



Communications and Engagement Summary Report

Fifth Street Redevelopment, Nanaimo, BC

July - August 2026

Introduction

This report provides an overview of communications and community engagement held during July and August 2026 related to the redevelopment of 564 Fifth Street in Nanaimo. This site was the location of the former Sanala Apartments.

Project Overview

The Fifth Street Redevelopment is a 5.8-acre site in Nanaimo's Harewood neighbourhood. The site includes three properties owned by different partners: BC Housing owns 564 Fifth Street, the City of Nanaimo owns 502 Howard Avenue, and Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools owns 505 Howard Avenue.

The first phase of the redevelopment will take place on the BC Housing-owned property at 564 Fifth Street. BC Housing plans to build 201 modern, energy-efficient rental homes. A master plan was previously developed to guide possible future uses of the neighbouring properties owned by the City of Nanaimo and Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools. Development of future phases will depend on later provincial budget approvals.

The redevelopment at 564 Fifth Street will include is intended to include:

- 34 affordable homes with income-based rent, replacing the former Sanala Apartments.
- 167 new rental homes with rents close to market rates for households with low to moderate incomes.
- Two buildings, each five storeys tall.
- A central courtyard with a playground and shared BBQ area.
- 171 underground parking stalls.
- 212 bicycle parking spaces.
- A shared community amenity space.
- Indigenous cultural elements in the building design, arrival plaza, and courtyard.

All former Sanala Apartments residents will be supported throughout the redevelopment process.

[M'akola Housing Society](#) has been selected to manage the homes included in the first phase. BC Housing will continue to own the land at 564 Fifth Street.

A Development Permit application was submitted in June 2026 to the City of Nanaimo. Construction is expected to begin in late 2027/early 2028, following all municipal and provincial approvals.

Engagement Communications: July – August 2026

An open house was held on August 19, 2026, for former Sanala Apartments tenants and the broader community. BC Housing staff, along with representatives from M'akola Development Services, M'akola Housing Society, MacDonald Hagarty Architects (MHA), and the City of Nanaimo attended to engage in conversations and answer questions about the redevelopment.

Participants reviewed the updated project design, site plans, and unit concepts, met the project team, and learned more about M'akola Housing Society. Attendees were also invited to ask questions and provide feedback.

The event supported municipal public engagement requirements and provided an opportunity to share information about changes to the project phasing and design.

Invitation letters were distributed in July 2026 to former Sanala Apartments tenants and nearby residents within a 200 m radius of the site. Members of the Harewood Neighbourhood Association, Snuneymuxw Nation, Nanaimo-Ladysmith School Board, and City of Nanaimo were invited by email. Captions for these documents are available in the appendices at the end of this document.

Neighbour letter

This communication included:

- Confirmation of Phase 1
- Details about the proposed 201 homes
- Anticipated timelines
- An invitation to the open house on August 19, 2026

Tenant letter

This communication included:

- Confirmation that rezoning had been approved
- Details about the proposed Phase 1 housing
- Updates on project timelines and operators
- Reminder of commitments to former Sanala Apartments tenants
- An invitation to the open house on August 19, 2026

Email to the Harewood Neighbourhood Association

This communication included:

- Neighbour letter sent on July 10, 2026
- Open house invitation for August 19, 2026
- Proposal for an online meeting with the project team

BC Housing Project Webpage

This webpage contains the latest information about the project: www.bchousing.org/projects-partners/projects/nanaimo-fifth-street-redevelopment

Harewood Neighbourhood Association Online Question & Answer Session

August 11, 2026, 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. – Teams meeting

Purpose: To share the updated phasing and design. Provide an opportunity for questions and clarification.

Q&A Attendance – 4 attendees

This session was hosted online on Teams and facilitated by BC Housing's Redevelopment and Tenant Engagement Team.

