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**To:** "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

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**Subject:** Vancouver Granville Corridor FAQ -FINAL.pdf

**Attachments:** Vancouver Granville Corridor FAQ -FINAL.pdf

Greetings Mayor and Council

Please find attached FAQs prepared by BC Housing regarding their efforts to house people from Oppenheimer and the impacts on the Granville Corridor.

Best

Sadhu

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Pronouns: he, him, his



*The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.*

### ***What's happening?***

- People experiencing homelessness face challenges every day in accessing running water, bathrooms, sourcing food, and finding safe, secure places to sleep.
- BC Housing has been working with our partners to secure locations, such as hotels, where people experiencing homelessness are able to access safe housing with a private room and bathroom during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes helping people who had been living at Oppenheimer Park.
- We recognize that efforts to protect people experiencing homelessness from the COVID-19 virus – reducing shelter capacity for physical distancing, closing public washrooms, and the impact of new safety protocols on community service agencies – can make it harder for those living on the streets and in the homeless encampments to access the supports they need.
- By securing hotels nearby, we can create the necessary space to support physical distancing in the emergency shelters as well as provide access to interim safe, secure housing for people experiencing homelessness, including those living in crowded encampments.
- We recognize this is an interim solution to reduce homelessness in Vancouver until more permanent supportive housing options can be made available.

### ***What hotels has BC Housing leased to support people experiencing homelessness?***

BC Housing is partnering with local hotels in Vancouver to provide people who are experiencing homelessness with access to interim housing.

<b>Hotel</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Operator</b>
Holiday Inn	1110 Howe St	Lu'ma and Coast Mental Health
Howard Johnson Hotel	1176 Granville St	Atira
International Hostel (Downtown)	1025 Granville St	Community Builders Group (CBG)
International Hostel (Central)	1114 Burnaby St	Atira
The Lark	103 East Hastings St	PHS

### ***Who is living at the hotels?***

BC Housing has secured hotel spaces for range of marginalized people, including:

- Shelter guests or people staying at emergency response centres, to free up space in shelters to allow for physical distancing;
- People living in the parks or on the streets who need safe, secure housing;
- Patients without a fixed address being discharged from hospitals who do not need emergency care, but require ongoing health care – freeing up space in hospitals.

***Why are we moving people experiencing homelessness into hotels?***

- People experiencing homelessness face challenges every day in accessing running water, bathrooms, sourcing food, and finding safe, secure places to sleep.
- People experiencing homelessness have higher rates of health concerns and may be at greater risk if exposed to the virus.
- BC Housing has been working with our partners to secure locations, such as hotels, where people experiencing homelessness are able to access safe housing with a private room and bathroom during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- By securing hotels, we can create the necessary space to support physical distancing in the emergency shelters as well as provide access to interim safe, secure housing for people experiencing homelessness, including those living in crowded encampments.
- By moving shelter guests into nearby hotel spaces, we are better able to support physical distancing in the local emergency shelters and provide improved access to hygiene facilities and healthcare supports. This is an important part of our effort to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus among people experiencing homelessness.
- People who had been living on the streets and in the parks can now sleep in a safe place, have their own bathrooms, and access the supports they need.

***What are the long-term plans? When will permanent supportive housing be available?***

- This is an interim solution to reduce homelessness until more permanent housing options can be made available.
- BC Housing recognizes there is an urgent need and we are working in collaboration with local municipalities, health authorities and non-profit partner to develop permanent supportive housing options for people experiencing homelessness.

***Why was it necessary to move people out of Oppenheimer Park?***

- The decampment from Oppenheimer Park occurred as a result of a public safety order from the provincial government.
- The increased density at the encampments had become a serious concern for public safety. The priority was to provide housing with support and access to food and hygiene.

***Why was the public not informed? Why are you releasing the information now?***

- BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health, and the City of Vancouver acted quickly to provide housing to people who needed it during the pandemic. People living on the streets have limited access to food, services, secure and safe housing, and ability to meet other basic needs, and can be at higher risk to COVID transmission.
- This included creating new shelter spaces, providing people with additional income support, food and access to services, as well securing hotel spaces to provide safe, secure and affordable housing

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for those most in need. The people moving into these hotels have just as much of a right to be living in the neighbourhood as anyone else.

