FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
925 BRAIDWOOD & RYAN ROAD
COURTENAY

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OVERVIEW

Why does Courtenay need a new purpose-built shelter and permanent supportive housing?

- The 2025 Point-in-Time homeless count identified at least 218 people experiencing homelessness in the Comox Valley.
- When vulnerable people have stable housing with a range of supports, they can access things like health care, wellness services and skills training to help rebuild their lives, supporting healthy and safe communities for everyone. This can in turn help them move through the housing continuum to other more independent forms of housing.

What is happening at 925 Braidwood and Ryan Road?

- BC Housing is building a permanent, purpose-built shelter building and supportive housing building at 925 Braidwood Road, in consultation with the City.
- The shelter would provide approximately 73 shelter spaces with capacity for 30 extra spaces during extreme weather.
- The supportive housing would provide approximately 70 studio homes to people from the local area who need supports to maintain stable housing.
- This project is an important part of a collaborative and continued effort to address the urgent need to offer safe, indoor shelter to people experiencing homelessness in Courtenay.

What is the development timeline?

- We plan to start construction on the purpose-built shelter and supportive housing in February 2026. This timing will depend on building permit approval.
- We currently expect the shelter to take 13 to 16 months to build, and the supportive housing is to take 18 to 20 months. These timelines may vary due to weather and soil conditions. We are aiming to construct both buildings at the same time, subject to design and costing timelines.
- We currently expect the shelter to open in fall 2027 and the supportive housing to open in winter 2027.

Who will stay in the supportive housing?

- BC Housing and Lookout Housing and Health Society will offer the supportive homes to people using a Coordinated Access and Assessment (CAA) process.
- A CAA working group is made up of BC Housing representatives, Island Health, housing operators and community service providers and partners. This working group meets regularly to review supportive housing applications. Members evaluate resident support needs and barriers to housing such as physical and mental health issues or addictions, and history of homelessness over the past several years. The CAA group helps determine people who will be a good fit for a particular housing type or building.

Who will stay in the purpose-built shelter?

- The shelter spaces will be made available to anyone in need in the community

Will local residents be prioritized?

- The supportive homes at 925 Braidwood and Ryan Road are being designed to meet the needs of the local community. The resident selection process for this site will prioritize people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in the Comox Valley.
- The 2025 Point in Time (PiT) count indicates 86% of people experiencing homelessness in the Comox Valley have been in the community for more than one year.

Is the new purpose-built shelter intended to replace existing shelter spaces in Courtenay (i.e., CONNECT)?

- The purpose-built shelter at 925 Braidwood and Ryan Road is intended to operate alongside existing community shelter services in Courtenay.
- The City of Courtenay owns the building where the CONNECT shelter is currently located. They are best placed to advise on any decisions around the future of that property.

What are the roles of the organizations / partners involved in this project?

- BC Housing will fund the development and construction of the purpose-built shelter and permanent supportive housing, as well as provide ongoing operational funding.
- BC Housing has selected Connective to operate the purpose-built shelter, and Lookout Housing and Health Society to operate the permanent supportive housing. These experienced non-profit operators will manage the buildings, maintain the properties, and provide support services to residents.
- Both operators were selected through a fair and open Request for Proposals process.

Will there be a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for this location?

- BC Housing is phasing out the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) program. Instead, we are shifting towards neighbourhood-based inclusion planning for new supportive housing and shelter projects.

- Through this process, BC Housing supports the non-profit housing operator(s) to collaborate within the local community to develop customized plans that support the inclusion of the new supportive housing/shelter in the neighbourhood.
- Connective and Lookout will determine what neighborhood inclusion efforts may be initiated after the building opens and could include meetings, events, communications or other initiatives based on different community contexts. Once the building is open, neighbours can reach out to the Operator directly to discuss opportunities further.

ABOUT 925 BRAIDWOOD & RYAN ROAD

What is a purpose-built shelter?