- The session opened with a 15-minute presentation sharing an overview of the Fifth Street Redevelopment.
- The project team, including staff from BC Housing and M'akola Development Services, were available to answer questions. Topics from this session are included in the "What We Heard" section below.

Community Open House

August 19, 2026, at Bowen Park Complex, 500 Bowen Road, Nanaimo, B.C

Former Sanala Tenants Preview Attendance: 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. session – 1 attendee

All Community Attendance: 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. session - 11 attendees

The Community Open House featured large posterboards on display in a self-guided format:

- Seven subject matter experts were positioned at boards to answer questions and engage in conversations.
- Topics from this session are included in the "What We Heard" section below.

Community Relations Inbox

BC Housing's Community Relations inbox (**communityrelations@bchousing.org**) did not receive any email inquiries related to the Fifth Street Redevelopment project between July 1 and August 31, 2026.

BC Housing's Community Relations team remains available to respond to questions and inquiries regarding this project.

What We Heard – Engagement Summary

The following provides a summary of the main topics and themes that arose during this engagement period. These topics were gathered at the Community Open House, and the online Q&A session.

Site design and amenities

Questions about the physical design of the development:

- Differences between the original concept and the updated design.
- The size of the central courtyard.
- The design and use of the shared community amenity space, including whether it could support cooking activities.
- The number and location of parking and bicycle parking spaces.
- Tree retention and landscaping plans.
- How the site will be maintained before construction begins.
- Sustainable building features and energy-efficient technologies.

Housing

Questions about the homes themselves:

- Details about affordable housing and rent-geared-to-income homes.
- The meaning of "near-market" rental housing.
- Unit types and sizes, including one-, two-, and three-bedroom homes.
- The availability of studio or smaller units.
- How to apply for housing.

Accessibility and security

Questions about how residents will use and experience the homes and site:

- Accessibility features, including walk-in showers.
- In-suite laundry.
- Pet policies.
- Whether the courtyard will be publicly accessible.
- Pedestrian crossings and traffic signals for children walking to school.

Project delivery and operations

Community members asked questions about:

- The construction timeline and next steps.
- M'akola Housing Society's role as the housing operator.
- Why M'akola Housing Society was selected.

Positive comments

Participants shared a number of positive comments about the project, including:

"Love the bike space ratio, sound baffles, community space, BBQ, playground, garden."

"I know we didn't get exactly what we had imagined, but I am glad to see new housing going in."

"Excited to see it go up."

Feedback on Future Engagement

Participants provided suggestions to improve future engagement activities:

- Consider holding future open houses later in the evening to better accommodate community schedules.
- Expand the neighbour notification area beyond the current 200-metre radius to reach a broader area of the Harewood neighbourhood. Participants noted that Harewood has historically included larger lot sizes and a wider area of interest.

Next Steps

BC Housing community relations team will continue to respond to inquiries by email throughout the development of the Fifth Street Redevelopment. We plan to provide another project update on the website once the Development Permit has been approved and a construction start date has been confirmed. Phase 1 Building Permit approvals and the start of construction are currently expected to start in late 2027/early 2028

APPENDICES – COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS

Appendix A: Neighbour Letter



Neighbour Update

July 10, 2026

Fifth Street Redevelopment | 564 Fifth Street, Nanaimo

Hello,

We are writing to provide some important updates on the Fifth Street Redevelopment, formerly called Te'tuxwtun, in Nanaimo.

The municipal rezoning process is now complete. City of Nanaimo Council adopted a zoning bylaw change in March 2026 to support redevelopment of these lands. This important milestone means we can begin the detailed design phase and plan for construction of Phase 1 on the BC Housing property at 564 Fifth Street. Construction is anticipated to begin in early 2028, once funding and permitting for the project is approved.

What's Next

We intend to move forward with a phased approach that will allow us to build approximately 200 new homes in the first phase. Phase 1 would include:

- 34 affordable rent geared to income homes for seniors, families, and people living with disabilities. These homes will replace the former Sanala Apartments.
- 167 new purpose-built rental homes with rents that near market rates intended for households with moderate and middle incomes.

