



Community Engagement Report

Proposed New Supportive Housing & Shelter Building
Joyce Avenue, Powell River

August – September 2024

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INTRODUCTION

BC Housing, in partnership with the City of Powell River, is proposing to build a new supportive housing and shelter building on City-owned land on Joyce Avenue adjacent to the qathet General Hospital. The proposed new building would offer up to 43 supportive studio apartments, some of which will have added Complex Care Housing services. The building would also include a purpose-built shelter with up to 20 spaces to support people’s initial transition out of homelessness.

The project team consists of the following partners:

- **BC Housing** would fund and lead development and construction, as well as provide ongoing operational funding.
- **The City of Powell River** would provide the land for the supportive housing and shelter building.
- **Lift Community Services** would operate the building and provide staff support for resident care and safety.
- **Vancouver Coastal Health** would operate Complex Care Housing in partnership with Tla’amin Nation and Lift to deliver a range of health services. The Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions funds Complex Care Housing.
- **The Tla’amin Nation** would provide services to Indigenous clients in the Complex Care Housing program.

This report provides a summary of the community engagement held in August and September 2024 for the proposed development.

PROJECT NOTIFICATION – AUGUST 2024

Letter to Neighbours & Email to Interested Parties

On August 15, 2024, BC Housing, in partnership with the City of Powell River, sent a neighbourhood letter (**Appendix A**) by mail to **288 residents and owners** of properties within the area indicated in the map below.



The letter included the following:

- A short summary of the proposed development
- Information about the need for more supportive homes and shelter spaces in Powell River
- A map showing the location of the proposed site
- An overview of the development timeline and the bylaws process to support the proposed development
- A description of the supportive housing, Complex Care Housing and shelter services that would be provided in the building
- An introduction of Lift Community Services as the operator that would manage the building and provide services to residents and shelter guests
- A link to the Let's Talk Housing BC project webpage
- An invitation to participate in an in-person open house about the proposed development
- BC Housing's community relations email address

An email with similar information was also sent on the same day (August 15, 2024) to **58 local businesses, organizations and other interested parties** in the community.

Let's Talk Housing BC Webpage

The community was invited to visit the Let's Talk Housing BC project webpage for more information about the project and learn about engagement opportunities. This webpage launched on August 15, 2024, at letstalkhousingbc.ca/powell-river-joyce-avenue (**Appendix B**).

The webpage included the following:

- Project details, including a map showing the location of the proposed site, and a summary of the proposed development, the development process and timeline, as well as the supports and services at the site
- Links to relevant documents, including information sheets about the Powell River 2023 Homeless Count and Community Benefits of Supportive Housing
- Details of the in-person open house and link for registration
- An invitation to send in questions and comments to BC Housing's community relations email address

On September 12, 2024 (one day after the in-person open house), the poster boards used in the open house were uploaded onto the webpage.

As of September 17, 2024, there have been **1,292 visitors** to the project webpage. The poster boards were viewed **49 times**.

ENGAGEMENT EVENTS – SEPTEMBER 2024

Online Information Session for City of Powell River Staff – September 4, 2024

On September 4, 2024, BC Housing and the City of Powell River hosted an online information session for City of Powell River staff. **About 30 people participated in the 1-hour session.**

Representatives from the project team gave a presentation about the project and provided details about the proposed building, municipal process and development timeline, operations and staffing, as well as residents and services.

The presentation was followed by a moderated Q&A during which representatives from the project team answered questions from participants about the project.

In-person Small Group Meetings with Key Interested Parties – September 10, 2024

On September 10, 2024, the project team hosted **two 90-minute small group meetings** with key interested parties at the ballroom in the Powell River Town Centre Hotel. A third-party consultant facilitated the meetings.

The project team identified 37 local businesses and organizations as key interested parties to invite to the meetings. **9 businesses and organizations participated in the first meeting at 11:30 a.m. 8 participated in the second meeting at 2 p.m.** A third meeting was scheduled for the morning of September 11, but it was cancelled due to lack of registrations.

During each meeting, representatives from the project team gave short presentations on different topics before pausing to allow participants to ask questions. Topics included the proposed building, municipal process and development timeline, operations and staffing, as well as residents and services. This was followed by a moderated discussion during which all participants engaged in a dialogue about the project.

