

Frequently Asked Questions for Supportive Housing at 580 Dogwood Street

What is happening at 580 Dogwood Street?

BC Housing is leasing approximately an acre of the land at 580 Dogwood from the City of Campbell River. The proposal is to build 50 new purpose-built, permanent homes with 24/7 supports for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Campbell River. This apartment style building is part of a commitment made between BC Housing and the City of Campbell River in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2018. Construction is expected to start by early Fall 2020.

What is supportive housing?

Supportive housing is a self-contained studio home with various support services provided on-site, to ensure people can achieve and maintain housing stability. Supports could include outreach workers, life skills training, employment assistance, connection and referral to community services and support groups.

Who would operate this housing?

The Vancouver Island Mental Health Society (VIMHS) would be responsible for property and operations management, including 24/7 on-site staff. VIMHS is a Vancouver Island based organization dedicated to providing accessible services and opportunities to people who are experiencing mental health, addiction, and cognitive challenges. They provide programs that promote recovery, social inclusion, safe housing, and public education.

Who would live here?

People who apply to live here would need to meet eligibility requirements around income, homelessness and required supports and programming. Residents would be low-income individuals over the age of 19 who already live in Campbell River, have a history of homelessness or are at risk of homelessness and who need additional support services to maintain housing. Every potential resident would be considered on an individual basis to ensure that the housing and services match their needs. They would be provided support to assist with their successful tenancy, including daily meal services. All residents would pay rent.

People who experience homelessness are as varied as any other neighbour. They may be seniors, people with disabilities, people who have employment but no housing, people who are working through mental health concerns and/or substance use. All residents in supportive housing have made a choice to work towards living a healthy, stable life.

What security measures would be in place?

BC Housing and VIMHS are committed to being good neighbours. All supportive housing that we develop across the province provides a safe community both inside and outside the building. The most important security feature, both for residents and the community, is staffing. The building would have staff onsite 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to ensure that residents are supported and that any concerns are addressed in a timely manner.

The safety of residents, staff and the surrounding community is a priority. This would be a purpose-built property and security measures would include well-lit and fenced grounds, extensive camera monitoring and a controlled single point of entry. If concerns or problems occur with specific individuals on the project property, the operator would work with the individual and police to find solutions.

A Community Advisory Committee would be created to support the successful integration of the building into the neighbourhood and community, with representation from BC Housing, Island Health, municipalities, RCMP, BIA/Chamber, any relevant community partners such as the school district, service providers and community members at large, to be facilitated by a neutral third party.

Will alcohol and drugs be allowed on-site?

BC Housing's supportive housing buildings are operated based on the widely recognized and proven *Housing First* model. Residents at these sites, and all other supportive housing buildings that BC Housing is affiliated with, can make their own lifestyle choices. This includes the decision to abstain or use drugs/alcohol in the privacy of their homes, just like any other neighbour. If they choose to use, the operators would work with each tenant ensure they use safely.

A harm reduction approach means staff are available to support any residents who are in various phases of substance use. The operator would work with Island Health in determining best practices to ensure tenants are safe and healthy. When residents are ready to make a change, staff on site would connect them with the appropriate support services.

Who is going to be responsible for keeping the facility/area clean?

BC Housing and VIMHS are committed to being good neighbours in developing new supportive housing. Both staff and residents would be committed to keeping the property maintained with a daily clean-up, just like any other resident in the neighborhood.

Will property values go down with supportive housing in this neighbourhood?

Research completed in 2019 of 13 B.C. supportive housing sites showed that property values immediately surrounding 10 sites either kept pace with or surpassed surrounding municipal trends. Property values for the other three sites were not notably different compared to municipal trends.

Will supportive housing have an impact on nearby schools or daycares in my neighbourhood?

Many supportive housing sites for people experiencing homelessness across the province have been operating in their communities and near schools for 10+ years with no issues and with support from the community. There are over 210 provincially funded supportive housing sites across the province that are within 500 metres of a school, and 52% of provincially-funded supportive housing sites in B.C. within 500 metres of schools have been operating for 10+ years. A BC Housing 2019 study (Modular Supportive Housing Resident Outcomes Study: Results for First Seven Modular Supportive Housing Developments) reported that 82% of survey respondents across seven modular supportive housing sites reported experiencing positive interactions with neighbours in the surrounding community since they moved in.

Will this new building increase density, cause more traffic congestion and create more strain on infrastructure?

The neighbourhood surrounding 580 Dogwood Street is made up of a mix of single-family homes and apartments of varying density. The proposed three storey building is expected to fit in well to the surrounding landscape.

Supportive housing typically has a low demand for parking because many residents do not have vehicles. Traffic generation from supportive housing tends to be low and is mainly driven by staff who work in the building. As part of the development process, municipal infrastructure capacity is explored. From preliminary investigations, no concerns have been identified.

Do we need supportive housing in Campbell River?

Campbell River recorded 81 people experiencing homelessness during the last Point in Time survey in 2018. This number is believed to have grown since then due to rising housing costs, low rental vacancy rates and COVID-19. The loss of services during COVID-19 has had a negative impact on those experiencing homelessness. There is also a significant increase in calls related to homelessness through the RCMP, Bylaw Enforcement and for parks and city maintenance crews. The health and social service sector also describes an increase in demand for services. There have also been increased concerns identified by downtown business owners and the public related to issues surrounding homelessness and perceptions of safety. This housing would help to address all these issues.

Why this location?

Supportive housing locations are determined based on services, amenities and availability of property. Housing for people experiencing homelessness needs to meet people where they are, providing connection to the resources they need. Access to community services and transit is key for people without homes, but 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, which is essential for people who are working towards a healthy, stable life.

Why is this moving so quickly?

The province is facing dual crises: the opioid crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have made it more important than ever to get people off the streets and out of shelters and into safe, stable housing. BC Housing and the City's goal is to ensure the public is informed regarding the development of new permanent, purpose-built supportive housing and to include opportunities for community engagement and feedback. Community learning and feedback opportunities will be provided for this new site.

Will there be opportunities for public input on the proposal?

We want to work with Campbell River residents to overcome potential challenges and create welcoming neighbourhoods. The site will undergo a development permit review process for site layout and servicing considerations, design, form and character and landscaping. This will inform the submission for the required building permit. Construction is expected to start early fall.



We are reaching out to the community to provide more information and collect input as part of this process. We will be holding small group meetings (six to eight people with proper COVID measures taken) and online information sessions with panelists representing BC Housing, the City and VIMHS. The in-person and online sessions will be an opportunity to learn more about the proposal and to ask questions and provide input.

Feedback towards this plan will also be gathered through a Let's Talk page at www.letstalkhousingbc.ca/campbell-river-580-dogwood-street and can be submitted to communityrelations@bchousing.org. Questions for the City of Campbell River can be directed to Cleo Corbett at cleo.corbett@campbellriver.ca or 250-286-5764.