



3595 West 17th Avenue (16th and Dunbar):

Information Sheet on Dunbar & 16th Housing Project

Prepared in conjunction with BC Housing, VCHA,
and Coast Foundation Society

Introduction

A few written enquiries and phone calls about the proposed supportive housing project at Dunbar and 16th have been received.

The following commentary is intended to provide answers to the most common questions:

Process

What City Policies are in place regarding this development proposal?: The development of Dunbar & 16th as supportive housing has been under consideration since 2005 when the City purchased the site. Three important steps have occurred in support of the proposal:

- 1) **Site Acquisition:** for social housing was approved by City Council in April 2005.
- 2) **Supportive Housing Strategy:** in June 2007, City Council approved the "Supportive Housing Strategy", which included the site at Dunbar & 16th as a potential location for supportive housing.
- 3) **The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** endorsed by City Council on December 19, 2007, covers 12 City-owned sites, including Dunbar and 16th Avenue. Details of the project are outlined further on.

What is the process for approval of the project?

The project is proceeding under the existing C-2 zoning, which provides for a range of uses, including retail, office and residential uses. The application will be processed and brought forward to the Development Permit Board on July 14th. The Board meeting is open to the public, and delegations may register to speak to the Board.

The open house on May 27th is intended to provide the public with details of the proposal, and an opportunity to provide comments to staff from the City, BC Housing and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCHA). Comments will be forwarded to the Development Permit Board as part of their consideration of the application.

Details of the Development Project

Will the project fit the character of the Dunbar commercial area?: The development application DE412085 was submitted on April 22, 2008.

In summary, the project is a four storey building, consisting of commercial/retail space at grade fronting onto Dunbar Street, and 51 residential units in three floors above. Parking for 17 cars will be provided underground with access from 16th Avenue.

Project statistics are as follows:

•..... Number of units:	51
•..... Total floor space:	34,257 ft. ²
•..... Commercial floor space:	4,114 ft. ²
•..... Floor space ratio:	2.3 (allowed 2.5)
•..... Height:	4 storeys
•..... Parking spaces:	17
•..... Bicycle parking:	44
•..... Loading bays:	1

The development will resemble in all respects similar commercial & residential developments to the south along Dunbar Street. The mixed use building will be of a high quality, both in terms of its design, architectural detail and materials. The City's Urban Design Panel recently commended the overall design and has given its unanimous support with suggestions for some minor design refinements.

New retail spaces facing Dunbar will replace the existing premises. The building will be built to LEED Gold standard that will significantly reduce its energy consumption and carbon footprint.

The 51 residences will provide much-needed highly livable, affordable housing with a priority given to individuals who have live or have connections to the neighbourhood who would otherwise be unable to afford to live here.

Who Will Manage the Building?: Coast Foundation Society (Coast) was selected as the housing provider for the project by BC Housing, in conjunction with City staff. Coast will manage the building on a day-to-day basis. BC Housing and the VCHA have committed to providing funding for the daily operation which will ensure staffing 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Coast is a non-profit organization established in 1974 and has extensive experience in the management of supports, services and buildings for individuals with mental illnesses. Currently, Coast provides housing for approximately 700 people, services to over 2,500 people and assistance in areas such as housing, jobs, rehabilitation, recreational opportunities, food, clothing and basic life skills training

Coast has partnered with two smaller societies **St. George's Place Housing Society** (four units) who will house individuals with low-incomes who have physical disabilities and **Yaffa Housing Society** (five units) who will house and provide support services to individuals with a Jewish affiliation. The involvement of the two smaller societies will be co-ordinated through BC Housing.

It is intended that the City's Real Estate Division will manage the commercial/retail space on the ground floor.

The ultimate goal for all the partners (Coast, BC Housing, VCHA and the City) is to create a rental building that is well managed and will provide a higher level of support than market rental housing. Coast is obliged to manage the building so that tenants are provided with quiet enjoyment, within the building and to ensure that the building is a good neighbour in the community.

Tenant Considerations

How will tenants be selected and who makes the final decision?: The MOU between the Province and the City of Vancouver and endorsed by City Council on December 19, 2007, outlined general targets for tenant selection for the site at 16th and Dunbar, to include one-third to one-half of the tenants with mental health issues, and the remaining one-half to two-thirds to include individuals at core need income levels. For an individual in Vancouver, this means an annual income under \$29,000 when renting a bachelor apartment unit. A priority is to be given to individuals who live in or have links to the Dunbar, West Point Grey and Kitsilano communities.

Tenants will be generally drawn from two sources:

- 1. Units for the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCHA):** Discussions involving the City, VCHA, BC Housing and Coast since December 19th have now determined that 30 of the 51 proposed units will be allocated to VCHA and these units will be occupied by individuals who are connected with VCHA mental health services. All VCHA tenants will be assessed by mental health professionals to ensure they are able to function well with the level of support provided by the housing program, and all VCHA tenants will be connected to mental health treatment services in the community. VCHA will provide funding to enhance staffing levels within the building to ensure adequate support is provided. The VCHA mental health housing assessment and referral process is well-established, and is already used by Coast and other housing providers to successfully match tenants to a wide range of existing mental health supported housing programs.