In-person Open House – September 11, 2024

On September 11, 2024, the project team hosted a 2-hour in-person open house at the ballroom in the Powell River Town Centre Hotel.

After the initial 100 tickets were sold out on Eventbrite, the registration capacity was increased to include the 28 people who reached out to BC Housing to express their interest in participating. **On the day of the event, around 150 people attended the open house.** No one was denied entry.

At the open house, participants visited stations around the room to view poster boards (**Appendix C**) and filled out comment forms. The poster boards provided details about the proposed building, municipal process and development timeline, operations and staffing, as well as residents and services. Project specialists and representatives from all project partners were available at the stations to answer any questions and listen to feedback.

After the open house, the poster boards were uploaded onto the Let's Talk Housing BC project webpage and made available for download. The physical poster boards were also available for viewing at the Powell River Public Library until September 17, 2024.

ONGOING ENGAGEMENT – AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2024

BC Housing's Community Relations Inbox

Since the initial project notification in August, BC Housing has provided the communityrelations@bchousing.org email address for the community to ask questions and provide comments about the project. The letter to neighbours, the email to interested parties, the Let's Talk Housing BC project webpage and the poster boards all included an invitation to send questions and comments to the Community Relations Inbox.

WHAT WE HEARD: KEY THEMES

In total, the project team collected **44 comment forms**. Of these, **4 were supportive, 6 were inquisitive/neutral** and **34 were negative**.

As of September 17, 2024, BC Housing's Community Relations Inbox has received **124 emails** regarding the project. Of these, **4 were supportive, 44 were inquisitive/neutral** and **76 were negative**. Separately, the City of Powell River has so far received **14 letters and emails** regarding the project not copied to BC Housing. Of these, **1 was neutral** and **13 were negative**.

Several consistent themes emerged, including:

- **Site Selection:** Some community members expressed concern that the proposed site is located near seniors and other vulnerable people accessing the hospital. Some indicated that the proposed development should be built at an alternate location where it would not affect others in the community.
- **Safety & Security:** Some community members noted that crime, safety and security issues have been increasing in the community over the past few years. Some associated these issues with the existing supportive housing and temporary shelter. They expressed concern that the proposed new building would bring more issues to the community and have a negative impact on nearby residents and businesses.
- **Operations:** Some community members have raised questions over the management of both the existing supportive housing as well as the proposed new building. Some questioned whether the residents come from out of town. Some indicated a preference for stricter enforcement of rules for evictions. Some questioned how BC Housing evaluates housing operators and why Lift was chosen as the operator of the new building. Some expressed concern over staffing issues and questioned whether there would be sufficient staff to support the operations, including health care professionals to provide Complex Care Housing services.
- **Engagement process:** Some community members questioned whether the proposed development is a "done deal" and requested further opportunities for their comments and feedback to be heard.

The project team has considered the key public interests identified above to ensure they are being addressed in the project.

The project team has responded to many of the above questions and comments during the engagement events. BC Housing and the City of Powell River also responded to the comments and questions directed to them. The participation of the community is sincerely recognized and valued.

With regards to themes identified:

- **Site Selection:** The proposed site was selected after thorough discussions between BC Housing and the City of Powell River. The site was chosen because it is vacant and available. It

is also close to services, amenities and transit, which are essential for people who are transitioning out of homelessness and working towards a healthy, stable life.