Since we last engaged with the community, planning and designs have changed to reflect current budget realities. This means some elements of the initial project proposal will not be moving forward as we are focussing resources to address immediate housing needs in Nanaimo. Development of future phases will depend on later provincial budget approvals.

The 5.8-acre site in the Harewood neighbourhood of Nanaimo is owned by multiple partners: BC Housing owns 564 Fifth Street, the City of Nanaimo owns 502 Howard Avenue, and Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools owns 505 Howard Avenue. BC Housing has selected M'akola Housing Society as the operator to manage the homes included in the first phase of construction. The project design and construction are being led by M'akola Development Services. The project is currently progressing through the detailed design stage.

This redevelopment is being built on the Traditional and Ancestral Territories of the Snuneymuxw First Nation and will honour the Nation's cultural teachings and Indigenous development strategy.

Engagement

We're grateful for the thoughtful input provided by former tenants of Sanala, Snuneymuxw First Nation, and community members during the early planning process (2022-2025). This input continues to inform the new phased approach we intend to move forward with.

Community Open House

Learn more about the project, ask questions, and meet the project team.

Date: August 19, 2026

Time: 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Location: Room 1 – Bowen Park Complex, 500 Bowen Road, Nanaimo BC

For More Information

Visit: bchousing.org/projects-partners/projects/nanaimo-fifth-street-redevelopment
or scan the QR code below:



Please reach out with any questions to: communityrelations@bchousing.org

Kindly,

BC Housing

Appendix B: Tenant Letter



Tenant Update

July 10, 2026

Fifth Street Redevelopment | 564 Fifth Street, Nanaimo

Hello,

As someone who used to live at the Sanala Apartments, we are writing to share some important news about Fifth Street Redevelopment, formerly called Te'tuxwtun, in Nanaimo.

The City of Nanaimo has finished approving the zoning for the Fifth Street Redevelopment project. This milestone means we can move ahead with detailed design and planning. **Construction is expected to start in early 2028**, once funding and permits are approved.

What's next?

We are planning to build the project in phases. In Phase 1, we plan to build about 200 new homes, including:

- 34 affordable (rent geared to income) homes for former tenants of the Sanala Apartments. Residents include seniors, families, and people with disabilities.
- 167 rental homes for people with moderate to middle incomes.

Since we last talked with tenants, planning and designs have changed to reflect current budget realities. This means some elements of the initial project proposal will not be moving forward as we are focussing resources to address immediate housing needs in Nanaimo. Development of future phases will depend on later provincial budget approvals.

Building design and construction are being led by M'akola Development Services. M'akola Housing Society has been selected to operate the homes in Phase 1. This redevelopment is being built on the Traditional and Ancestral Territories of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. The project team will honour the Nation's cultural teachings and Indigenous development strategy.

Our commitment to you

- Once new homes are ready, all former Sanala tenants will have the opportunity to move into the new building under their current rental agreement (as long as you remain eligible for subsidized housing).

- BC Housing will work with each household and cover all reasonable moving costs when you move into your new home.
- New homes will be offered in a fair and transparent way.

Open House

Learn more about the project, ask questions, and meet the project team.

Date: August 19, 2026

Time: 4:00 – 5:00 pm - Tenant-specific session

5:30 pm – 7:30 pm - Open house

Location: Room 1 – Bowen Park Complex,
500 Bowen Road, Nanaimo, B.C.

Questions?

Stay up to date by visiting our webpage: www.bchousing.org/projects-partners/projects/nanaimo-fifth-street-redevelopment or scan the QR code below:



If you can't attend the open house and have any questions or concerns, please email us: communityrelations@bchousing.org

Sincerely,

BC Housing

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Appendix C: Email to the Harewood Neighbourhood Association

On Tue, Jul 14, 2026 at 2:48 PM Kristin

Hello Alexis,

I'm writing to share information with you about the Fifth Street Redevelopment. I've attached an update that has been mailed to neighbours within a 200M radius this week.

