



Early Engagement Summary Report

Supportive Housing in Vancouver South Grandview Highway at Copley Street

April 2022





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Purpose

This Early Engagement Summary Report provides an overview of community and stakeholder engagement activities completed to date. It includes a summary of feedback that was received during the early planning stages for the proposed supportive housing at South Grandview Highway at Copley Street in Vancouver.

BC Housing, the City of Vancouver and project partners, began early engagement in February 2022. This early engagement will inform the development of the rezoning application, which is expected to be submitted to the City of Vancouver in Spring 2022.

This level of early engagement is aligned with BC Housing's best practices for community engagement and exceeds the public consultation requirements of the City of Vancouver's rezoning process. When a rezoning application is submitted to the City of Vancouver, a further City-led public consultation process will take place.

This report includes a summary of key themes that have emerged from the early community engagement process which included two 90-minute Neighbourhood Dialogues, a four-week Public Comment Period, an ongoing comment form on the BC Housing Let's Talk webpage, and a Community Liaison available to receive feedback and answer questions by phone or email. Project fact sheets were also translated into Traditional Chinese, Vietnamese and Tagalog to ensure the information was accessible to all community members.

Frequently asked questions and corresponding responses provided by BC Housing during the engagement period have been included as an Appendix to this report.

Background

BC Housing is working with the City of Vancouver on a proposal to build new supportive housing at 2518–2538 South Grandview Highway. Prior to submitting a rezoning application to the City of Vancouver, BC Housing engaged with neighbours, local groups and the community to introduce the proposed project and listen to feedback.

BC Housing is proposing a building that would offer approximately 64 studio homes with supports for adults, seniors and people with disabilities who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness with a priority for people in the local community. Supports may include mental health care, medical care, education and training, reconnecting to culture, life skills training, substance use services, and help accessing income assistance, disability benefits, pensions, identification or setting up a bank account.

BC Housing is committed to bringing people inside and reducing the number of people outside struggling to survive. When a person chooses to live in supportive housing, they have a warm, safe place to call home, can access the necessities of life such as food, washrooms and laundry, can begin to heal from the damage caused by living outside and can strengthen community connections.





Early Engagement Program Goals

The goals of the early engagement program for South Grandview Highway at Copley Street were to:

1. **Provide a variety of opportunities for neighbours, local groups and the community to learn** about the proposed housing and provide feedback.



2. **Build awareness** of the need for housing with supports for people experiencing homelessness in Vancouver.



3. **Explore ways to build an inclusive community** where everyone has an opportunity for a safe and healthy place to live.



4. **Collect feedback** on the proposed design of the site to inform the rezoning application.





Opportunities for Community Feedback

BC Housing reached out to engage community members early in the planning process using a variety of channels to ensure the community had the opportunity to learn about the project and provide comments.

Community members were invited to ask questions and provide input to the project through:

Virtual Neighbourhood Dialogue Sessions



12 community members attended two 90-minute sessions where they viewed short presentations on the topics of homelessness, learned about supportive housing and the project details, and engaged in roundtable discussions with project staff.

Small-group Meetings with Local Organizations



BC Housing and City of Vancouver staff offered to meet with members of local organizations to discuss the proposed supportive housing project and listen to questions and feedback.

Public Comment Period



BC Housing provided a Public Comment Period that was hosted on its webpage from February 21 until the end of the day on March 18, 2022. Community members had an opportunity to submit feedback about the proposed supportive housing directly to the project team. As part of the Public Comment Period, a self-guided presentation with information about the development proposal was available to review.

Let's Talk Housing Webpage



BC Housing invited public feedback through Let's Talk Housing, an online comment form on the project webpage. BC Housing staff continue to receive input through this comment form.

BC Housing Community Liaison Email and Phone



A Community Liaison continues to be available Monday to Friday from 9:00am to 4:00pm, for community members to contact via phone or email. The Community Liaison's contact information was included on all notification and presentation materials so that community members could submit comments and questions on the project and receive responses from BC Housing. BC Housing continues to accept calls and emails through the Community Liaison.



Engagement Activities and Timeline

The table below describes engagement activities related to the project.