- **Safety & Security:** People experiencing homelessness are our most vulnerable neighbours. Offering people indoor spaces will increase their personal safety and well-being. This contributes to community safety overall. The most important security feature for everyone is staffing. Supportive housing staff would be onsite 24/7 to address any issues that may arise. BC Housing Design and Construction Standards apply Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) practices in all building projects. This includes security measures such as fenced grounds, a single point of entry, fob access, 24/7 staffed reception, security cameras and lighting.
- **Operations:**
 - There is no evidence that people are coming from out of town to access the supportive housing and shelter services in Powell River. All people in the existing supportive housing are long-term residents of the qathet Region. Like in many communities, homelessness is increasing in Powell River and affordable housing remains a challenge. The last Point-in-Time Homeless Count in April 2023 identified 126 people experiencing homelessness in Powell River. Of these, 85% reported having lived in Powell River for five years or more. 54% reported having always been in the community.
 - Evictions are not taken lightly and used as a last resort, as the project team seeks not to return a person to homelessness. When needed, additional resources and supports are provided to each resident to ensure a successful tenancy and prevent the need for eviction.
 - In addition to financial and budget reviews, BC Housing conducts regular operational reviews to help individual operators identify areas of strength and improvement as well as to ensure contractual compliances. BC Housing has recently updated its operational review process to include “Client and Community” as a focus area. In this portion of the review, we use a community lens to assess operational effectiveness. This focuses on improving client and community interactions through staff engagement, feedback and complaints policies, and building rapport with interested parties within the community.
 - Lift is the only local operator with years of experience operating supportive housing and shelter programs. Lift was also involved in working with Vancouver Coastal Health and the Tla’amin Nation in the collective proposal for Complex Care Housing program. They have established working relationships, and continue to play an essential role in supporting marginalized community members to access the care they need. This benefits the people they serve as well as the entire community.
- **Staffing issues:**
 - Lift currently employs over one hundred staff who support the ongoing operations of nine distinct sites. Their wages and benefits, training and career development opportunities, and organizational culture make them an attractive employer in the community. They have a dedicated Human Resource team that focuses on recruitment and retention and employee wellness and support. Based on experience,

Lift has full confidence that they will be able to fulfill the staffing requirements for the proposed site.

- B.C. and Canada are experiencing health-care resourcing challenges. This has impacted every corner of the province, including qathet (Powell River). VCH has a dedicated People (HR) team who oversees strategic initiatives for the ongoing recruitment and retention of VCH health-care staff.
- **Engagement process:** City Council will be considering the road closure and rezoning bylaws required to support the proposed development at the meeting on October 10, 2024. Residents can provide written submissions to info@powellriver.ca. In order for correspondence to be included on the agenda, it would need to be received by no later than October 1, 2024 at 4 pm. If the project moves forward, the project team plans to organize further engagement opportunities in early 2025.

CONCLUSION

Since August 15, 2024, BC Housing, in collaboration with the City of Powell River, the Tla'amin Nation, Vancouver Coastal Health and Lift Community Services, has engaged the Powell River community about the proposed new supportive housing and shelter building on Joyce Avenue and provided opportunities for the community to learn more, ask questions and provide comments and feedback. The mechanisms to reach the public were broad, proactive and diverse, and the engagement held so far has been fulsome.

We are only at the beginning of the community engagement process for this project. If the project moves forward, the project team will reach out again to the community in early 2025 to offer more engagement opportunities.

Appendix A – Letter to Neighbours



August 15, 2024

Neighbourhood Update

City-owned land adjacent to 5000 Joyce Avenue, Powell River

Hello Neighbour,

BC Housing, in partnership with the City of Powell River, is proposing to develop a new supportive housing and shelter building on City-owned land adjacent to qathet General Hospital at 5000 Joyce Avenue. This project would help address the urgent need for more safe, indoor spaces for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Powell River.

The building would offer up to 43 homes with supports, including Complex Care Housing services funded by Vancouver Coastal Health. The purpose-built shelter would include up to 20 spaces to support peoples' initial transition out of homelessness. The building would also include the amenity, clinical, programming and staffing space to deliver Complex Care Housing services.

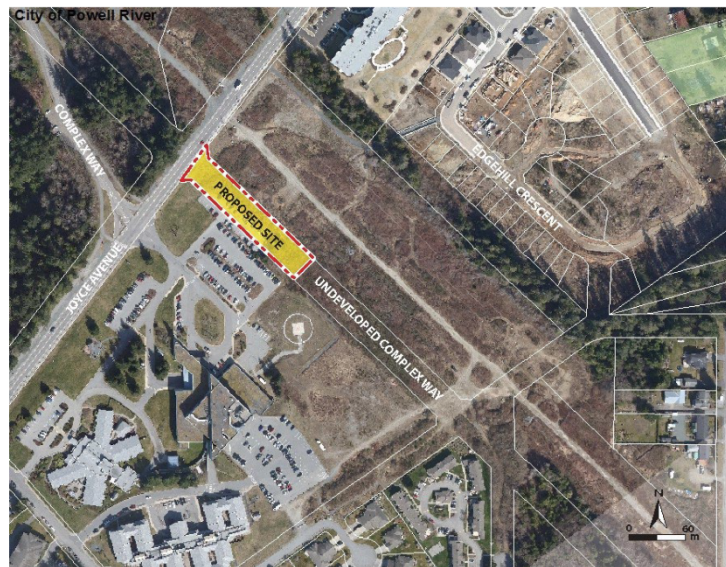
The urgent need in Powell River

The last Point in Time Homelessness count in April 2023 identified 126 people experiencing homelessness in Powell River. Of these, 74% were unsheltered. Opening more supportive homes and shelter spaces means there would be fewer vulnerable people sheltering outdoors. This would contribute to overall community safety.

