



Engagement Summary Report

3027/3037 2nd Avenue
Proposed Supportive Housing
Port Alberni, BC

May 2025

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Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this Engagement Summary Report is to provide an overview of engagement that took place regarding BC Housing’s proposed 55-unit supportive housing development at 2037/3037 2nd Avenue in Port Alberni. This report details how direct neighbours and businesses, as well as the wider community were engaged, key themes that emerged, as well as outcomes to support the project moving forward.

Background

BC Housing is proposing to build 55 new supportive homes in a 6-storey building on City-owned land at 3027 & 3037 2nd Avenue in Port Alberni. This proposed development is an important step to address the urgent need to offer culturally safe and accessible housing with supports and services to people experiencing homelessness in Port Alberni.

The proposed development requires rezoning. BC Housing submitted a rezoning application to the City of Port Alberni on February 3, 2025. This application is currently pending review by City Council.

On February 10, 2025, the City of Port Alberni Council released a council meeting summary including the following resolution:

“That staff prioritize the processing of the Zoning Amendment, Development Permit, and Building Permit applications for the proposed permanent supportive housing project located at 3027 and 3037 2nd Avenue.”

Engagement Goals

- To engage during the rezoning phase with immediate neighbours, interested parties (IPs), and the wider community.
- To share information about proposed supportive housing, the planning process, and associated timelines.
- To build awareness about the importance and need for supportive housing in Port Alberni.
- To listen and respond to questions from community members about the proposed development.

Engagement Team and Partners

- Jennifer Fox, Regional Director
- Sarah Smith, Director, Regional Development
- Elsabe Fourie, Development Manager
- Crystal Paul, Indigenous Relations Advisor (IR)
- Jerry Michael, Coordinated Access and Assessment Manager
- Michelle Brossoit, Access and Assessment Coordinator
- Laura McLeod, Senior Communications Advisor (MRIM)
- Emily Kendy, Senior Communications Advisor
- Maggie Sheeshka, Senior Communications Specialist
- City of Port Alberni Director of Development Services-Deputy CAO
- Number Ten Architects

Introductory Communications – January-February 2025

Neighbour Letter

On January 28, 2025, BC Housing mailed a letter to 464 neighbours within a 200m radius of the proposed supportive housing at 3027/3037 2nd Ave (**Appendix A**). This letter included:

- An introduction to the proposed supportive housing project and the services to be provided
- An overview of the rezoning application and operator selection processes
- A commitment to host engagement opportunities in the near future
- A link to the Let's Talk Housing BC project webpage and direct email address for questions

Interested Parties (IPs) Emails

On January 28, 2025, BC Housing emailed 48 IPs in the immediate vicinity including the Uptown Merchants. This message included:

- An introduction to the proposed supportive housing project and the services to be provided
- An overview of the rezoning application and operator selection processes
- A commitment to host engagement opportunities in the near future
- A link to the Let's Talk Housing BC project webpage and direct email address for questions

First Nations Engagement

On February 3 and 4, 2025, BC Housing reached out directly to Chief Councilor Brandy Lauder of the Hupačasath First Nation, and Chief Councilor Ken Watts of the Tseshaht First Nations to develop collaborative relationships and to seek feedback on proposed designs (**Appendix B**).

Let's Talk Housing BC project webpage

On January 29, 2025, BC Housing launched a dedicated webpage with the full details about this project (letstalkhousingbc.ca/port-alberni-second-avenue). This page will continue to share the latest information on the project as well as community engagement opportunities. The page also invites public feedback via BC Housing's Community Relations email address (communityrelations@bchousing.org). As of the date of this report, we've responded to 16 queries through this email.

Community Open House Invitations and Promotion

On February 25, 2025, BC Housing mailed a follow-up letter to the same neighbours and IPs (**Appendix C**) with an invitation to an in-person open house for community, scheduled for Tuesday, April 1, 2025.

Additional event promotions included (**Appendix D**):

- Community board posters (City-led) were shared around the community
- Alberni Valley News ad ran the week of March 10, and again March 24 (BC Housing led)

BC Housing Community Relations Email

Contact information for BC Housing's Community Relations inbox at communityrelations@bchousing.org has been included on all notification and presentation materials to date. This has given community members and IPs the opportunity to ask questions, provide input on the project, and receive responses from BC Housing staff.

BC Housing will continue to monitor the community relations inbox and respond to inquiries throughout the project timeline.

