites are shown in the table below.

LOCATION	CURRENT USE	NEW USE	HOUSING ENHANCEMENT
702 Nicol St <i>BC Housing-owned</i>	Vacant Lot	Permanent Supportive Housing / Shelter	Approximately 50 new homes + shelter space for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Requires Development and Building Permits.
250 Terminal St <i>BC Housing-owned</i>	Temporary Supportive Housing	Permanent Supportive Housing & Affordable Housing	Approximately 50 new homes for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness; temp housing removed; approximately 40 future affordable rental housing. May require rezoning depending on siting of the buildings.
285 Prideaux St <i>City-owned</i>	Community Services Building – Emergency Response Centre opening date TBC	Permanent Supportive Housing	Approximately 50 new homes for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness; community amenity space; Requires Demolition, Development and Building Permits.
355 Nicol St <i>BC Housing-owned</i>	Shelter + Transitional Housing	Permanent Supportive Housing	Approximately 40 new homes for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness; shelter & drop-in removed. Requires Demolition, Development & Building Permits.
1425 Cranberry <i>City-owned</i>	Vacant Lot	Affordable Rental Housing	Approximately 46 new affordable rental homes for families, seniors & people with disabilities. Requires Development & Building Permits. Requires rezoning.
564 Fifth St, 502 & 505 Howard Ave (Te'tuxwtun)	Mixed-use education, social housing, recreation	Affordable Rental Housing with other uses	New affordable rental homes; integration of education, culture, parks and recreation services; other community services such as health services and childcare ( <i>announced 2018</i> ).

**355 Nicol Street** is owned by BC Housing. Samaritan House, operated by Island Crisis Care Society, provides shelter and transition housing to women experiencing or at risk of homelessness. These services will be temporarily relocated to 285 Prideaux as part of the COVID-19 emergency response centre starting Summer 2020, and eventually permanently relocate to 702 Nicol when the new permanent supportive housing and shelter space is ready.

Once the site is vacant, BC Housing will move forward on a plan to demolish the building and build 40 new permanent purpose-built homes with supports for people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Nanaimo.

All new supportive housing buildings in the province have around-the-clock staffing to help young people, people with disabilities, seniors and others in critical need of housing. Experienced staff provide support to tenants, based on their assessed needs. Supports include medical and mental health and addictions services, as well as food, laundry, and security. An operator has not yet been selected for this site. All residents will pay rent.

We will be looking at setting up a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) with representatives from BC Housing, the housing operator, other partners, community organizations and community members. We will also be working with the neighbourhood association and the downtown business community to successfully integrate the new buildings and residents into the community.

BC Housing and its partners invite you to join us at one of two virtual neighbourhood meetings to learn more about the plan for 355 Nicol Street, have your questions answered and provide feedback to the project team. Please only register for one virtual session so we can hear from as many people as possible.

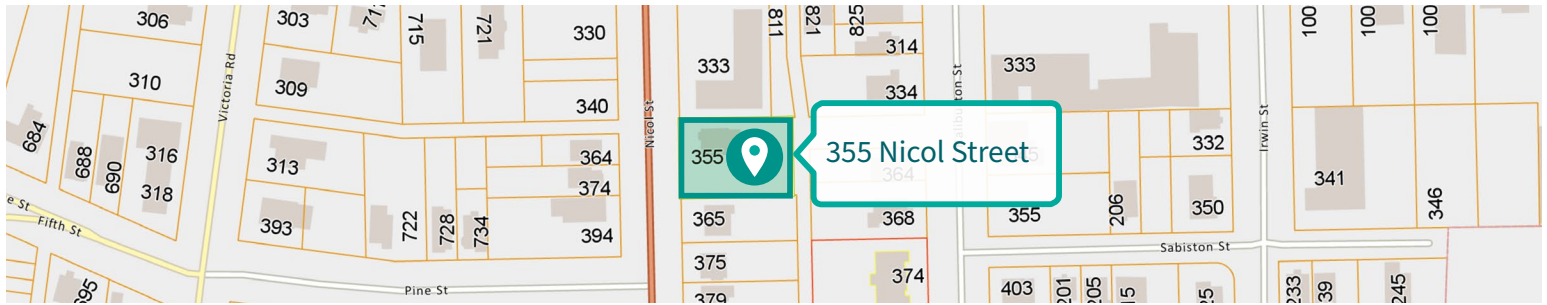
If you are not available on August 13<sup>th</sup>, there are ongoing opportunities to connect with us. You can learn more about the plan, provide feedback and ask questions at [www.letstalkhousingbc.ca/nanaimo-355-nicol-street](http://www.letstalkhousingbc.ca/nanaimo-355-nicol-street) or send questions and feedback to [communityrelations@bchousing.org](mailto:communityrelations@bchousing.org).