- 2. Other Units:** Tenants for the other 21 units, including Yaffa and St. George's units, will be individuals who are homeless or at-risk-of-homelessness who would benefit from a supportive housing environment. Again, priority will be given to individuals with links to the Dunbar, West Point Grey and Kitsilano communities. These tenants will be referred through a coordinated access system being developed in collaboration with non-profit housing providers and administered by BC Housing. Through this system, tenants will be matched to appropriate housing through a single point of access.

BC Housing, Coast, Yaffa and St. George's will participate in the tenant selection process both by screening referred tenants and by referring prospective tenants through the coordinated access system. Tenants for the Yaffa and St. Georges units will be referred through the coordinated access system.

Will individuals have drug and alcohol addictions?: Individuals who have struggled with mental illness often have dealt with substance abuse at some point in their lives. BC Housing, VCHA and Coast have agreed that the focus for the development at 16th and Dunbar will be individuals whose primary challenges are related to their mental illness, not addictions. Some individuals may have histories of substance abuse.

Individuals whose substance abuse would negatively impact the housing site or the community at large will not be eligible for tenancy. If a tenant's behavior becomes a problem during tenancy, that person will be referred to alternative accommodation. All tenants will be required to sign and adhere to a good neighbour agreement to maintain tenancy.

Potential tenants will be evaluated on an individual basis. Coast will be looking for stable tenants who can live independently and do not have major health conditions which might require support beyond that which will be provided on the site. If someone is recovering from substance abuse in addition to their primary mental health condition, Coast will have to determine whether there is sufficient support in the building, or alternatively encourage the person to apply for housing where sufficient supports are available. The final decision will rest with Coast, in conjunction with BC Housing and VCHA.

How will residents of the new building interact with the neighbourhood?:

Residents of the building will be chosen on the basis of their ability to live independently, interact with other residents and with neighbours in a manner fully consistent with any resident of an apartment building anywhere in the community. A daily meal program will be available for all tenants, and tenants will shop and utilize services in the community to meet their daily needs.

Coast's programs focus on helping tenants get involved in the community using local recreational facilities, gardening, shopping and other social activities. Coast has frequently established a working relationship with local BIAs to provide for community clean-up and other activities.

What impacts will there be on traffic, parking and general congestion in the area of 16th and Dunbar?: The proposal will provide 17 parking spaces. Most tenants will not have cars because of their limited income. Transit, walking and bicycles will be the primary means of getting around. Parking is provided mainly for staff, visitors and commercial uses.

Access to the underground parking is from 16th Avenue because of the significant slope from 17th to 16th Avenue. Engineering Services has reviewed this entry point carefully to ensure it does not significantly affect the traffic flow at this point of 16th Avenue.

Will the project pose a danger to students in local schools? The Vancouver School Board has historically taken a position of support for supportive housing. This position recognizes that schools are distributed city-wide and that it would be virtually impossible to locate projects at a distance away from schools. Vancouver Police Department indicates that supportive housing does not represent a risk to residents or students in the surrounding area.

Management of Community Impacts

What controls will be in place to ensure proper management of the building?: The MOU stipulates that an Operations Management Plan (OMP) may be required. Staff will recommend an OMP for the site at Dunbar & 16th Avenue. The OMP will serve as an operating agreement between the City, BC Housing, VCHA and Coast and address the following issues:

- Site contacts;
- Staffing;
- Dispute resolution mechanisms to deal with impacts of the project in the community, if any should occur;
- Reporting protocol back to the City; and
- Establishment of a liaison mechanism with the community.

As part of the OMP, a **Community Advisory Committee** will be established composed of representatives of the community, Coast and government agencies. Community representatives will likely include the Dunbar Residents Association, the Dunbar Vision Implementation Committee, the Business Improvement Area and the school Parent Advisory Committees. The Committee will include also representatives of the City and VCHA.

Coast is committed to dealing with all concerns in a timely manner, and all reported concerns and their resolutions will be reviewed at the meetings of the community advisory committee.

The City will continue to own the site. Coast will have operating agreement with BC Housing and a service contract with VCH.

Other Considerations

Many Dunbar residents want affordable housing for seniors: The Dunbar CityPlan Vision supports both seniors housing and supportive housing. The City's present focus on supportive housing is to a large extent linked to funding provided by the Province of BC, which provides the funding for both capital construction and ongoing operating subsidies.

Contacts

Further information may be obtained from the following sources:

Housing Centre, City of Vancouver

Rob Whitlock, tel. 604-873-7432, or email to rob.whitlock@vancouver.ca

Web site: www.vancouver.ca/housing/

Development Services, City of Vancouver

Doug Robinson, tel. 604-871-6092, or email to

doug.robinson@vancouver.ca

Coast Mental Health Foundation

Darrell Burnham; tel. 604-675-2324, email to

darrellb@coastmentalhealth.com

Web site: www.coastmentalhealth.com

Vancouver Coastal Health Authority

Allyson Muir, tel. 604-708-5279, or email to Allyson.Muir@vch.ca

BC Housing

Donna Money; tel. 604-439-4192, or email to dmoney@bchousing.org

Web site: www.bchousing.org