Community Open House: April 1, 2025

On April 1, 2025, BC Housing hosted a Community Open House event for neighbours and the broader community of Port Alberni to learn more about the proposed supportive housing at 3027/3037 2nd Avenue.

The open house was hosted at the Best Western Plus Barclay Hotel Conference Centre in Port Alberni. This was a drop-in format. Poster boards (**Appendix E**) were situated throughout the room with members of the project team, including representatives from BC Housing, Number Ten Architectural

Group and the City of Port Alberni. Attendees were able to stop by at a time that was most convenient, view poster boards throughout the room and have one-on-one discussions with project team members.

Uptown Merchants' First Look (5:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.)

During planning for this event, BC Housing corresponded with the Uptown Merchants via email over several weeks, and as a result, a separate session was developed ahead of the community open house. This gave local businesses in the area the chance to have a first look at the proposed project details, and focused time with the project team to ask questions.

Approximately 13 Uptown Merchants came through during their half-hour 'first look' session. Common themes from attendees' questions included:

- What supportive housing is and how it works
- The expected timeline for the project
- Questions around the location and why it was chosen
- The process for operator selection

Community Open House (5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.)

Doors opened for the wider community following the Uptown Merchants' First Look session.

Approximately 44 community members attended the open house. Common themes included:

- What supportive housing is and how it works
- The supports and services that will be available to residents
- Expected operations such as programming for residents
- Expectations regarding resident conduct
- Questions around how neighbourhood safety will be managed
- Housing First approach and harm-reduction strategies
- Questions around the location and why it was chosen
- The process for operator selection
- The expected timeline for the project

See the Engagement Outcomes section below for detailed responses to frequently asked questions.

Feedback and Surveys

All event attendees were invited to fill out feedback forms (**Appendix F**) and a survey (**Appendix G**) about the engagement. On April 8 and 9, 2025, BC Housing also emailed this survey to all open house attendees.

Of the 57 total attendees, 9 feedback forms and 9 surveys were received.

Of the feedback forms received, most were curious with concern around location and previous experiences with housing in Port Alberni.

The survey responses highlighted themes such as the need for accountability, the presence of Indigenous staff, and concerns about neighbourhood security. The tone of the responses was predominantly neutral, with one negative mention.

Engagement Outcomes

The combination of direct mail and email communications, a publicly accessible webpage and a community open house gave neighbours and other interested parties ample opportunity to learn more about the need for supportive housing in Port Alberni and the important role this project plays in helping meet that need.

In total, we reached out to **464** neighbours and **48** interested parties – by either direct mail or email – with project information, contact information and invitations to our community open house event. These communications resulted in **57** people engaging with us in person to ask questions and discuss the proposed supportive housing at 3027/3037 2nd Avenue. As of this report's writing, there have been over **285** visits from **436** visitors to the Let's Talk page.

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. These communications and engagements allowed BC Housing to lay a foundation for strong relationships with neighbours and the community surrounding these much-needed supportive homes.

Questions & Answers

The following is a summary of key questions/concerns expressed during the Community Open House, as well as responses provided by the project team:

WHAT IS SUPPORTIVE HOUSING AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

Response: Supportive homes are deeply affordable studio apartments intended for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness who need supports to maintain their housing. Supportive housing includes two meals a day, laundry services and a variety of onsite services for residents.

WHAT ARE THE SUPPORTS AND SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR RESIDENTS?

Response: Supportive housing provides many onsite support services to residents, including:

- Daily meals
- Life and employment skills training
- Culturally appropriate services for Indigenous clients
- Individualized case planning
- Integrated health and wellness supports, including:
 - Connections to mental health and community-based substance-use programs, in conjunction with health partners
 - Overdose prevention and response programs
 - Services focused on stabilization and connections to housing

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF RESIDENTS IN TERMS OF APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR?

Response: Tenants in supportive housing have rights and responsibilities under the Residential Tenancy Act. Residents would sign an addendum that addresses expectations about appropriate and respectful behavior, especially as it relates to the health and safety of themselves and others. Supportive housing providers rely on guest management policies and conduct wellness checks to protect both tenants and staff and support an inclusive and safe environment. The non-profit housing operator would work with residents and neighbours to foster good community relationships. This could include opportunities for engagement activities and volunteer programming (e.g. neighbourhood clean teams, etc.).

