



November 16, 2021

Re: 610 Trunk Road

Dear resident or business owner,

We are writing to provide you information about a temporary emergency shelter program to help vulnerable people in our community. It Takes a Village: Housing the Unsheltered Population of the Cowichan Valley will provide temporary housing in the form of 40 sleeping units (cabins) with individualized support services for unsheltered people in the Cowichan Valley. The project proposes to commence January 2022 and conclude September 2022 subject to a temporary use permit approval by the City of Duncan.

Cowichan Housing Association and all project partners recognize the importance of neighbourhood dialogue about the Village project and the services the initiative will provide to vulnerable unsheltered people in the community. Cowichan Housing Association, in partnership with the Cowichan Covid-19 Task Force for Vulnerable Population and Lookout Housing and Health Society, has scheduled two Neighbourhood Conversation sessions to provide information about the Village with interested members of the neighbourhood and broader community:

- **Monday, November 29 from 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm, or**
- **Tuesday, November 30 from 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm**

As COVID-19 spread remains high, the Neighbourhood Conversation will be held virtually. To register, please email engage@cowichanhousing.com. *The same information will be presented at each session.*

A flyer with details about the Neighbourhood Conversation sessions and registration information is attached. Please share with others you think may be interested in this project. Additional information about the Village project can be found at: www.cowichanhousing.com/village.

The Village project is an essential part of the continuum of services for unsheltered people in the Cowichan Valley and represents an important first step in helping people off the streets permanently. People supported through the project will have access to multiple on-site services including but not limited to food security programs, case planning, health and safety programming, and community referrals. Site amenities will include common eating areas and a secure area for the distribution of medication and for people to meet with outside support services.

This initiative is based on an established model of housing already in use at *The Mound* site on Cowichan Tribes land and at St. Julien Street site in the City of Duncan. The current model has been successful in getting people off the street and reducing the number of negative interactions between the business community and unsheltered people. The design of the temporary accommodation site minimizes the need for unsheltered individuals to travel through the community to meet their needs, allowing them to shelter in place and reduce the risk of Covid-19 transmission.

At the start of the pandemic, the COVID-19 Vulnerable Population Cowichan Task Force was formed to work with the City of Duncan, Cowichan Tribes, local governments, and the Province of BC to find safe places for people experiencing homelessness. Several small-scale temporary tenting sites were set up across the region which were then later consolidated to 3 pods of sleeping units. The existing sleeping unit sites have been highly successful in achieving safe outcomes for the individuals supported.

Additional funding for Covid relief was allocated under the provincial and federal government Safe Restart: Strengthening Communities' Services grant program. The aim of this program is to support unsheltered homeless populations and address related community impacts for one year. The Cowichan Covid-19 Task Force's application, submitted by the Municipality of North Cowichan on behalf of the region, was successful.

In consultation with municipal staff and elected officials and local social agencies, **610 Trunk Road** has been identified as a transitional sleeping unit site for this project. The City of Duncan, through a license agreement with the property owners BC Housing, intend to sub-lease the property to CHA for a period of one year. Lookout Housing and Health Society, an experienced supportive housing service provider, will be operating the site with trained outreach staff 7 days a week. Health and wellness support from Island Health and other public health organizations will be provided for those Individuals requiring additional assistance. The site will include food, outreach, hygiene, and overnight security services. Garbage collection, cleaning and sanitation will happen regularly. BC Housing have graciously offered to donate 2 C-can washroom facilities with toilets and showers.

There will be no more than 14 people staying in each of the three fenced pods for a total of up to 40 individuals residing at this site. Specialized health teams will visit the site regularly to assess individuals' mental and physical health. When staff are not on shift, dedicated security will be on-site daily between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m.

Transitional response sites like this one are a short-term solution to the COVID-19 pandemic until longer-term solutions can be found. BC Housing recognizes the urgent need and is committed to working with partners to develop permanent supportive housing in the region.

We greatly appreciate your understanding of the need to protect the most vulnerable during these difficult times. We want to answer your questions and address your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Cook'.

