

Temporary Modular Supportive Housing in Richmond

7300 Elmbridge Way

Frequently Asked Questions

The City of Richmond and BC Housing are committed to ensuring that everyone has a place to call home. Under the Province's Rapid Response to Homelessness, BC Housing has committed to funding the development of modular, supportive housing on City-owned land at 7300 Elmbridge Way to provide safe, rental homes for 40 Richmond residents that are currently experiencing homelessness in the community. The building will be on the site for five years.

On May 18, 2018, the temporary modular, supportive housing project was approved by Council. Following the issuance of the Development Permit and the Building Permit, construction is anticipated to begin this fall. Occupancy of the supportive housing is anticipated in early 2019.

Below are responses to frequently asked questions regarding the temporary modular, supportive housing.

Community Need

What is supportive housing?

Supportive housing combines affordable housing with support services from health and housing professionals. It offers vulnerable people access to a safe, secure and affordable homes. The services provided in the housing are customized to meet the needs of each tenant to help them towards their goals. Supportive housing has been proven to have a positive effect on a person's housing stability, employment capabilities, and mental and physical health.

How is homelessness being addressed by the City of Richmond?

The City of Richmond has policies in place to address a variety of housing needs. Currently, the City is in the process of updating the Homelessness Needs Assessment and Strategy, which will help guide the City's actions in addressing the needs of individuals experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Why is supportive housing needed in Richmond?

The last Homelessness Count estimated that at least 70 Richmond residents are experiencing homelessness – an increase of 84% since 2014. Non-profit organizations serving people who are homeless and the RCMP estimate this number to be over 120. Richmond City Council acknowledges that an appropriate mix of housing with the right supports is necessary to create a healthy and liveable community and supportive housing was identified as a need in the Affordable Housing Strategy 2017 – 2027, (endorsed by Council in March 2018). Supportive housing is an important type of housing to move people living on the street into affordable housing.

Housing and Design

Is this going to be an emergency shelter?

This housing is not an emergency shelter. The temporary supportive, modular housing will contain 40 studio units. Each tenant will pay rent and have access to their own kitchen and bathroom. This housing is intended for Richmond residents exiting the streets or shelter system and will provide them support to move into more permanent affordable housing

options along the housing continuum. Support will include breakfast and a hot meal each day, life-skills support, and access to primary health care, mental health and/or substance use services.

Housing and Design, continued

What will the housing look like?

The housing will be a 3-storey modular housing building with 40 studio homes. Each studio would have its own kitchen and bathroom and residents would share common amenity space. The building form and character will fit the neighbourhood context.

Why modular housing?

Richmond continues to face a housing affordability crisis, and people with low-income and people experiencing homelessness are especially vulnerable. The provincial government, through the Rapid Response to Housing

program, is providing funding dollars for the construction and operation of modular supportive housing. Modular housing offers the quickest solution to help people into housing with appropriate supports. Often, the units can be constructed in less than half the time of a conventional wood-frame/concrete building.

What will happen to the dog park?

7300 Elmbridge Way is currently being used as a temporary off-leash dog park. A portion of the site will be maintained for this use. Alternatively, both Minoru Park and Brighthouse School Park are within a 5-10-minute walk from the site.

Building Operations and Management

The City and BC Housing are committed to ensuring that the temporary modular, supportive housing is managed safely and responsibly.

Who will manage the housing?

RainCity Housing, a well-respected housing provider with over 35 years of experience working in seven municipalities, will manage the supportive housing. RainCity Housing is committed to ensuring that people who benefit from their programs are treated with dignity and respect, and are offered a safe place to live which can facilitate improved health outcomes and quality of life. In partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health, the non-profit has recently expanded their ACT program (clinical outreach-based services) to Richmond and has already begun to develop strong working relationships with the local mental health system, other community service providers, and Richmond residents experiencing homelessness.

What staff will be onsite?

A minimum of two staff will be onsite 24/7 to provide support services to residents and manage the building. Staff will be supported by a manager, who will be onsite Monday–Friday, in addition to various other staff that will be providing on-site services to the tenants. RainCity Housing will ensure that all staff will have the appropriate training and skills necessary to support residents. The required training, as required by BC Housing, includes, but is not limited to:

- Crisis prevention training;
- First Aid/CPR;
- Indigenous awareness training;
- Mental health first aid training;
- Domestic violence and safety planning;
- Substance use awareness and safety training; and
- Trauma-informed training.

Services for Residents

What services will be provided to residents on site?

RainCity Housing will work with each resident to understand their level of needs and to provide the right mix of support in the building. RainCity Housing will offer the following core services:

- 24/7 staffing;
- Meals;
- Laundry facilities;
- Support for residents to maintain their residencies;
- Life skills and social/recreational supports;
- Connection to community supports and services (including, education, employment, health and wellness); and
- Assistance in accessing income (including income assistance, pension, disability, or establishing a bank account).

Vancouver Coastal Health's, Anne Vogel Clinic (community mental health and substance use services) is less than a five-minute walk from the site. Vancouver Coastal Health will work with RainCity to connect residents to health services. Tenants will be able to receive treatment at the clinic or in their homes.

How long will tenants remain in the housing?

RainCity Housing will work with each client to understand their needs and goals and provide the support they need to work towards securing permanent housing. Supportive housing is intended for individuals exiting the shelter system and/or being on the street and providing them with supports needed to move into more permanent affordable housing options. Although there will be no maximum length of stay requirement, RainCity Housing anticipates that many residents will not remain in the supportive housing for the full five years.

Tenant Selection

How will tenants be selected?

