

NORTH VANCOUVER, 1577 LLOYD AVENUE, SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is happening at 1577 Lloyd Avenue?

The District of North Vancouver is pursuing the development of permanent supportive housing for women and families in North Vancouver.

A district-owned site at 1577 Lloyd Avenue has been identified as a potential location. If approved, the proposal is to construct a five storey, 60-unit building that targets women-led families who are at risk of homelessness.

District staff are leading the rezoning process and BC Housing would be the funder. RainCity Housing would operate the housing, with staff on-site 24/7 to provide supports, including meal programs, life and employment skills training, as well as health and wellness support services.

Why is this needed in North Vancouver right now?

The latest Point in Time count for Metro Vancouver conducted in 2020 counted at least 121 people experiencing homelessness on the North Shore. This is up from 100 in 2017 when the last count was conducted.

The main cause of homelessness in the District of North Vancouver is low income, high rents and lack of available rentals. When rental vacancy rates are low, people with barriers (such as mental health and substance use issues) are pushed out of the rental market altogether. For many people with multiple barriers, supportive housing is more appropriate than a private rental.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical importance of getting people into safe, stable homes with supports. As part of our post-COVID response, BC Housing has identified a number of projects, including the site on Lloyd Avenue, as a priority for redevelopment.

What is supportive housing?

Supportive housing is an opportunity for people to leave the streets and shelter system for safe and stable housing that will contribute to an improved quality of life. A typical supportive housing unit is a self-contained studio home with various support services provided on-site, to ensure people can achieve and maintain housing stability – the Studio units in this building would have that make up. The family units would be two-, three- and four-bedroom apartments. Supports may include onsite family support workers, life skills training, employment assistance, connection and referral to community services and support groups, depending on the unique needs of each resident. All residents would sign a program agreement (similar to a tenancy agreement) and would pay rent at either shelter rates or rents geared to income.

Supportive housing is for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness with varying health and personal challenges and needs. 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 and work on healing.

Who would live here?

The women-led families and single women who apply to live here would need to meet eligibility requirements around income, homelessness and required supports and programming. BC Housing would work with local service providers to determine the criteria and to select residents, while recognizing that this housing would specifically be targeted to women and families. All new residents would pay rent and sign a program agreement and good

neighbour agreement. This supportive housing project is focused on women and their children as tenants. Men are allowed to reside in the building, but women will be considered the head or lead tenant of each unit.

People who experience homelessness are as varied as any other neighbour. They may be seniors, people with disabilities, people who have employment but no housing, people with children, and 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.

Would this new program be low barrier housing?

There are a lot of different terms that can get used to describe what supported housing is and sometimes one of those terms is “low barrier.” Because this would be a building that would house families, we would not classify this program as a low barrier program – we would use the term supportive housing because this is a more fulsome and accurate way to describe the support services that would be offered to the women and women-led families that would be living there.

Part of supportive housing is recognizing that some people will sometimes choose to use substances, as many of us across society do in our own homes. We want to make sure that if they’re making that choice, then we can find ways and make time to talk about it, offer harm reduction services as needed, and provide additional supports when necessary.

Sometimes the term “low barrier” gets mistaken for meaning that there will be no rules or guidelines that people living there need to follow. This is not the case and would not be so in this building – each person is required to sign a Program Agreement outlining certain commitments they would need to meet in order to live there. They would also sign a good neighbour agreement that speaks to not only how they would interact with the other women and children living in the building, but also with neighbours in the surrounding area.

Would alcohol and drugs be allowed on-site?

BC Housing’s supportive housing buildings are operated based on the widely recognized and proven Housing First model. Residents at this housing, and all other supportive housing buildings that BC Housing is affiliated with, are permitted to make their own choices in regard to lifestyle. This includes the decision to abstain or use drugs/alcohol in the privacy of their homes.

RainCity takes a harm reduction approach, which means staff is available to support any residents who are in various phases of substance use. RainCity would work with Vancouver Coastal Health in determining best practices to ensure tenants are safe and healthy.

Residents can access on-site and community support services to assist them in maintaining their personal goals and manage challenges.

Is there a safe injection site proposed for this site?

This project would not include a safe injection site.

I am concerned about increased crime in the area and drug use on the property. What security measures would be in place?

BC Housing is committed to being good neighbours. All new supportive housing that we develop across the province provides a safe community both inside and outside the building. The most important security feature, both for residents and the community, is staffing. The building would have staff onsite 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to ensure that residents are supported and that any concerns are addressed in the timely manner.

The safety of residents, staff and the surrounding community is a priority. This would be a purpose-built property and security measures would include well-lit and fenced grounds, extensive camera monitoring and a controlled single point of entry. If concerns or problems occur with specific individuals on the project property, the operator would work with the individual and police to find solutions.

The building would have a RCMP liaison officer that would work with RainCity. Given that the population would be women and families we do not anticipate a lot of criminal activities associated with this building. With any new developments in the community, the RCMP consider all potential and real impacts and are well positioned to provide appropriate responses when called upon. Their deployment model also utilizes metrics and analytics to respond to community needs.

A Community Advisory Committee would be created to support the successful integration of the building into the neighbourhood and community. The Committee would have representation from BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health, the District of North Vancouver, RainCity, Host Nations, RCMP, any relevant community partners such as school district, service providers and community members at large, to be facilitated by a neutral third party.

What expectations would be made of residents? What consequences are there for non-compliance?

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

Will property values go down with supportive housing in this neighbourhood?

Research of 13 B.C. supportive housing sites completed in 2019 showed that property values immediately surrounding 11 sites either kept pace or surpassed surrounding municipal trends. Property values for the other sites were not notably different compared to municipal trends. You can read more in the [Property Values Case Studies Series](#).

Why is this site being used for a residential development when we need more commercial and industrial land?

Providing more diverse and affordable housing choices is a key objective of the District's Official Community Plan and this site was identified in 2018 as a possible site for a permanent supportive housing project. Employment lands are also important, and this housing project would create jobs related to the operations of the building. The District selected this property for this project after considering benefits in the local area that allows for access to transit, schools and community supports.