

ATTACHMENT A



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August 13, 2024

Dale Lindsay, Chief Administrative Officer
City of Nanaimo
455 Wallace Street
Nanaimo, BC V9R 5J6

Dear Dale,

Re: 1030 Old Victoria Road, Nanaimo

BC Housing is dedicated to working with the City of Nanaimo to promote a strong, inclusive community where people can thrive. This includes fostering a safe environment for housing tenants and staff and supporting channels for people to raise questions.

We are grateful for the City's collaboration and partnership through the HEART and HEARTH MOU signed in January 2024. Our efforts have resulted in four projects for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, including the proposed Navigation Centre at 1030 Old Victoria Road.

This site would provide up to 60 individual sleeping units for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness currently staying in overnight shelters. These temporary spaces, made available more quickly than traditional construction, would help bring people who have been experiencing long-term homelessness indoors, while providing time for BC Housing and the City to identify location(s) for new permanent, purpose-built supportive housing. We are pleased to fund this project through the Homeless Encampment Action Response Temporary Housing (HEARTH) program, part of the Province of BC's *Belonging in BC Homelessness* plan. The search for a suitable location for the Navigation Centre, which was first announced in 2020, has been ongoing for a number of years and we are keen to move forward.

We understand that City Council is requesting a Good Neighbour Agreement and a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for 1030 Old Victoria Road as a condition of the lease. With supportive housing projects across the Province, BC Housing must apply a consistent approach to all of them and as such, we are unable to commit to a Good Neighbour Agreement or Community Advisory Committee for the reasons outlined below.

Good Neighbour Agreements

After careful consideration, we are no longer implementing Good Neighbour Agreements at any supportive housing sites in the province. BC Housing finds that they:

- stigmatize our tenants and may pressure operators and BC Housing to create rules that are different and inequitable compared to other residential buildings in the area.
- potentially expose the non-profit housing society and others to human rights concerns, depending on associated obligations.
- place additional pressure on BC Housing to fund supports that are outside of our mandate (i.e., policing and security services).
- place additional pressure on the operator to respond to responsibilities that are outside of their agreement or control, and which can lead to operators declining to support other projects due to the increased strain.
- typically assign the responsibility for being a good neighbour on the housing provider without any reciprocal responsibility from the community to be a good neighbour.

Community Advisory Committees (CACs)

BC Housing has been moving away from CACs for the following reasons:

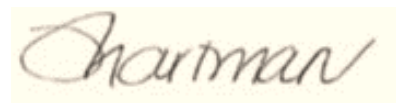
- Increased strain on staffing resources, which includes BC Housing staff, contractors, partners such as Health, municipalities and RCMP/police, and associated costs.
- Those attending CACs frequently ask for them to be extended, even if there are no concerns with the building. CACs were first developed to be in place for the first six months only, after a supportive housing building becomes operational.
- There is risk that CACs put further pressure on housing providers to address crime and other community safety concerns unrelated to the building and outside their mandate.

BC Housing remains committed to working with the City and neighbours to ensure two-way dialogue and a safe and secure environment. In lieu of a Good Neighbour Agreement and CAC, BC Housing is proposing to work with the City of Nanaimo to develop a Neighbourhood Integration Plan to support the initial four months after the site opens to set the operator up for success. This Neighbourhood Integration Plan, which would be a separate agreement from the lease, would include:

- Supporting the operator, Vancouver Island Mental Health Society (VIMHS), in facilitating up to four neighbourhood meetings focused on fostering community inclusion for the new Navigation Centre. These meetings would be developed in collaboration with the City, VIMHS, and the local community association.
- Commitment from BC Housing to meet with the local community association executive annually, or as issues arise.
- Assigning a BC Housing representative who would serve as site liaison to the Operator and provide operational oversight. Contact information will be shared with City to communicate with this person directly.
- Commitment to continue to hold regular meetings with the City of Nanaimo to discuss housing challenges, opportunities and emerging issues in the community.
- Ensuring operations are guided by the [HEART-and-HEARTH-Program-Framework.pdf \(bchousing.org\)](#) and the Operator Agreement.
- Working in collaboration with the City and the Operator to develop and distribute a *Who to Call, When to Call* fact sheet to immediate neighbours to ensure they know where to direct inquiries for specific concerns.
- Supporting VIMHS in engaging with immediate neighbours and local businesses to support a strong, inclusive community.

BC Housing is dedicated to working with the City of Nanaimo to make the Navigation Centre a success. We hope that our proposal to provide a Neighbourhood Integration Plan meets the needs of Council satisfactorily and we look forward to the City finalizing the lease so that we can move ahead with planned community engagement.

Sincerely,



Heidi Hartman
Associate Vice President, Supportive Housing and Homelessness
BC Housing

Cc: Jennifer Fox, Regional Director, Vancouver Island, BC Housing