**VIRTUAL NEIGHBOURHOOD MEETINGS – 355 NICOL STREET**

**August 13, 2020**

**10:30am – 12pm and 7pm – 8:30pm**

**For more information about the session, visit [www.letstalkhousingbc.ca/nanaimo-355-nicol-street](http://www.letstalkhousingbc.ca/nanaimo-355-nicol-street).**



## → CURRENT USE:

355 Nicol Street is currently home to Samaritan House, which provides shelter and transition housing to women experiencing or at risk of homelessness. It is operated by Island Crisis Care Society. These services will be relocated to 285 Prideaux as part of the new Emergency Response Centre during Summer 2020, and will relocate to 702 Nicol when the new permanent supportive housing and shelter space is ready.

Once the site is vacant, BC Housing will move forward on a plan to demolish the building and build 40 new permanent purpose-built homes with supports for people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Nanaimo. BC Housing owns this site.

## → FUTURE USE:

The building will be demolished to make way for the development of approximately 40 new homes with supports for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. An operator has not been selected yet.

## → HOUSING ENHANCEMENTS FOR NANAIMO:

The permanent, purpose-built housing would be operated by an experienced non-profit housing provider. Their responsibilities will include property management, operations management and resident selection. Once people move in, staff will remain on-site around the clock every day of the week for support.

The new housing at 355 Nicol Street will not be a shelter. While shelters provide a critical community service by offering access to food and a temporary bed or mat overnight to bring people indoors to get warm, supportive housing provides a home as well as 24/7 on-site support services. People must apply and go through an assessment process. If accepted, they 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 and pay rent. There will no longer be drop-in services provided at this site.

## → ZONING:

📍 **355 Nicol Street** is currently zoned at *CS1: Community Service One*, which allows for supportive housing use.

## TIMELINE:



### Summer 2020:

→ BC Housing engages community on plans for new housing



### Summer/Fall 2020:

→ Development Permit review



### Fall 2020:

→ Demolition of existing building and construction for new permanent housing begins



### Spring 2021:

→ New housing opens



## Will supportive housing affect property values in my neighbourhood?



Studies show that property values immediately surrounding supportive housing sites typically keep pace with the trends of the surrounding municipality.



10/13

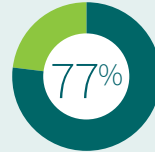
Property values immediately surrounding supportive housing sites in BC **kept pace or surpassed** municipal trends



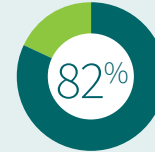
## Will supportive housing change my neighbourhood?



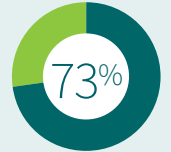
Many supportive housing residents have an existing connection with the neighbourhood and report experiencing positive interactions with neighbours after they moved in.



77% of supportive housing survey respondents reported a **prior connection** to the neighbourhood



82% of supportive housing survey respondents reported **positive interactions** with neighbours



73% of supportive housing survey respondents reported having **friends or relatives** in the neighbourhood



## Does supportive housing work to reduce homelessness in my neighbourhood and community?



Supportive housing residents are no longer homeless after they are housed. Once in a supportive housing unit, individuals previously experiencing homelessness report improvements in access to employment, income, education, addiction issues, mental health and life-skills.

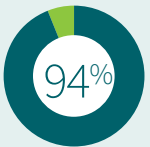


## Is supportive housing costly for tax-payers?



Studies show the cost of providing supportive housing is less than the cost of providing the health and public safety services needed to address homelessness.