Location and development

The City of Powell River owns vacant land adjacent to the property at 5000 Joyce Avenue. The proposal is for BC Housing to enter into a long-term lease for a portion of this land to facilitate the development of this housing.

It is important for supportive housing and shelter space to meet people where they are, in the community where they already live. Supportive housing and shelter must 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.

Directed by Council, the City has initiated road closure and rezoning bylaws required to support the proposed development. Following approval, Council can then consider leasing these City-owned lands to BC Housing. If a lease is granted, construction is estimated to start in 2025.

Supportive Housing and Complex Care Housing

Supportive homes are deeply affordable studio apartments for people who need various supports to maintain their housing. These can include daily meals, life skills and employment training, and referrals to other community services. Residents would be single adults (19+) of all genders, including seniors, people with disabilities or any others who need supports to maintain stable housing. All supportive housing residents sign residency agreements and pay rent.

We are proposing for this site to offer Complex Care Housing services. Through this program, Vancouver Coastal Health, in partnership with the Tla'amin Nation and Lift Community Services, would provide residents with enhanced health supports, including person-centered health care and other culturally safe services and more. These services would be in addition to the supports provided by supportive housing and be available to residents under one roof and in their own home.

Complex Care Housing services have been a welcome addition to supportive housing programs across B.C. Learn more about Complex Care Housing by visiting gov.bc.ca/complexcarehousing.

Purpose-built shelter

The new building would include a purpose-built shelter with up to 20 spaces. When a shelter is purpose-built and co-located with supportive housing, we can include more safety and security features for the benefit of the shelter guests as well as the surrounding community. These may include fenced grounds, a single point of entry, fob access, 24/7 staffed reception, security cameras and lighting. Shelter support worker would support each guest to help them along their individual journey to transition out of homelessness. Shelter services can include skills training and support navigating the housing system.

Operator

Lift Community Services (Lift) would manage the building and provide services to the supportive housing residents and shelter guests. Lift is a community-based non-profit society that has been operating in the qathet Region for 40 years, offering housing and employment services, food security programs, health and family services and more. Learn more about Lift by visiting liftcommunityservices.org.

Community engagement

A caring community can contribute greatly to the success of people transitioning out of homelessness. BC Housing is committed to being a good neighbour and keeping lines of communication open as this project moves forward.

In-person open house

We are inviting interested neighbours to join us for an in-person open house to learn more about the proposal, meet project partners and ask questions.

Date: Wednesday, September 11, 2024

Time & location: To be confirmed (details will be provided to registrants)

RSVP by visiting letstalkhousingbc.ca/powell-river-joyce-avenue or scanning the QR code below. You can also find the latest project information there.



We welcome questions at any time by email to communityrelations@bchousing.org.

Sincerely,

BC Housing
City of Powell River

Appendix B – Let’s Talk Housing BC Project Webpage

Powell River – New Supportive Housing & Shelter Building on Joyce Avenue



BC Housing, in partnership with the City of Powell River, is proposing to build a new supportive housing and shelter building on City-owned land adjacent to qathet General Hospital at 5000 Joyce Avenue. This project would help address the urgent need for more safe, indoor spaces for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Powell River.

The new building would offer up to 43 supportive studio apartments, some of which will have added Complex Care Housing services funded by Vancouver Coastal Health. The building would also include a purpose-built shelter with up to 20 spaces to support people’s initial transition out of homelessness. It would also provide the amenity, clinical, programming and staffing space to deliver Complex Care Housing services.

The urgent need in Powell River

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It is important for supportive housing and shelter space to meet people where they are, in the community where they already live. Supportive housing and shelter must 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.

Directed by Council, the City has initiated road closure and rezoning bylaws required to support to the proposed development. Following approval, Council can then consider leasing these City-owned lands to BC Housing. If a lease is granted, construction is estimated to start in 2025.