Date	Activity	Description
February 7, 2022	BC Housing and the City of Vancouver delivered postcards to site neighbours	BC Housing and the City of Vancouver hand-delivered postcards to residential and business neighbours within a 2-block radius of the proposed site to introduce the project. The postcards included a link to the Let's Talk Housing webpage, the Community Liaison contact information and an invitation to the Neighbourhood Dialogue meetings in March.
February 7, 2022	BC Housing and the City of Vancouver reached out to local organizations	BC Housing and the City of Vancouver emailed community organizations and other identified stakeholders to provide information about the project and offer virtual meetings with BC Housing and the City of Vancouver staff. Community organizations and stakeholders included local schools and child care centres, faith-based groups, community centres, care homes and non-profit housing societies.
February 7, 2022	BC Housing and City of Vancouver staff visited local businesses with project information	BC Housing and City of Vancouver staff visited local businesses in person with project information to answer any early questions about the supportive housing proposal.
February 7, 2022	Let's Talk Housing Renfrew Street webpage launch	BC Housing launched a webpage to receive input from community members and to share project information letstalkhousingbc.ca/vancouver-grandview .
February 8, 2022	Fact sheets delivered to businesses neighbouring the project	BC Housing mailed fact sheets about the housing proposal to residents and businesses within a 5-block radius of the proposed housing.
February 10, 2022	Site signage	An information sign was installed at the project site.
February 10, 2022	Joint site announcement by BC Housing and the City of Vancouver	A news release was issued to inform the public about the proposal for the new permanent purpose-built supportive housing site.
February 21 to March 18, 2022	Public Comment Period	A four-week Public Comment Period was hosted on the BC Housing Let's Talk webpage where community members could submit feedback about the proposed supportive housing. As part of the Public Comment Period, a self-guided presentation with information about the development proposal was available for review.
March 1 and March 2, 2022	Neighbourhood Dialogue Sessions	Two virtual Neighbourhood Dialogues were held with neighbours. BC Housing and City of Vancouver staff provided information about supportive housing and pathways to homelessness. Community members had the opportunity to ask questions about the proposed project and provide input.



What We Heard

Participant Snapshot

BC Housing and the City of Vancouver worked together to ensure meaningful early engagement with neighbourhood residents through a process that is robust, fair and equitable, aligned with BC Housing's best practices for community engagement and takes place before the public consultation requirements of the City of Vancouver's rezoning process.

Community members and stakeholders participated in the engagement program in a variety of ways:

12
2

people
participated
in

Virtual
Neighbourhood
Dialogue Sessions



11

people shared
their comments as
part of the Public
Comment Period



25

comments and questions were submitted through through
the BC Housing Community Liaison phone and email and the
Let's Talk Housing website



Guidelines for Respectful Dialogue

BC Housing wants to hear from everyone who wants to share their perspective in a safe and respectful way.

All conversations — in person, over the phone, and/or online — are meant to be a place where people can share and listen.

We expect everyone will refrain from using language or acting in a way that is discriminating, threatening, abusive, racist or otherwise disrespectful. Discrimination or abusive language of any kind is not tolerated.



Summary of Feedback

The following themes have emerged from community feedback on the housing proposal to date:

Many community members expressed general support for the project. Comments included:

- Very glad to hear the City is providing more supportive housing units for people who are homeless
- These buildings are meeting pressing needs in our city to house, build community and provide supportive care to address the growing drug overdose crisis and the homelessness and affordable housing issues of our city
- I am in full support of this excellent project proposal
- Thank you for seeking to incorporate supportive housing in my neighborhood; I am in support of this project.

Some community members expressed general opposition to the project. Comments included:

- The project is not appropriate for the surrounding neighborhood or community
- As a homeowner in the area, I am strongly against the development of these new proposed homes

A few community members expressed an interest in how the project will be operated and who would live in the building. Feedback included:

- Suggestions that the building would fit into the neighbourhood better if the housing was designed for families
- Suggestions that the housing should be for long-term residents
- A request for an on-site contact once the building is open

Many community members stressed the need to ensure adequate supports are in place for the residents in the building. Feedback included:

- Ensure enough support staff would be on site 24/7
- Ensure support for substance use and mental health to help people towards healing and recovery

A few community members provided comments related to the design of the building. Comments included:

- This proposed structure is too high and six-storeys is not keeping in character with the rest of the neighbourhood
- The designs are excellent!
- The proposed number of surface parking stalls is insufficient
- The building may contribute to existing parking issues around 15th Avenue

Some community members provided suggestions for early engagement. Feedback included:

- Concern for neighbours who don't have a computer and couldn't join a virtual Neighbourhood Dialogue session
- Ensuring translated materials are available for neighbours whose first language isn't English
- Having an available contact person to send feedback to directly



Next Steps

Upcoming phases of the community engagement process include:





Appendix: Frequently Asked Questions and Responses

The following questions emerged throughout the early engagement period. The responses from BC Housing are provided below.