In addition, I think this would be a great time to reconnect with Harewood Neighbourhood Association. Perhaps you and I can coordinate a virtual meeting?

In the letter, you will find information about an Open House that BC Housing is planning on August 19, 2026. I'd love to connect before then, and also welcome HNA members to that event.

All the best,
Kristin



Appendix D: BC Housing Project Webpage

Nanaimo – Fifth Street Redevelopment

Share



Artist's rendering showing the planned Fifth Street redevelopment once it is complete.

Project overview

BC Housing plans to redevelop the site at 564 Fifth Street by adding close to 200 modern, energy efficient rental apartments.

The redevelopment will include:

- 34 affordable homes with income-based rent replacing the former Sanala Apartments for seniors, families and people living with disabilities.
- 167 new rental homes with rents close to market rates for households with low to moderate incomes
- Two buildings, each five storeys tall
- A central courtyard with a playground and shared BBQ area
- 171 underground parking stalls
- 212 bicycle parking spaces
- A shared community amenity space
- Indigenous cultural elements in the building design, arrival plaza, and courtyard

The land at 564 Fifth Street will continue to be owned by BC Housing. All former residents will be supported throughout the redevelopment process.

Development timeline

- ✓ **2023**
Draft design concept
- ✓ **2024**
Site preparation: demolition of vacant building
- ✓ **2025**
Development partner and building operator selection
- **2026**
 - Rezoning complete
 - Phase 1 Development Permit
- **2027/2028**
Expected Phase 1 Building Permit approval and start of construction
- **2030**
Expected completion of Phase 1 construction

Questions?

Please email communityrelations@bchousing.org with questions about this project.

Provincial Redevelopment Program



Community engagement



Resources



Appendix E: Community Open House – Poster boards

Welcome

Open House

Wednesday, August 19, 2026

Thank you for joining us to learn about the new designs and plans for the Fifth Street Redevelopment.

Please feel free to:

- Put on a name tag so we can get to know each other.
- Grab some snacks, refreshments or enjoy the activity table.
- Ask us questions, share your feedback, and leave a sticky note.

We acknowledge, with gratitude, that the area we are discussing today is situated on the unceded traditional territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation.

Overview



What's Happening?

BC Housing is proposing to build two buildings at 564 Fifth Street. This will allow for the construction of:

34 affordable rent-geared-to-income homes for seniors, families, and people living with disabilities. These homes will replace the former Sanala Apartments.	167 new purpose-built rental homes with rents at near market rates intended for households with moderate and middle incomes.	 is leading the development process and will be the long-term housing operator of all homes or apartments.
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Updates & Changes



What's New?

- Previous engagement with tenants and the community was held in 2023/2024. At that time, the development was planned to cover the full 5.8 acre site. The original site was comprised of three lots owned by BC Housing, City of Nanaimo, and the Nanaimo-Ladysmith School District.
- Since then, planning, scope, and designs have changed to reflect current budget realities.
- Some elements will not be moving forward as we focus resources to address immediate housing needs in Nanaimo. The development is now focused solely on the BC Housing owned site at 564 Fifth Street, as Phase 1.
- Development of future phases will depend on later provincial budget approvals.

Location & Design



Design Elements

201 Homes → 19 studios → 74 one-beds → 70 two-beds → 38 three-beds	171 Parking Stalls including visitor and loading spots	212 Bicycle Parking Spaces	 Main Entries off Fifth Street and Georgia Avenue
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Location & Design



Design Elements

Indigenous Cultural Elements

- Medicinal Indigenous plant garden
- Arrival plaza
- Indigenous artwork on façade

Community Spaces

- Shared community amenity room in Building B
- Shared public access through courtyard
- Public multi-use path to the north

Other Amenities for Residents

- Balconies and outdoor living spaces
- Shared BBQ area
- Children's playground

Renderings of Buildings A and B



Looking at Building B from the corner of Fifth Street and Georgia Avenue



View of Building A from Georgia Avenue

Renderings provided by MVA Architects Ltd. Subject to change.