Purpose-built shelters are intentionally designed spaces. Unlike shelters which are often set up in community centres, halls or other buildings, purpose-built shelters are designed specifically as temporary shelter spaces with specific features in mind to support those who stay there and the surrounding community. Compared to supportive housing, shelters are a temporary accommodation. A person could stay in a shelter from one night to a few months or longer. A case worker works with each shelter guest to help them along their individual journey to transition out of homelessness and into permanent housing.

- Features of purpose-built housing and shelter may incorporate specific features such as central kitchens, storage for belongings and private outdoor areas. They may also have features to mitigate any impacts in the surrounding community such as specific types of lighting, landscaping, fencing and security systems.
- Moving indoors is an important step in a person's transition out of homelessness and into stable housing. People without access to basic shelter must focus solely on survival. After a person can access a warm bed, washrooms, and meals, they are in a much better position to improve their housing situation and well-being.
- With neighbourhood integration in mind, the new purpose-built shelter will also provide indoor support including dining and program spaces as well as outdoor amenity spaces.

What is supportive housing?

Purpose-built supportive homes are deeply affordable studio apartments intended for people who need supports and services to maintain their housing.

- Residents are single adults (19+) of all genders, including seniors, people with disabilities, people who have experienced trauma or poverty and people who have struggled with the high cost of housing.
- Residents pay the provincial shelter rate rent of $500 and receive individual case planning.
- Supports are provided on site to help residents maintain housing stability. These typically include:

- daily meals
- life skills training
- employment assistance
- referrals to health care
- connections to other community services

How was this location selected?

- The site was selected in collaboration with the City of Courtenay. The land use falls within the Official Community Plan (OCP).
- BC Housing purchased the three-acre site at 925 Braidwood Road in March 2024, in consultation with the City.
- Access to community services and transit is key for people without homes and so is feeling part of a neighbourhood. With a remote site, there is no access to services, no regular transit access, and no integration with the community. All these things are essential for people who are working towards a healthy, stable life.

Can you explain the price BC Housing paid for the land and why the purchase price was higher than the assessed value?

- It is BC Housing's policy to have land appraised by a qualified, third-party before making any purchase. The appraisal completed on this property supported the vendor's sale price considering the site's potential for allowable buildable area and potential units of housing.
- There can be a variance between assessed value and market value for several reasons. For more information see: info.bcassessment.ca/Services-products/Understanding-the-assessment-process/market-value-and-property-assessment.

Why was the community not informed of the purchase prior to the announcement on March 28, 2024?

- We recognize that many neighbours would like to be informed in advance of BC Housing purchasing a site. However, it is not possible to disclose or publicize real estate transactions until they are concluded.
- The most important reason for this is that it could lead to cost escalations and potentially jeopardize the real estate transaction. This would inhibit BC Housing's ability to do our work of providing safe, quality, accessible, and affordable housing options to British Columbians.
- Once a real estate transaction is finalized, our commitment is to engage with the community and provide opportunities for dialogue and conversation so that we can build our partnership and ensure successful community integration into neighbourhoods.

What are the plans for traffic mitigation for the Braidwood Avenue and Ryan Road?

- Our transportation consultant has reviewed the site and vehicle estimates for the proposed development and prepared a transportation study. The report concluded that the new vehicle trips that will be generated by the development is not expected to have a significant impact on the surrounding road network. BC Housing provided this report to the City of Courtenay as part of the rezoning application.
- The new pedestrian greenway connects Braidwood Road to Ryan Road to support walking, cycling and transit.
- Parking will be provided on site to primarily support staff, visitors, and community partners.
- The building will have secure bicycle parking as well as a bicycle wash and repair station.

Has this site been rezoned for use?

- Yes. On August 28, 2024, Courtenay City Council unanimously approved the decision to move the rezoning of 925 Braidwood Road to final enactment.
- Final enactment of the rezoning was completed in September 2024.
- More information about the rezoning process and the Official Community Plan for the City of Courtenay can be found on the City's website.

Why was there no public hearing held for this rezoning application?

- The rezoning application conforms with the Official Community Plan for this site.
- As a result of Provincial amendments to the Local Government Act adopted in Fall 2023, zoning bylaws for residential developments that align with the Official Community Plan are prohibited from holding a public hearing.
- On August 7, 2024, BC Housing submitted a Community Engagement Report to Courtenay City Council summarizing the communications, community engagements and feedback regarding the proposed project.