HOW WILL NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFETY BE MANAGED?

Response: The most important security feature, both for residents and the community, is staffing. This building would have a minimum of two staff on site 24/7 to ensure that residents are supported

and that any concerns are addressed in a timely manner. Security measures on the property would include camera monitoring, fencing and controlled access through a monitored single-point entry. We all want a safe community. While BC Housing and our non-profit operators are not funded to address community safety concerns beyond our properties, we remain committed to working with neighbours as well as partners who are best positioned to address safety issues beyond our housing sites. These include bylaw, law enforcement, or other emergency services.

WHAT ARE BC HOUSING'S HOUSING-FIRST APPROACH AND HARM REDUCTION STRATEGIES?

Response: BC Housing uses the widely recognized and proven Housing First approach. This approach recognizes that people are better able to improve their well-being if they are first housed. After a person can access a warm bed, washrooms and meals, they are in a better position to improve their physical and mental health, including substance-use recovery. If residents choose to use substances, we take a harm reduction approach, which means support staff would work with each person to use safely. The goal of harm reduction is to prevent the negative consequences of substance use and to improve health. Harm reduction acknowledges that many people may not be in a position to remain abstinent. The harm reduction approach meets people where they are at and provides an option to engage with peers, medical and social services in a non-judgmental way. Harm reduction approaches and programming are seen as a best practice for engaging with people who have substance use issues. If residents want to access treatment or recovery, staff will support them in accessing those services. The operator will also work closely with Island Health in determining best practices to ensure tenants are safe and healthy.

WHY WAS THIS LOCATION CHOSEN?

Response: The property was selected after consultation with local partners, including the City of Port Alberni. It is important for supportive housing to meet people where they are, in the community where they already live. Supportive housing must also be located close to services, amenities and transit. These things are essential for people who are transitioning out of homelessness and working towards a healthy, stable life. Land availability is also a major factor in choosing a location for supportive housing. The property at 3027 & 3037 2nd Avenue is City-owned, vacant and available.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR OPERATOR SELECTION?

Response: BC Housing selects a non-profit operator through a fair and open process to manage the building and provide services to residents. Through this process, we have selected Lookout Housing Health Society to operate this proposed housing should it be approved by City Council.

WHAT IS THE EXPECTED TIMELINE FOR THIS PROJECT?

Response: A decision by City Council is estimated within a six-month window on submission of the rezoning application, which took place in February 2025. Should the housing be approved, the next steps include development permit and building permit phases, ahead of construction. Relevant timeline information will be posted to the Let's Talk page and shared with neighbours if/when confirmed.

Appendices

Appendix A: Announcement Letter, January 28, 2025



January 28, 2025

Neighbourhood Update

3027, 3037 2nd Avenue, Port Alberni

Hello Neighbour,

We are writing to announce that BC Housing is proposing to build 55-units of supportive housing at 3027 and 3037 2nd Avenue, in Port Alberni, with the support of the City of Port Alberni. This development is an important part of our continued effort to address the urgent need to offer safe, indoor housing to people experiencing homelessness in the community. The 2023 Point-in-Time (PIT) homeless count identified 163 people experiencing homelessness in Port Alberni.

About the Proposed Supportive Housing

Supportive housing is deeply affordable studio apartments. They are intended for people who need support to maintain their housing. Residents will pay shelter rates and sign a lease with an addendum that addresses expectations about appropriate and respectful behavior, especially as it relates to the health and safety of themselves and others. There will be a variety of health and safety services and supports onsite, including:

- Cultural 24/7 staffing and security
- Meal programs
- Life and employment skills training
- Health and wellness support

BC Housing will select a non-profit operator for this project through a fair and public process. They would be responsible for managing the building, the property, and providing support services to residents. The operator would also work to foster positive relationships and keep open communication with neighbours.

Community Engagement

Neighbours can watch out for engagement opportunities to be shared in the coming weeks. We encourage you to participate and share your thoughts and feedback as we continue to focus on delivering needed housing to people living in Port Alberni. The proposed development requires rezoning of the land that must be considered by City Council, and BC Housing will be submitting the rezoning application to the City on February 3, 2025.

More Information

To learn more, please visit our web page at: letstalkhousingbc.ca/port-alberni-second-avenue. You can also reach out at any time with questions or feedback by emailing communityrelations@bchousing.org.