Shelley Cook
Executive Director, Cowichan Housing Association
shelley.cook@cowichanhousing.com
250.597.1938

Please join us for an online Neighbourhood Townhall

to find out more information about

“The Village”

at

610 Trunk Road, Duncan

The Cowichan Housing Association (CHA), representing the Cowichan Covid-19 Task Force for Vulnerable Population, have submitted a Temporary Use Permit application to the City of Duncan to provide 24-hour shelter and support services for up to 40 individuals from January 15, 2022 to September 30, 2022 at 610 Trunk Road.

It Takes a Village: Housing the Unsheltered Population of the Cowichan Valley project - “The Village” - will provide a transitional housing solution to improve the regional capacity to serve the unsheltered population currently residing in the region.

In keeping with the successful model at St Julien St. and the Mound site, additional temporary sleeping units (cabins) would be placed on the proposed site. We propose to add 40 units of temporary accommodation (sleeping units), additional staff and associated individualized support services.



Neighbourhood Townhall

CHA and project partners are committed to engage with neighbours of the site to provide information, hear concerns, and incorporate input where feasible into the site design and operations plan. Representatives from Lookout Housing and Health Society, Our Cowichan Communities' Health Network, the City of Duncan and others will be in attendance to respond to questions. Both sessions will be online via Zoom.

Monday, November 29
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

or

Tuesday, November 30
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

To register for an online Neighbourhood Townhall, please email engage@cowichanhousing.com with your preferred date and a Zoom link will be provided. *NOTE: The same information will be presented at each session.*

Village Project information can be found at: www.cowichanhousing.com/village

Homelessness in Cowichan

The Cowichan Valley, with a population of 90,380, has an unsheltered homeless population exceeding 300 individuals. The most recent Point in Time (PIT) count indicated that there were 129 people who were unhoused on March 11, 2020.

Based on the number of applications for the new supportive housing under construction, our estimate is that the population has doubled. For the 99 units of new supportive housing to be built by the summer of 2022, there are well over 270 applications. This housing is designed for people with multiple barriers to accessing housing, so the number of applications is fairly reflective of the homeless population that is connected with services in some way.

Project Description

The Village Project includes:

- Temporary emergency shelter for up to 40 individuals
- 3 fully fenced and enclosed pods of 12-14 individuals
- 40 new modular 8'x14' sleeping units
- 1 staff/security unit 20'x20'
- 3 shower and bathroom units 8'x20' (donated by BC Housing)
- On-site security 8pm to 8am
- Support services:
 - o 7 days/week outreach and support staff
 - o Sanitation, garbage and clean team
 - o Overnight security
 - o 3 meals/day
 - o Peer outreach, coordination, and incident response
- Neighbourhood Support
 - o Urban Street Cleanup Program and quick response team
 - o Community Advisory Committee
 - o Good Neighbour Agreements with program participants
 - o 24/7 Open Communication Line for feedback and concerns

Overall, the establishment of the new temporary tenting sites for people who are homeless or precariously housed has not had a significant impact on policing in the area covered by the North Cowichan Duncan RCMP, in terms of increasing or decreasing call volume, or increasing or decreasing the severity of calls or the number of frontline officers required to attend. This may be in part due to the sites having arrangements for private security in place to enforce rules and restrictions for people using the resources offered at the temporary tenting sites, or changes in behaviour related to the ongoing Covid-19 public health emergency.

North Cowichan Duncan RCMP
Detachment, Spring 2021

The Village Project Partners

Additional funding for Covid relief was allocated by the Government of Canada and the Government of British Columbia under the Safe Restart: Strengthening Communities' Services grant program. The Municipality of North Cowichan submitted the project application on behalf of the region. The aim of this program is to support unsheltered homeless populations and address related community impacts for one year.

The proposed activities will be overseen by CHA in partnership with the Municipality of North Cowichan, the City of Duncan, and landowners BC Housing. A range of community partners will be involved in delivering the activities including Lookout Housing and Health Society who will deliver the support services and operations functions.