Meet the Operator



M'akola Housing Society is the largest Indigenous affordable housing provider in BC, serving more than 5,000 family members and managing more than 2,400 homes in communities across the province. M'akola Housing Society first opened in Victoria in 1984 to support Indigenous families and has expanded north in subsequent decades to provide safe and affordable housing to individuals, couples, Elders, and families across the Island.

MHS in Nanaimo

Along with their Nanaimo regional office, M'akola Housing Society (MHS) operates six existing properties (136 homes) in the city of Nanaimo. As a long-term operator and neighbour, MHS is excited to be part of this project and supports the addition of rental housing in this key neighbourhood corridor.



Housing at 564 Fifth Street

The 167 purpose-built rental homes proposed at 564 Fifth Street are expected to be offered at close to market rent, however, M'akola Housing Society and the project team are committed to pursuing all opportunities to increase affordability of these homes.

- Eligibility will be governed by an Operating Agreement with BC Housing.
- As an Indigenous housing provider, priority will be given to Indigenous applicants.

How do I Apply?

M'akola will make information for applicants available on their website closer to construction completion.

For Inquires:

applications@makola.bc.ca



Typical Unit

Adaptable one-bedroom 557 sqft



One-bedroom home 557 sqft



Two-bedroom home 831 sqft



Three-bedroom home 1012 sqft



BC Housing Commitments— Former Sanala Tenants

BC Housing is committed to supporting former residents of this site (Sanala Apartments) in the following ways:



Communication:
BC Housing maintains regular communication with former residents (Sanala Apartments).



Rent Geared to Income (RGI):
Replacement unit RGI rates in Phase 1 will be based on incomes below the Housing Income Limits (HILs), currently set at 30% of household income.



Current Housing:
All former residents were assisted to find suitable, secure alternate housing, until Phase 1 is complete. No one is without a home because of the redevelopment.



Housing Eligibility:
Priority is for former residents who will be offered an appropriate home after redevelopment through a fair process, based on HILs eligibility, family size, and household needs.



First Right of Refusal:
Former residents will be offered a home in the new Phase 1 building before anyone else.



Moving Costs & Assistance:
BC Housing will pay for reasonable moving costs. This can include hiring movers and reconnecting utilities like telephone and cable.

Development Team

MAKOLA DEVELOPMENT SERVICES	M'AKOLA HOUSING SOCIETY	AES
kwasun	HEROLD ENGINEERING	MHA
WCPG CONSTRUCTION LTD.	LADR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS	JRS ENGINEERING
AME Group	McElhanney	BC HOUSING

Development Timeline



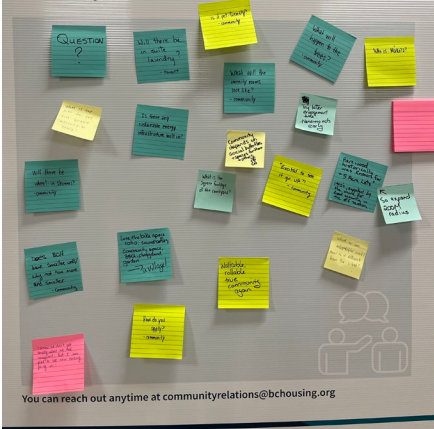
Provincial Redevelopment Program & BC Housing Continuum

The Provincial Redevelopment Program aims to redevelop provincially-owned properties to renew existing low-income housing while creating purpose-built rental housing options for individuals and families of middle and moderate incomes.



Share your feedback!

Add a sticky note!



Appendix F: Community Open House – Photos