Sincerely,
BC Housing

Appendix B: Letters to First Nations Chiefs



January 29, 2025

Chief Councilor Brandy Lauder
Hupačasath First Nation
5500 Ahahswinis Drive
Port Alberni, BC V9Y 8J9

Re: Proposed supportive housing project

3027, 3037 2nd Avenue, Port Alberni

Dear Chief Councilor Lauder,

I am reaching out to you and the Hupačasath First Nation to share that BC Housing is proposing to build 55 units of supportive housing at 3027 and 3037 2nd Avenue in Port Alberni, with the support of the City of Port Alberni. This development is an important part of our continued effort to address the urgent need to offer safe, indoor housing to people experiencing homelessness in the community. The 2023 Point-in-Time (PIT) homeless count identified 163 people experiencing homelessness in Port Alberni.

About the proposed supportive housing

Supportive housing is deeply affordable studio apartments. They are intended for people who need support to maintain their housing. Residents will pay shelter rates and sign a lease with an addendum that addresses expectations about appropriate and respectful behaviour. There will be a variety of health and safety services and supports onsite, including 24/7 staffing, meal programs, life and employment skills training and health and wellness supports.

BC Housing will select a non-profit operator for this project through a fair and public process. They would be responsible for managing the building and the property and providing support services to residents. The operator would also work to foster positive relationships and keep open communication with neighbours.

Invitation to meet with BC Housing

I would like to invite you to meet with our project leaders to discuss this housing proposal in more detail. Currently, we are available on **February 10 or 14 at 1:00 p.m.** Please let us know if either of these dates work for you. You can reach our Development Manager Elsabe Fourie directly at efourie@bchousing.org or **236-997-0379**.

For more project information, please visit letstalkhousingbc.ca/port-alberni-second-avenue.

Sincerely,

Sarah Smith
Director, Regional Development
BC Housing

January 29, 2025

Chief Councillor Ken Watts
Tseshah First Nation
5091 Tsuma-as Drive
Port Alberni, BC V9Y 8X9

Re: Proposed supportive housing project 3027, 3037 2nd Avenue, Port Alberni

Dear Chief Councillor Watts,

I am reaching out to you and the Tseshah First Nation to share that BC Housing is proposing to build 55 units of supportive housing at 3027 and 3037 2nd Avenue in Port Alberni, with the support of the City of Port Alberni. We acknowledge that the project is situated in the traditional, ancestral and unceded homelands of your Nation and peoples. This development is an important part of our continued effort to address the urgent need to offer safe, indoor housing to people experiencing homelessness in the community. The 2023 Point-in-Time (PiT) homeless count identified 163 people experiencing homelessness in Port Alberni.

About the Proposed Supportive Housing

Supportive housing is deeply affordable studio apartments. They are intended for people who need support to maintain their housing. Residents will pay shelter rates and sign a lease with an addendum that addresses expectations about appropriate and respectful behaviour. There will be a variety of health and safety services and supports onsite, including 24/7 staffing, meal programs, life and employment skills training and health and wellness supports.


BC Housing will select a non-profit operator for this project through a fair and public process. They would be responsible for managing the building, the property, and providing support services to residents. The operator would also work to foster positive relationships and keep open communication with neighbours.

Invitation to meet with BC Housing

I would like to invite you to meet with our project leaders to discuss this housing proposal in more detail. Currently, we are available on **February 10 or 14 at 1:00 p.m.** Please let us know if either of these dates work for you. You can reach our Development Manager Elsabe Fourie directly at efourie@bchousing.org or **236-997-0379**.

For more project information, please visit letstalkhousingbc.ca/port-alberni-second-avenue.

Sincerely,

Sarah Smith 
Director, Regional Development
BC Housing

Appendix C: Open House Invitation, February 25, 2025



February 25, 2025

Neighbourhood Update

3027, 3037 2nd Avenue, Port Alberni

Hello Neighbour,

We are writing as a follow up to our Jan 28 letter to invite you to a Community Open House to learn more about the proposed Supportive Housing at 3027 and 3037 2nd Avenue in Port Alberni. The rezoning application for this proposed project was submitted to the City on February 3, 2025.

In-Person Community Open House Event

Join us in person to learn more, meet with project team members and ask questions about the project.

- **Date:** Tuesday, April 1, 2025
- **Location:** Best Western Barclay Hotel (Ballroom), 4277 Stamp Ave, Port Alberni
- **Time:** 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
- **RSVP at:** second-avenue-open-house.eventbrite.ca

Registration is appreciated to help with planning.