How is community peace of mind being considered in the design of this development?

- Safety of the residents, staff and surrounding community is always our top priority. One of the most important safety features for any supportive housing or shelter project is 24/7 staffing by experienced professionals.
- BC Housing Design and Construction Standards considers Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) in all new purpose-built shelters and supportive housing. This approach includes features such as maximizing views of parking areas, entrances, sidewalks and other public spaces, and will include security features, such as cameras, fob entry, fencing and lighting.

Will this development decrease property values?

- BC Housing research shows that property values surrounding supportive housing sites typically keep pace with the surrounding municipality. See the full report here: Exploring Impacts of Non-Market Housing on Surrounding Property Values Full Report.

Has there been Indigenous consultation, and/or consultation with community partners as a part of this project?

- BC Housing has introduced the project to K'ómoks First Nation (KFN) Chief and Council and will continue to update KFN about this project.
  - Archaeology permit applications were submitted in July 2024, Ministry comments under review (12.2 Heritage Inspection Permit and 12.4 Alteration Permit).
  - A KFN Cultural Heritage Permit (CHIP) was granted on May 27, 2024, for Preliminary Field Reconnaissance (PFR).
  - An Archaeology Impact Assessment (AIA) is required for areas of potential and CHIP
- BC Housing has met with multiple other community partners about the housing and shelter design including frontline workers, emergency responders and people with lived experience.

OPERATIONS & SERVICES

Who will manage the purpose-built shelter at 925 Braidwood and Ryan Road?

- BC Housing selected Connective through a fair and public process to operate the shelter. Connective will manage the building and the property and provide 24/7 support services to the shelter guests.
- Learn more about Connective by visiting connective.ca.

Who will manage the permanent supportive housing there?

- BC Housing selected Lookout Housing and Health Society through a fair and open process to operate the permanent supportive housing. Lookout will manage the permanent supportive housing building and provide 24/7 support services to the residents.
- Learn more about Lookout by visiting lookoutsociety.ca.

Has BC Housing increased the number of shelter beds to 132?

- The rezoning speaks to a capacity of 'up to 132 beds.' However, this does not mean there will be 132 guests.
- Currently, 73 beds are expected with flexibility to support another 30 Extreme Weather Response (EWR) beds in certain weather.

How will the shelter and supportive housing buildings be staffed?

- One of the most important ways supportive housing and shelter can integrate well into the neighbourhood is through good staffing.
- There will be at least three staff on site at each building overnight, and typically additional staff during the day to manage the building and provide support services to residents.

What training does BC Housing require for operator staff?

- Staff training, as required by BC Housing, includes, but is not limited to:
  - Crisis prevention training and/or de-escalation training, non-violent intervention;
  - First Aid/CPR;
  - Indigenous awareness training;
  - Mental health first aid training;
  - Domestic violence and safety planning;
  - Safety for women in co-ed shelters training;
  - Substance use awareness and safety training, including Naloxone training;
  - LGBT2SQIA+ awareness training;
  - Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT) training;
  - Trauma-informed practice training;
  - Staff self-care training; and
  - BC Housing database training.

What services will be offered to people who will live/stay at 925 Braidwood Road?

- Services typically available in supportive housing include:
  - Studio homes with kitchenette and private washroom
  - Daily meals
  - Case management and health care and support service referrals
  - Laundry services
  - Communal dining and amenity spaces
  - On-site 24/7 staff support
- Services typically available in shelters include:
  - Daily meals
  - Beds with pillow and basic linens
  - Towels and hygiene products
  - Access to washrooms and showers
  - Laundry
  - Secure area for belongings
  - On-site 24/7 staff support

Who will be responsible for keeping the buildings and property clean?

- Connective and Lookout are committed to being good neighbours. They will manage and maintain the buildings and property as any other neighbour would.