- Our first and most important priority was supporting the people moving into the hotels. In particular those who were offered this housing after they were required to leave Oppenheimer. This work had to happen quickly, because of the public safety order.
- Now that we have completed the decampment, we are engaging community in a dialogue to address concerns. We are committed to working together to create a safe space for the both the neighbours and the people living in the hotels.

### ***What is being done about safety?***

- Homelessness continues to be a significant issue in neighbourhoods across the city and throughout the region and province. While the solution to homelessness is housing with appropriate supports, there is not enough of this housing to meet the need. Therefore, there are also a number of programs and initiatives to support communities while housing solutions are still being developed, including increased street cleaning, homelessness outreach, and harm reduction services
- We understand and appreciate that there is an increased concern in and around the Granville Street corridor. Some of these concerns existed before people experiencing homelessness were moved into the hotels, and others have arisen since.
- We are committed to working with the community to create a safe space for both the neighbourhoods and the people living in the hotels.
- We have set up a Community Dialogue Group to bring together service providers, experienced not-for-profit providers, business and community representatives to communicate how the hotels are operating, how they will be managed, and receive feedback from the community
- At least one-third of the Community Dialogue Group will be made up of community and business representation

### ***What supports are available for people living in the hotels?***

- Non-profit societies that have significant experience working with vulnerable populations oversee the day-to-day management of the hotels.
- Staff are on-site to support, manage day-to-day operations, and available to respond in a timely manner to any related concerns that arise.
- Staff provide daily meals, cleaning services and medical care for those who require support.

### ***Will substance use be allowed in the hotels?***

- Communities across the province are in an overdose crisis.
- BC Housing follows the widely recognized and proven Housing First model. A harm reduction approach means staff are available to support any residents who are in various phases of substance use.

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- In order to help people who use substances, we need to first give them a safe and secure place to sleep, food to eat, and access to services so that they can move forward with their lives.
- All residents are offered overdose prevention support, and hotels have protocols in place to quickly respond to overdoses when they occur. Any harm reduction services within the hotel are for residents of the hotels only.
- When residents are ready to make a change, staff on site connect them with the appropriate support services.
- BC Housing's goal is to provide programs and services for residents that seek to break the cycle of homelessness.

### ***What is being done to address the bear bangers being thrown out the windows at the Howard Johnson?***

- BC Housing takes the safety and security of the community and the residents living in the building seriously.
- BC Housing and Atira are aware of the concerns and are actively taking steps to address the issue, including ensuring security is stationed in the back alley 24/7 and issuing notices to residents to advise them such behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Any residents found throwing anything out the window will no longer be welcome at the hotel and will be relocated to alternate accommodations.

### ***What about other health services?***

VCH has a number of programs and services to support the health needs of our most vulnerable community members currently residing in the Granville Corridor area, including:

- Health services provided by Three Bridges Community Health Centre;
- City Centre and REACH Urgent and Primary Care Centres;
- Intensive Housing Outreach Team (a new team designed to support people with complex health needs who are transitioning into housing).
- Harm reduction and treatment services, such as a mobile Overdose Prevention Service (OPS), Overdose Outreach Team, as well as access to Providence Health's Rapid Access Addiction Clinic

### ***Where do I go if I have any concerns?***

- **Call 9-1-1** for police, fire, or medical emergencies when immediate action is required -- someone's health, safety or property is in jeopardy or a crime is in progress.
- Call Vancouver Police non-emergency line at **604-717-3321** for non-emergency issues related to personal safety or property.
- Other community inquiries can be directed to the City of Vancouver's 311 line or BC Housing via [communityrelations@bchousing.org](mailto:communityrelations@bchousing.org).



## VANCOUVER GRANVILLE CORRIDOR QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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### *What if I have more questions?*

- BC Housing will provide regular, ongoing updates about the operations of the hotels, and will engage with the public as long-term housing solutions start to evolve.
- Please send any questions or comments to BC Housing at [communityrelations@bchousing.org](mailto:communityrelations@bchousing.org).