



INFORMATION- 285 ROSEHILL STREET ZONING BYLAW AMENDMENT

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

The Vancouver Island Mental Health Society (VIMHS) owns 285 Rosehill Street, a property at the corner of Rosehill Street and Terminal Avenue North. VIMHS has submitted an application to the City of Nanaimo to re-zone the property to build a 3-storey building containing 19 affordable apartment units with on-site support for tenants, some of whom would have suffered from addictions or mental health issues in the past. The building will include a reception, office space, and a sharing lounge/dining area. It is supported by BC Housing.



Fig 1. Existing Appearance

WHO IS VIMHS?

VIMHS is a Vancouver Island-based non-profit organization demonstrating excellence in support services for adults with mental health and addictions concerns, and/or cognitive challenges. VIMHS is an experienced operator that has been providing housing and support services in Nanaimo for 40 years, and has worked with BC Housing for over 30 years. With five facilities in Nanaimo, VIMHS has first-hand experience and understanding of positive, appropriate ways to manage housing within the Nanaimo area.



Fig 2. Proposed new building (LEIRA Architects)

WHY IS A CHANGE TO THE ZONING BYLAW NECESSARY?

The property is currently zoned "Medium Density Residential (R8)", which permits "single residential dwellings", "multiple family dwellings", "residential shelters", and "rooming houses" on the property. VIMHS has applied to change the zoning of the property to "Mixed Use Corridor (COR2)"- the same zoning category as the Ramada Hotel across the street, and the other two properties at the corners of Rosehill Street and Terminal Avenue North. The change is necessary to permit an increase in density (a ratio of the floor area of the building to the lot area), a reduced front yard setback and a larger range of uses, including "personal care facilities".

WHAT CRITERIA WILL CITY COUNCIL CONSIDER IN MAKING ITS DECISION?

City Council considers input from the public as well as the advice of City planning staff when making its decision. Primarily, City Council will consider whether or not the proposed zoning change conforms to the land use and growth strategy in the Nanaimo Official Community Plan (OCP), which is the governing long-term land use management document for the City. In this case, the OCP supports the proposed building size and land use proposed.

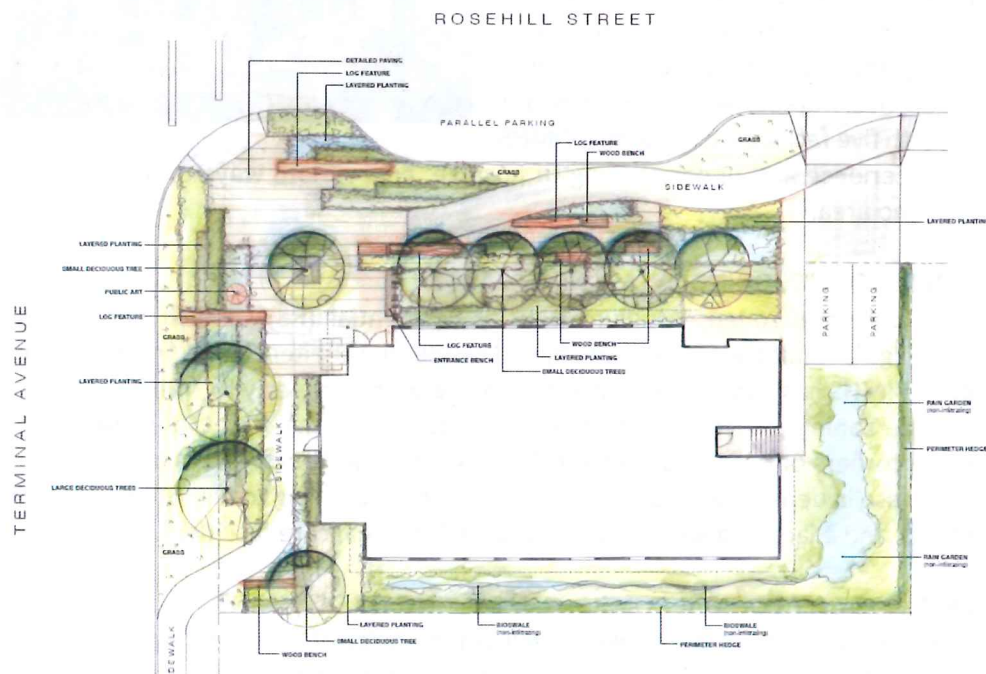


WHY IS THIS TYPE OF HOUSING NEEDED?

With over 90 individuals currently on the VIMHS waitlist and 130 people eligible for this specific type of housing, the need and demand in Nanaimo for affordable housing is growing while the creation of new housing, especially with supportive services, lags. There is an urgent need to increase investment in the stock of affordable housing that can also provide support services for people with mental illness.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY AND LOCAL BUSINESSES?

- **Creates an internal community of care;** strong, connective housing communities are known to reduce reliance on external services such as hospital admissions and emergency room visits, and strengthen individuals' opportunity for recovery and reintegration into the community.
- **Minimizes community costs.** There is a strong fiscal case for supportive housing, considering the cost of supportive housing programs is significantly lower than inpatient psychiatric accommodation.
- **Decreases homelessness, incarceration and hospital readmission.** While on waitlists, people requiring additional support are alone and often unable to access critical services; this can result in hospital readmission, in some cases incarceration, and a retreat down the continuum of housing towards homelessness.



Courtesy of Victoria Drakeford Landscape Architect

For more information, please contact Taryn O'Flanagan, Executive Director- VIMHS for more information. Her phone number is 250-758-8711, and her email is clinical.manager@vimhs.org