More Information

This development is an important part of our continued effort to address the urgent need to offer safe, indoor housing to people experiencing homelessness in the community.

To learn more, please visit our web page at: letstalkhousingbc.ca/port-alberni-second-avenue. You can also reach out at any time with questions or feedback by emailing communityrelations@bchousing.org.

Sincerely,
BC Housing

Appendix D: Additional Promotional Material (Poster & Newspaper Ad)

Community Open House

3027 and 3037 2nd Avenue, Port Alberni

BC Housing is proposing to build **55-units of supportive housing** at 3027 and 3037 2nd Avenue in Port Alberni.

Learn more at our community open house:

Date: Tuesday, April 1st
Time: 5:30pm-7:30pm
Location: Best Western Barclay Hotel (Ballroom)



Scan here to register or visit:
letstalkhousingbc.ca/port-alberni-second-avenue



Community Open House

3027 and 3037 2nd Avenue, Port Alberni



BC Housing is proposing to build **55-units of supportive housing** at 3027 and 3037 2nd Avenue in Port Alberni.

Learn more at our community open house:

Date: Tuesday, April 1st
Time: 5:30pm-7:30pm
Location: Best Western Barclay Hotel (Ballroom)



Scan here to register or visit:
letstalkhousingbc.ca/port-alberni-second-avenue

Appendix E: Open House Poster Boards

letstalkhousingbc.ca/47074/widgets/205257/documents/153523

Appendix F: Feedback Form



Community Open House Comment Form

3027, 3037 2nd Avenue, Port Alberni

BC Housing plans to build a 55-unit supportive housing complex at 3027 & 3037 2nd Avenue. This project aims to provide safe and accessible housing with services for people experiencing homelessness in Port Alberni.

Your feedback is important

All comments from this event will be included in a community engagement report, which will be posted on the project webpage at letstalkhousingbc.ca/port-alberni-second-avenue.

[illegible]

Thank you for sharing your thoughts!

Appendix G: Survey and Responses

BC Housing Survey: 3027 and 3037 2nd Avenue Port Alberni - Community Open House

Thank you for your participation at our open house. We value your feedback.
If you have any further questions or concerns, please reach out to communityrelations@bchousing.org

1. What brought you here today? (Choose all that apply)

- ☐ I care about the topic
- ☐ I like in the neighbourhood
- ☐ I'm affiliated with a local business
- ☐ I wanted to learn more about the project
- ☐ I wanted to learn more about the operator
- ☐ I wanted to provide feedback about the project and community interests
- ☐ I wanted to hear and share opinions with other community members

2. Were your questions about the project answered? (Choose any one option)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Mostly
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No

3. Was the information shared clear and easy to understand? (Choose any one option)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Mostly
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No

4. Did you feel able to express your views/that you were heard? (Choose any one option)

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

5. Did attending the open house grow your understanding of supportive housing and its role in addressing homelessness? (Choose any one option)

Yes

Mostly

Somewhat

No

6. Do you have any other questions you would like to submit?

7. Was there anything missing from today's open house that you would like to have seen or heard?

1. Was there anything missing from today's open house that you would like to have seen or heard?

Various responses including the need to hear from the City, accountability from those in charge, and more representatives from Port Alberni.

2. Do you have any other questions you would like to submit?

Questions ranged from neighborhood security to the presence of Indigenous staff.

3. Did attending the open house grow your understanding of supportive housing and its role in addressing homelessness?

Responses were "Mostly" (2 respondents), "Somewhat" (4 respondents), and "No" (1 respondent).

4. Did you feel able to express your views/that you were heard? (Choose any one option)

A few respondents felt somewhat heard. The majority felt "Mostly" (2 respondents), with some feeling "Somewhat" (2 respondents), and "No" (1 respondent).

5. Was the information shared clear and easy to understand? (Choose any one option)

Responses were "Mostly" (2 respondents), "Somewhat" (2 respondents), and "No" (1 respondent).

6. Were your questions about the project answered? (Chose any one option)

Responses included "Mostly" (2 respondents), "Somewhat" (4 respondents), and "No" (1 respondent).

7. What brought you here today? (Choose all that apply)

Common reasons for attendance included caring about the topic, affiliation with a local business, living in the neighbourhood, and wanting to provide feedback about the project and community interests.