Supportive housing

Supportive homes are deeply affordable studio apartments for people who need various supports to maintain their housing. These can include daily meals, life skills and employment training, and referrals to other community services.

Residents would be single adults (19+) of all genders, including seniors, people with disabilities or any others who need supports to maintain stable housing. All supportive housing residents sign residency agreements and pay rent.

Complex Care Housing services

Through the Complex Care Housing program, Vancouver Coastal Health, in partnership with the Tla'amin Nation and Lift Community Services, would provide residents with enhanced health supports, including person-centered health care and other culturally safe services and more. These services would be in addition to the supports provided by supportive housing and be available to residents under one roof and in their own home.

Complex Care Housing services have been a welcome addition to supportive housing programs across B.C. [Learn more about Complex Care Housing\(External link\)](#).

Purpose-built shelter

The new building would also include a purpose-built shelter with up to 20 spaces. When a shelter is purpose-built (and co-located with supportive housing), we can include more safety and security features for the benefit of the shelter guests as well as the surrounding community. These could include fenced grounds, a single point of entry, fob access, 24/7 staffed reception, security cameras and lighting.

Shelter support workers would support each guest to help them along their individual journey to transition out of homelessness. Shelter services can include skills training and support navigating the housing system.

Operator

Lift Community Services (Lift) would manage the building and provide services to the supportive housing residents and shelter guests. It would work in partnership with the Tla'amin Nation in providing services to all Indigenous program participants.

Lift is a community-based non-profit society that has been operating in the qathet Region for 40 years, offering housing and employment services, food security programs, health and family services and more. [Learn more about Lift\(External link\)](#).

Community Engagement

A caring community can contribute greatly to the success of people transitioning out of homelessness. BC Housing is committed to being a good neighbour and keeping lines of communication open as this project moves forward.

Our community open house took place at the Powell River Town Centre Hotel on September 11, 2024. We want to thank all participants for their time and thoughtful discussion.

[Poster boards](#) from the open house are now available for download. They are also available for viewing at the Powell River Public Library (at 6975 Alberni Street) until September 17, 2024. We welcome any feedback by email to communityrelations@bchousing.org([External link](#)). We will collect all community feedback received by September 17, 2024 into an Engagement Summary Report. The report will be submitted to City Council for their consideration.

We are only at the beginning of a fulsome community engagement process for this project. We plan to reach out again to the community early in 2025 to offer more engagement opportunities.

We welcome questions at any time by email to communityrelations@bchousing.org([External link](#)).

Appendix C – Open House Poster Boards

Welcome

Proposed Supportive Housing & Shelter Building Joyce Avenue, Powell River

Community Open House September 11, 2024

Join the conversation about:

- Housing & Homelessness in Powell River
- Proposed Supportive Housing & Shelter Building
- Housing & Shelter Operations

Visit stations around the room to chat with project specialists and representatives from all project partners.

Help yourselves to refreshments.

We acknowledge, with gratitude, that we are gathered today on – and the area we are discussing today is situated on – the traditional territory and the treaty lands of the Tla'amin Nation.



Homelessness & Housing in Powell River

Homelessness in Powell River

- **126 people** were identified as experiencing homelessness in Powell River. (Point in Time Homeless Count, April 2023)
- **74%** were unsheltered.
- **85%** report having been in Powell River for **5 years or more**; **54%** report having **always been here**.
- **18%** were **over the age of 55**.



Photo: SUSTAIN Powell River

BC Housing in Powell River



Tipton Place
Affordable Rental Housing – 42 Units



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"Klah Klah Hay Ayeh"
Affordable Housing – 24 units



Lift Emergency Shelter
Temporary Shelter – 20 spaces



Cranberry Place
Affordable Rental Housing – 24 Units



qathet Supportive Housing
Supportive Housing – 44 units



Proposed Supportive Housing & Shelter Building

What the building would provide

- **Up to 43 deeply affordable studio apartments** with support services
 - Some with added **Complex Care Housing services**
- **Purpose-built permanent shelter** with up to 20 spaces to support people's initial transition out of homelessness
- Purpose-built clinical, programming, amenity and staffing space to deliver services to residents

Project Partnership



- **BC Housing** would fund and lead development and construction, as well as provide ongoing operational funding.



- **The City of Powell River** would provide the land for the supportive housing and shelter building.