- Staff commit to working with shelter, supportive housing residents and the surrounding community on an ongoing basis to address any cleanliness concerns quickly and collaboratively.
- If there are cleanliness issues on or immediately surrounding the property, we encourage neighbours to contact the operator directly so they can be addressed.
- We will share a direct phone number for the supportive housing and shelter with neighbours when it is available. Staff would be on site 24/7 to support residents and provide a point of contact for neighbours.
- Many supportive housing programs also include a "Clean Team" where residents are hired to take on cleaning and maintenance duties on and around the property. (Note that specific programs have not yet been decided for this site).

How will you address neighbourhood concerns if they arise?

- BC Housing, Connective and Lookout are committed to work closely with partners who are best positioned to address issues beyond our housing sites. These include bylaw, law enforcement, or other emergency services for whom public safety is their mandate.
- BC Housing, Connective, and Lookout will also work directly with community members to address any concerns that may arise.
- As in all neighbourhoods, in an emergency, neighbours should call 911 and wait for help to arrive.

Will alcohol and drugs be allowed?

- Our supportive housing and shelter services are open to all local residents who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Lookout and Connective will employ a harm-reduction approach to support the safety and well-being of all residents and guests, and we connect individuals with mental health and substance-use recovery services if they choose. Many shelter guests and residents do not use substances at all.
- Housing is crucial in a person's health journey. After a person can access a warm bed, washrooms and meals, they are in a much better position to improve their well-being, including accessing health care such as substance use treatments.
- It is also important to note not all supportive housing residents or shelter guests use substances, and this would not be a substance-use recovery facility.

Will smoking or substance use be allowed outside of the property?

- The building will adhere to all health and bylaw restrictions for common areas.
- There will be a contained, designated outdoor smoking area incorporated into the design.

- The operator will monitor the area to ensure it is kept quiet and respectful for neighbours.

Would there be camping/encampments allowed on the property?

- Encampments result when there is a lack accessible, affordable housing options in the community for the residents who live there. When people have access to housing with appropriate supports, they are far less likely to congregate in encampments.
- There will be no camping allowed on the supportive housing / shelter property. Staff would conduct regular walkabouts and monitor the property for this type of activity.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

What outreach was done to notify the community about the project?

- **March 2024:** On March 28, BC Housing announced it had purchased 925 Braidwood Road and Ryan Road in Courtenay with plans to build supportive housing and a purpose-built shelter.
- **April 2024:** A project webpage was published: letstalkhousingbc.ca/courtenay-925-braidwood-road.
- **June 2024:** On June 21, BC Housing mailed a letter to neighbours within 200m of the project site (978 addresses). This letter included:
  - Background information about the proposed development.
  - An invitation to a Neighbours Discussion Session and Community Open House (In-Person) on July 18, 2024.
  - Information about how neighbours could provide feedback using a Discussion Guide and Feedback Form posted on the project webpage.
- **June -July 2024:** From June 21 to July 24, BC Housing invited community feedback on project design elements using a Discussion Guide and Feedback Form. The Discussion Guide provided details on the development including:
  - Development timelines and site plans
  - Parking and sustainability information
  - Opportunities for engagement
  - Operator selection
  - Information about the purpose-built shelter and supportive housing
- **July 2024:** On July 18, a Neighbours Discussion Session and Community Open House was held at the Native Sons Hall.
- **August 2024:** On August 7, an Engagement Summary Report was posted to the project webpage and submitted to Courtenay City Council.

- **November 2025:** On November 10, BC Housing mailed a letter to neighbours announcing the operators and inviting them to Meet the Operators Open House in December.
- **December 2025:** On December 8, BC Housing will host a Meet the Operators Open House at Glacier View Secondary School in Courtenay.
- **December 2025:** On December 10, BC Housing will provide a public presentation to Courtenay City Council.

How has feedback during the Neighbours Discussion Session and Community Open House engagement been considered?

- Please see the Engagement Summary Report for details of the outcomes from discussions with neighbours and interested parties.

How can I learn more about the project?

- BC Housing and our non-profit partners commit to keeping lines of communication throughout this project. We will post updates to letstalkhousingbc.ca/courtenay-925-braidwood-roadas they are available, and reach out directly to neighbours regarding project milestones.
- If you have any questions about this project or would like to be added to our contact list for updates, please email communityrelations@bchousing.org.