

Neighbourhood Impacts of Supportive Housing Projects

Draft November 29, 2007

Purpose

This request for proposal concerns a study of any possible correlations between supportive housing projects and neighbourhood crime levels in the City of Vancouver.

Background

Supportive housing is affordable housing that provides links to support staff that assist tenants to stabilize their lives, enhance independent living skills, and re-connect with the community. Vancouver City Council policy is to locate supportive housing throughout the city in appropriately zoned areas. Supportive housing has been part of the City's housing continuum for more than twenty years. There are over 30 supportive housing buildings with over 1,200 units in the city.

For the purposes of this study supportive housing means: people living in *mental health supportive housing* have a mental illness that significantly affects their day-to-day functioning and which requires ongoing treatment and support, the person must be willing and able to participate in planning for services and be engaged in treatment; or people who are housed in *alcohol and drug free supportive housing* had a previous dependency on substances, are actively engaged in treatment, and are willing to develop and implement an individual recovery plan.

There is much evidence that supportive housing provides positive outcomes for residents of the buildings and is cost effective. Vancouver Coastal Health research has found that Supportive Housing provides positive outcomes:

- Reduction in emergency room visits by 32% and hospital bed use by 57%
- Reduction in symptoms for conditions such as schizophrenia and other psychosis
- Increased residential stability with people staying in one place longer
- Increased independence and empowerment and gains in role achievement

Supportive Housing is cost effective:

- Overall savings \$6,000 per person per year (from \$24,000 for homeless people to \$18,000 housed people)
- Savings of \$950 per day or \$1,050 annually per person in hospital bed use
- Savings of \$16,282 per year per unit of supportive housing.

The savings were from reduced use of shelters, psychiatric hospitals, medical services, prisons and jails. People in supported housing are in treatment for a mental illness or an addiction from which they may be recovering, or both.

Scope

For the purposes of this study the residents of a representative sampling of buildings outside the downtown core so that there was a representative sampling of type of tenant, program, age of building, location etc. This might include five to six buildings with a total tenant population of 80 - 100 people. Please see the Supportive Housing Strategy for a complete listing of projects within the City of Vancouver at: <http://www.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/housing/supportivehousingstrategy/index.htm>

We encourage details of the chosen methodological approaches to be taken by proponents that may include any or all of the following methods: tracking of individual residents from a representative sample of supportive housing projects located outside the downtown core; interviews with key informants in the neighbourhoods; an analysis of VPD crime data; other quantitative data etc.

Proposal

Draft Terms of Reference - Neighbourhood Impacts, Supportive Housing

Study has number of parts:

1. An annotated bibliography of literature reviewed as background to the research subject, approach and methods.
2. Description and rationale for the study time period and interview plan.
3. Description of supportive housing projects and programs and residents included within the study.
4. Description of qualitative data collection from building residents and/or key informants.
5. Quantitative analysis of VPD data on crime around projects and self-reported criminal activity including a rationale for the types of crime to be identified.
6. A rationale for any other significant data to be collected which may include positive impacts of supportive housing projects in neighbourhoods.

Proposals should outline the following:

1. A description of each phase of the project with activity, cost and schedule;
2. The study team members, their qualifications, language skills, roles and responsibilities; and
3. Charge rates for all team members within the team.
4. Ethics approval from an appropriate institution such as university or college

At a minimum, applicants should address how data on the following areas will be compiled: criminal activities; rationale for range of neighbourhood impacts to be tracked; key informant interviews; relevant quantitative data.

If a resident survey is proposed a draft will be submitted to the Steering Committee for final comment and approval. If key informant interviews are include a rationale of how key informants will be identified should be included. A rationale for additional information gathering is welcome.

Minimum requirements for analysis include: comparative analysis of VPD data and self-reported activity; comparative assessment of perceptions of key stakeholders on neighbourhood impacts; identification of seasonal and longitudinal trends over the course of the study; general assessment of impacts. Suggestions for additional analysis

are welcome. Proposals should incorporate some time for any additional analysis required once data has been collected.

Reporting

This consultancy is being initiated by the Housing Centre, City of Vancouver, with a steering committee made up of representatives from the City's Planning Department and the Vancouver Police Department. Peter Greenwell, Housing Planner, Housing Centre, City of Vancouver, will be the staff contact for the consultant. A final expenditure statement will be provided to the steering committee by the consultant.

Project Outputs

The consultant will present the steering committee with a draft survey for residents and for key informants, a summary when raw data collection is completed and analysis and a draft report for committee review with comments incorporated into a final report. Raw data as well as all reports should be considered property of the City of Vancouver. The consultant will produce an electronic report in Word format and ten written and bound copies on paper sized 8 1/2 x 11 inches.

Timing

Proposals will be accepted until 5pm, December ..., 2007 at the City of Vancouver's Housing Centre, 3rd Floor, East Tower, 555 W. 12th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. The final research report will be completed and provided to the Steering Committee by June, 2009.

Fees

The total funding for this consultancy is \$..... including GST, subject to final approval by City Council.