Questions about **who would live in the building**



A

The homes are proposed to be permanent supportive housing which is designed for adults who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. They can be young people, seniors, people with disabilities and anyone who has experienced trauma, poverty or struggled with the high cost of housing.

If approved, the non-profit housing operator, Community Builders, and its partners will work together to create a healthy and inclusive community inside the building and ensure future tenants are connected with supports that best meet their needs.

All residents in supportive housing have made a choice to live there, pay rent, and are able to access the supports provided by non-profit housing operators, health care professionals and other community-based programs.

Questions about **support services**



A

If approved, the building's supportive housing program for residents would be managed by Community Builders. Community Builders brings professional building management experience and expertise providing customized supports tailored to meet the unique needs of each resident. The supports may include mental health care, medical care, education and training, reconnecting to culture, life skills training, substance use services, and help accessing income assistance, disability benefits, pensions, identification or setting up a bank account.

Supportive housing offers residents a vital connection to programs and services to support their health and wellbeing. Supportive housing is for young people, seniors, people with disabilities, and anyone who has experienced trauma, poverty, or struggled with the high cost of housing.

Some supports may be offered in the building, while others are offered in the local community.



Questions about **building height**



A

BC Housing and partners aim to make the most efficient use of space at any given site and provide housing to as many people as possible when building supportive housing. In this specific area and under specific rental housing policies in Vancouver, this building qualifies for additional zoning height up to six-storeys.

This site requires a rezoning through the City of Vancouver where building design elements, such as height, will be considered. Once a rezoning application is submitted to the City of Vancouver, there will be a further City-led public engagement process followed by a public hearing and decision by Vancouver City Council.

Questions about **parking**



A

The parking spaces included in this proposal would cover the parking needs for operating this site. Typically, residents of supportive housing do not own vehicles and do not require a parking space. The final number of parking spaces would be determined by the City of Vancouver as part of the rezoning process.

Questions about **location of the proposed building and how it was selected**



A

There are more than 2,000 people experiencing homelessness in Vancouver. When funding is available, BC Housing and partners look for locations to build supportive housing in neighbourhoods all across the city. This location is a good option for supportive housing as it is close to transit, services and amenities — all of which promote the community connection that supportive housing residents need to lead healthier lives.

Questions about **supervised consumption services on site**



A

There will not be a public supervised consumption site at this building.

BC Housing takes a harm reduction approach, which means staff are available to support residents who live in the building who may be in various phases of substance use. When residents are ready to make a change, staff on-site will connect them with the appropriate support services.



Questions about the **public consultation process**



A

BC Housing is reaching out to the community early in the development process of this proposed supportive housing. Feedback collected during this early engagement will inform the rezoning application that will be submitted to the City of Vancouver for review by City Council. When a rezoning application is submitted, a further City-led public engagement process will be held including an open house and eventually a public hearing. Following the public hearing, Vancouver City Council will decide on if the project will proceed or not.

During this early engagement, there are multiple ways to provide feedback including:

- Attending a Neighbourhood Dialogue
- Submitting a comment during the Public Comment Period on the Let's Talk Housing website
- Submitting a comment anytime on the Let's Talk Housing website
- Phoning or emailing the Community Liaison

Questions about **why the proposed site is not designated for families and children**



A

BC Housing works to address critical gaps in housing. The proposed new homes at South Grandview Highway and Copley St. are being designed for adults who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness because that is an area of significant need. BC Housing is also creating thousands of new homes across the province for families, women fleeing violence, seniors and people with disabilities.

For more information on the range of housing BC Housing builds, please see the summary of homes created here: <https://www.bchousing.org/about/our-organization>.

Questions about **neighbourhood safety**



A

People who are at risk of or are experiencing homelessness are not all the same. They can be young people, seniors, people with disabilities, and anyone who has experienced trauma, poverty, or struggled with the high cost of housing. Many people living in supportive housing are already living in the local neighbourhood.

There is no evidence to suggest that people who live in supportive housing pose a greater risk to a local community than those living in other housing types. There will be policies and supports in place with these buildings to foster safety of both the residents and the surrounding community.