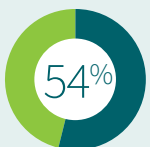
### After Six Months:



94% of supportive housing residents **remained housed**



84% of supportive housing survey respondents reported **improved overall well-being**



54% of supportive housing survey respondents reported **improved access to employment opportunities**



39% of supportive housing survey respondents reported **improvement in addiction issues**



VS



On average, a person experiencing homelessness with addictions and/or mental illness used

**\$55,000** per year in health care and/or corrections services

On average, a person in supportive housing with addictions and/or mental illness used

**\$37,000** per year in health care and/or corrections services

Every dollar invested in supportive housing **creates \$4-5** in social and/or economic value



Supportive housing residents were **64% less likely** than shelter clients to use ambulance services



Average hospital stay for supportive housing residents was **50% less** than shelter clients

### Sources:

- Insight Specialty Consulting. 2019. Exploring Impacts of Non-Market Housing on Surrounding Property Values. BC Housing
- BC Housing. 2019. Modular Supportive Housing Resident Outcomes Study: Results for First Seven Modular Supportive Housing Developments. [www.bchousing.org/research-centre/library/transition-from-homelessness/modular-supportive-housing-resident-outcomes](http://www.bchousing.org/research-centre/library/transition-from-homelessness/modular-supportive-housing-resident-outcomes).

## The new permanent purpose-built supportive housing will be different than the temporary workforce housing.

BC Housing provided temporary workforce modular housing at Newcastle Place (250 Terminal) and Nikao (2060 Labieux) in response to an urgent need to provide housing and support services to those struggling with homelessness in Nanaimo, including those who were residing at the 1 Port Drive encampment downtown.

The proposed housing will be purpose-built housing, meaning it can be designed with the neighbourhood aesthetic in mind and incorporates supportive housing best practices such as one secure point of entry with security systems throughout the site. Security cameras are included on the interior and exterior of the building. This housing is designed specifically to meet the needs of the residents and looks very different from a temporary workforce modular housing.

- The best example for what the proposed purpose-built supportive housing will be like for your neighbourhood is Uplands Walk or Boundary Housing in Nanaimo, Orca Place in Parksville or permanent supportive housing in other communities. The new housing will not be temporary workforce housing.

## Operators, residents and partners are responsible for ensuring the new supportive housing is successfully integrated into the community.

There are a number of checks in place to ensure that the new supportive housing successfully integrates into a community, including:

- **Operator experience:** BC Housing selects non-profit providers who are experienced in working with and supporting people who experience homelessness.
- **Thorough and thoughtful assessment process:** Every potential resident is considered on an individual basis to ensure that the housing and services provided by the program match the support services they need.
- **Program agreements:** Each resident signs a program agreement that outlines expectations about appropriate and respectful behavior especially as it relates to the health and safety of themselves and others.

- **24/7 staffing and supports:** A minimum of two staff are on-site 24/7 to support residents, manage the building and be available to respond directly to any related concerns that arise in a timely manner. During daytime hours, there are numerous staff on site including a manager/residence coordinator, building/grounds maintenance staff, cook and additional supports from other partners providing specialized services.

- **Property maintenance** 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.
- **Community advisory committees** Each site will have a Community Advisory Committee to mitigate and address any related concerns that come forward, with representation from BC Housing, City Bylaw, Vancouver Island Health Authority, RCMP, local businesses, community organizations and community members.

People who experience homelessness are as varied as any other neighbour.

People who experience homelessness are as varied as any other neighbour. They are 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. People experiencing homelessness are not a homogenous group, and have had different pathways into homelessness, that's why supportive housing tailors its response to clients, to help them maintain their housing.

- There are many factors that contribute to people experiencing homelessness – substance abuse or mental health are not the only factors.
  - **Structural factors:** lack of available affordable housing, eviction, unsafe housing conditions, discrimination
  - **Economic factors:** loss of job, cost of living and inability to pay for rent/mortgage and food, poverty
  - **Individual/relationship factors:** traumatic life events, family violence/abuse, divorce, mental health, other physical health issues
  - **System failure factors:** barriers to accessing public systems, transition planning from child welfare, discharge planning from institutions.



It costs less to house a person than leave them on the street or living in shelters.

People talk about the cost of providing supportive housing to people experiencing homelessness as a burden on taxpayers. The opposite is actually true – it costs less to house a person that to leave them on the street or living in shelters.

## Relying on emergency services is **expensive**


“Homeless women and men do not have “different” illnesses than the general population. However, their living circumstances and poverty affect their ability to cope with health problems.”

*Ambrosio, et al. (1992) Street Health Report*

  
**\$10,900**/mo.  
 Hospital Bed

  
**\$1,932**/mo  
 Shelter Bed

  
**\$4,333**/mo  
 Provincial Jail

  
**\$199.<sup>92</sup>**/mo  
 Social Housing

  
**\$701**/mo  
 Rental Supplement

Wellesley Institute' Blueprint to End Homelessness (2007)