- **The Tla'amin Nation** would provide services to all indigenous clients in the Complex Care Housing program.



- **Vancouver Coastal Health** would fund and provide a range of health care services for Complex Care Housing clients.



- **Lift Community Services** would operate the building and provide staff support for resident care and safety.

Homelessness & Housing in Powell River

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BC Housing in Powell River



Tipton Place
Affordable Rental Housing – 42 Units



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"Klah Klah Hay Ayeh"
Affordable Housing – 24 units



Lift Emergency Shelter
Temporary Shelter – 20 spaces



Cranberry Place
Affordable Rental Housing – 24 Units



qathet Supportive Housing
Supportive Housing – 44 units



Development Timeline

Aug – Sept 2024

October 10, 2024

2025



Project plans shared.
Engagement for community to learn more, ask questions and provide feedback.



City Council consider road closure and rezoning bylaws required to support the proposed development.



If the bylaws are approved and a lease is granted, construction is estimated to start in 2025.

Stay in Touch

We commit to keeping lines of communication open, answering questions and addressing any concerns.



Let's Talk Housing BC Web Page
letstalkhousingbc.ca/powell-river-joyce-avenue

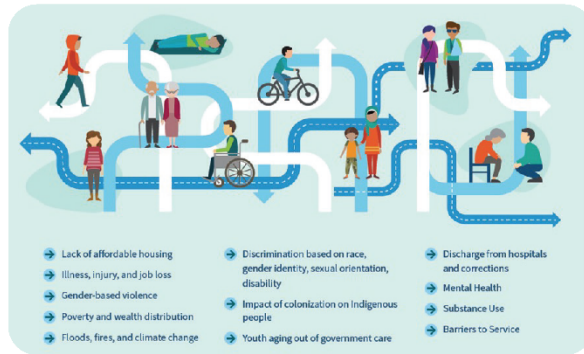


BC Housing Inbox
communityrelations@bchousing.org



Shelter as a Gateway to Housing

Pathways to Homelessness



People without access to basic shelter must focus solely on survival.

Homeless Outreach and Service Provider Referrals

Shelters



After a person can access a warm bed, washrooms and meals, they are in a much better position to improve their well-being and enter stable housing.

Coordinated Access and Assessment Process



Housing with Supports



Subsidized Housing



Market rentals with supported rent supplements



Supporting Housing

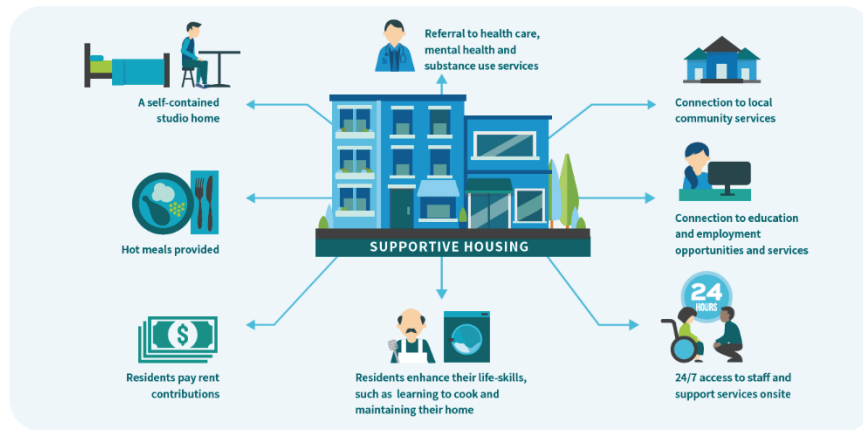
What is Supportive Housing?

- Deeply affordable homes with on-site supports
- Self-contained studio apartments
- For local people who need supports and services to maintain their housings
- Culturally informed support services and individual case planning



qathet Supportive Housing at 4910 Joyce Avenue, Powell River

What services are typically available?



Development Timeline

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2025



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Complex Care Housing (CCH)

The Need

Residents have **increasing health care needs**:

- Provide wraparound health and social supports complementing existing Mental Health and Substance Use services in community
- Address increased risk of evictions and homelessness

The Response

CCH incorporates **personalized health care into housing**:

- CCH provides person-centered health care and other culturally safe services to eligible people under one roof
- Based on individual needs
- CCH is a welcome addition to supportive housing programs

How is complex care housing different than supportive housing?

