



This document is intended to provide answers to frequently asked questions about BC Housing's proposed supportive, purpose built housing units at 2983 Drinkwater Road.

Further detail can be found at: <https://letstalkhousingbc.ca/cowichan-valley>

You can join the conversation, or ask BC Housing a question at:

[communityrelations@bchousing.org](mailto:communityrelations@bchousing.org)

**Q: What is the difference between a shelter and supportive housing? Is this housing for homeless people?**

A: BC Housing's Emergency Shelter program provides emergency access to a temporary shelter bed. The primary focus for shelters is moving people into housing. Supportive housing, such as the proposed project, provides housing as well as 24/7 on-site support services with access to treatment programs, employment and life skills programming. Where appropriate, the North Cowichan program will help people transition towards independent and stable housing.

**Q: Who can access the supportive housing?**

A: BC Housing and Lookout Housing & Health Society will collaborate with local service providers on a thoughtful and thorough assessment process to ensure an appropriate mix of residents with the right supports live in the housing. Every potential resident is considered on an individual basis to ensure that the housing and services provided by the program match the support services that they need, such as life skills training, employment assistance, and help with accessing a range of social and health care services.

**Q: Are there any targeted demographics for the supportive housing? (ie. any age restrictions)?**

A: Yes. We will be housing low income individuals over the age of 19, who have a history of homelessness, and who need additional support services to maintain housing.

**Q: What sorts of services will there be on-site?**

A: There are a variety of services proposed for this site. The Lookout Housing & Health Society will operate the building and coordinate services for residents; including outreach workers, wellness checks, connection to community services and support groups, life and social skills such as employment planning and managing the transition to independence and recovery, as well as programming space to facilitate training and food preparation.

**Q: Will all services in general only be limited to residents? (ie. no drop in services)?**

A: All services provided will be for residents. There is no plan to offer drop-in services for non-residents.

**Q: Will there be a community kitchen with drop-in for homeless people?**

A: There will be no community kitchen at the proposed building. Residents will have access to one hot meal a day and a light breakfast.

**Q: Will the housing have emergency beds for cold weather events?**

A: There is no plan to offer Extreme Weather Response shelter beds at this building.

**Q: Is there any requirement that residents be actively job searching or applying for education?**

A: There is no requirement that residents be actively job searching or applying for education.

**Q: Is there a curfew for residents?**

There is no plan to have a curfew.

**Q: What expectations are made of residents and what consequences are in place for non-compliance?**

A: Residents will sign a [Program Agreement](#) similar to a Residential Tenancy Agreement and will be expected to abide by it. The Program Agreement will address expectations about behavior, especially as it relates to the health and safety of themselves and others.

**Q: What is the barrier for drugs/alcohol (no barrier, minimal barrier, or high barrier)?**

A: BC Housing's supportive housing buildings are operated based on the widely recognized and proven Housing First model. Residents of supportive housing live independently and will make their own lifestyle choices, but will be encouraged to consider healthier options. They will have access to the on-site and community support services they need.

BC Housing takes a harm reduction approach, which means staff is available to support any residents who are in various phases of substance use. Then, when residents are ready to make a change, staff on site will connect them with the appropriate support services.

**Q: How will intoxication and aggressive behaviour be dealt with?**

A: If a resident is displaying dangerous, abusive or violent behaviours, and all attempts by staff to de-escalate the situation fail, the RCMP will be called.

**Q: What safety and security improvements are being made to the building?**

A: The most important security feature, both for residents and the community, is 24-7 staffing. Through community engagement, BC Housing will use feedback from neighbours to better understand what other features/services may help integrate this housing into the community.

**Q: Do you have any research to show around this model of housing and health care for homeless individuals?**

A: See BC Housing's case study here:

<https://letstalkhousingbc.ca/15074/widgets/59336/documents/35723>

**Q: Did BC Housing do business impact assessment? Do local businesses support this housing?**

A: BC Housing and the Lookout Housing & Health Society are speaking with the immediate neighbours about the proposed project. In addition, BC Housing will be setting up a community advisory committee, led by the Lookout Housing & Health Society, including representation from BC Housing; North Cowichan; Island Health and local RCMP; neighbours; and resident businesses to oversee the supportive housing's successful integration within the community. The Committee will be able to address any questions or concerns as the project moves forward, and will begin meeting as required.

**Q: Is BC Housing required to apply for a zoning amendment to permit?**

A: No. Although 2983 Drinkwater Road is zoned Residential Rural (R1), which does not permit multi-family dwellings or supportive housing as an allowable use, subsection 14(2) of the Interpretation Act has exempted the provincial government from having to comply with any North Cowichan municipal bylaws which regulates the use or development of land, or in the

planning, construction, alteration, servicing, maintenance or use of improvements. In November 2019, the British Columbia Supreme Court, in *Buechler v. Island Crisis Care Society*, 2019 BCSC 1899, held that a temporary supportive housing development was not subject to municipal zoning bylaws.

**Q: Will a Public Hearing be held before the property is developed?**

A: No. Subsection 464(1) of the Local Government Act only requires Council to hold a public hearing when they are creating or amending a bylaw for an official community plan, zoning and phased development agreement, or to terminate a land use contract.

**Q: How will you address the concerns in the neighborhood? How will you handle issues?**

A: The Lookout Housing & Health Society is committed to being a good neighbour in developing new supportive housing that is an asset to the community. Their commitments include communication with the neighborhood; identifying tenant expectations; rules and regulations and addressing concerns in a timely manner. BC Housing will also have expectations on administration and management of the housing units. A Good Neighbour Agreement will also be in place.

**How can I provide input?**

A: Join the conversation at: <https://letstalkhousingbc.ca/cowichan-valley> or email [communityrelations@bchousing.org](mailto:communityrelations@bchousing.org)