Priority will be given to Richmond residents experiencing homelessness. Eligible tenants already living in Richmond are known to community agencies, such as the RCMP, Vancouver Coastal Health and local service providers. Together, BC Housing and RainCity Housing will undertake a thoughtful assessment process to select tenants and to understand what supportive services are required for each tenant. BC Housing will use their Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT), an interview tool that provides a consistent and fair way of identifying people who would most benefit from supportive housing. Although criminal record checks will not be required as part of the screening process, the VAT offers a more comprehensive alternative for tenant selection. This tool is based on a number of indicators (e.g. survival skills, basic and health needs, social behaviours, mental health) and determines the supports required for each individual to stay housed. The VAT is a best practice tool used across Canada and the U.S as it is an effective method to ensure the appropriate supports are in place for a person to remain in stable housing. However, if a person presents a risk to the safety and security of others, they would not be eligible for housing funded through the Rapid Response to Homelessness initiative. The RCMP and other local service providers will be consulted during the selection process on an as-needed basis should BC Housing and RainCity Housing require more information regarding an individual.

What does Support Level 3 mean?

The level of support service needs are determined through use of the Vulnerability Assessment Tool and supporting information from other sources that may include service providers, police and health authorities, and are used to ensure prospective tenants are provided with the appropriate level of support and to provide a balanced resident mix in each building. Support needs will range from low to high. High supports sometimes referred to as level 3 are those individuals who may have complex needs and require a more advanced level of support to maintain their residencies. Factors contributing to a level 3 assessment may be related to mental illness, substance use, complex behavioural issues, physical disabilities or chronic illnesses.

Community Safety

How will community concerns be addressed?

RainCity Housing will form a Community Advisory Group, which will include representation from Vancouver Coastal Health and the RCMP, neighbouring businesses and residents prior to the opening of the building. The role of the Community Advisory Committee is to mitigate any community concerns regarding the proposal. RainCity Housing will manage the operations 24/7, and will be available to respond to community concerns that may arise. Community members will be encouraged to get in-touch with on-site staff in case any issues arise. On-site, tenants will have access to the building through one entrance/exit, which will be monitored.

How many people requiring support level 3 will live in the housing?

To ensure a balanced tenant mix for the building and community, applicants are selected from across the support levels. The tenant mix of the building will reflect the needs of the individuals currently experiencing homelessness in Richmond.

Will tenants be required to be good neighbours?

Residents of the supportive housing are just like other Richmond residents and will be expected to be good neighbours. Each tenant will agree to follow a Good Neighbour Agreement and will be expected to:

- Treat neighbours and community with consideration;
- Not make excessive noise or cause unnecessary disturbances;
- Ensure security doors are closed properly and not letting any unknown persons into building;
- Put garbage in the appropriate bins;
- Clean up after pets;
- Not smoke in the common areas, including the front entrance; and
- Not consume drug or alcohol substances in common areas, including the front entrance.

RainCity Housing may end a tenancy agreement at any time if a participant is:

- Engaging or behaving in a manner which is abusive and/or a threat to the mental or physical health or safety of anyone in the building/community;
- Significantly disrupting the quiet enjoyment of other participants and/or neighbours; and
- Engaging in willful vandalism or damage to the building or property.

Will crime in my neighbourhood increase?

Statistics demonstrate that supportive housing does not have a negative impact on community safety. The City of Vancouver has reported that there has not been an increase in crime in areas around supportive housing buildings in its 25 years of experience with supportive housing. After supportive housing, managed by RainCity Housing, at 5616 Fraser Street (Vancouver) opened, emergency calls to the police decreased by 18% in the neighbourhood.

Development Application Process

What is the development application process for the temporary supportive housing at 7300 Elmbridge Way?

In January 2018, Richmond City Council directed project partners to engage the public and key stakeholders on what needs to be considered regarding the temporary modular, supportive housing. All of the public input received was communicated to Council and was considered in their decision to approve the proposal. Following the proposal's approval on May 18, 2018, the project is now going through the required Development Permit application process. Construction is anticipated to begin in fall 2018 and occupancy is anticipated for early 2019.

Why was 7300 Elmbridge Way selected for this site?

The site was selected due to its proximity to transit, community amenities, and health and supportive services

Other

Will this housing affect my property values?

A research report conducted by the Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction (CARMHA) at Simon Fraser University shows that property values in close proximity to supportive housing have not declined. The study analyzed 18 different sites and found that there was no significant effect on the sale price and number of homes sold in the neighbourhood.

that potential tenants already access (e.g. Vancouver Coastal Health, Anne Vogel Clinic). The site also has the appropriate zoning in place of "CDT1", which allows for a broad range of commercial, service, business, entertainment and residential needs typical of a City Centre neighbourhood.

Why only for 5 years?

Operating funding for this housing is available through the Province's Rapid Response to Homelessness initiative and is available for five years. The lease between BC Housing and the City will be in place for 5 years.

What will happen to the site after 5 years?

BC Housing has committed to the City of Richmond to return the site in its original condition at the end of the lease. At that time, the City will take into consideration the context of the neighbourhood in any decisions they make regarding the future use of the site.

Is supportive housing model an efficient use of government funding?

The City of Richmond and BC Housing are committed to ensuring everyone has a place to call home. Modular, supportive housing is the quickest way to address street homelessness. A decrease in street homelessness can have direct savings to the public by reducing the use of expensive services including but not limited to: emergency room visits; shelter beds; and the judicial system. Tenants pay monthly rent, which helps pay for the cost of housing.

To reach the project team with questions or comments, please email: affordablehousing@richmond.ca

Learn more about this project at: richmond.ca/rapidresponsetohomelessness

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