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To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
Date: 10/26/2023 5:24:36 PM
Subject: 1st/Clark detox and housing project - update

Good afternoon Mayor and Council,

In follow up to recent media attention and a number of questions from Council, I am writing to share the background and recommended messaging regarding the above-referenced project.

If you require any additional information, please let me know.

Best,
Paul

Background:

In April 2019, the City of Vancouver received a development permit application from BC Housing and Vancouver Coastal Health to develop a withdrawal management centre, which would include social housing and enterprise space with focus on Indigenous healing and wellness.

The proposed project location at East 1st and Clark Drive is City-owned. Following Council's approval of the rezoning in February 2019, the City entered into a long-term lease of the land with BC Housing and will also be responsible for the social enterprise component of the proposal.

Prior to updating the VBBL to the 2019 version, the City had communicated to BCH and VCH about the forthcoming changes and the deadline for submitting their application to be considered under the 2014 VBBL. While BCH met the deadline to be considered under the 2014 VBBL, given that by June 2022 multiple outstanding permit requirements had not been met, the City met with BCH and agreed that the application must be updated to meet the 2019 VBBL.

The City has been working with BCH and VCH and has received some of the required updated documents.

Vancouver Building Bylaw – 2019 Update

Generally speaking, the updates to the VBBL in 2019 (from 2014) were intended to address fire safety, seismic resilience, accessibility and energy efficiency. For reference, the key updated requirements as they relate to this building are as follows:

Fire Safety:

- Leakage-rated doors, rather than weatherstripped doors, are required in a few locations
- Smoke dampers are required in ducts that penetrate fire separations
- Permitted use of maglocks has expanded
- Greater flexibility for the use of water curtain sprinklers

- Requirements for the firestopping of combustible outlet boxes are relaxed

Seismic Resilience:

- More robust seismic-force-resisting-system (SFERS) and foundations to meet increased seismic design loads
- Non-SFERS structural elements, such as columns, may have to be larger

Accessibility:

- Public corridors must be 1,500mm wide
- Ramps cannot be steeper than 1:12
- Kitchen cooktop and sink must be adjacent or have a continuous counter between them

Energy Efficiency:

- Building envelope thermal performance must be improved to meet lower thermal energy demand intensity and allowable CO2 emissions limits

Timeline and community consultation:

- February 2018** ☞Partnership announcement and initial community engagement
- Spring 2018** ☞Initial design and ongoing community engagement, ongoing design refinements
- April 23, 2018** - Pre-application open house led by BCH
- June 11, 2018** ☞City-led open house
- February 20, 2019** ☞ City held public hearing and approved the rezoning.
- April 11, 2019** ☞ Development Permit application created in permitting system.
- October 9, 2019** ☞Building Permit application created in permitting system.
- May / June2022** ☞The City received a letter from BCH requesting that the project be considered under the 2014 VBBL. City staff met with BCH and agreed that it will be considered under the 2019 VBBL.
- October 2023** ☞ City staff is continuing to work with the applicants to revise their application

Key messages about delays:

- The City supports partners such as Vancouver Coastal Health in providing much needed treatment options as an important part of recovery and wellness, and BC Housing in providing greater housing stability for the region.
- In fall 2019, the City considered the development permit and building permit applications under the 2014 VBBL ☞the VBBL was updated in November 2019. Given that multiple permit requirements were still outstanding in June 2022, the City met with BCH and agreed that the application must be updated to meet the 2019 VBBL.
- The City has offered to work with the design team to work through any challenges in order to have the permits issued as soon as possible.
- Staff have been working with BC Housing to update their submission so that it complies with the 2019 VBBL. Staff most recently provided feedback to BC Housing in January 2023. The application has been with BC Housing and Vancouver Coastal Health since that time.

Key messages about the project

- The Grandview Woodland Community plan identifies non-market housing and treatment facilities as core community needs. The Plan includes policies to support the delivery of non-market housing and addictions treatment facilities.

- The proposed development at 1636 Clark Drive and 1321 to 1395 East 1st Avenue includes approximately 60 - 100 units of affordable rental units, a new withdrawal management centre including 20 transitional beds, and new social enterprise space.
- This proposed project takes a holistic and health approach to mental health and addictions by providing a better menu of options for people, including enhancements to the current detox model that will allow people to access services much easier, and be supported with transitional housing while waiting for additional treatment or housing.
- The detox component of the facility includes space for clients to stay as they are beginning their recovery process, and includes small rooms with beds, gathering spaces, a cafeteria, nurses station, and counselling rooms. Patients remain within the facility during treatment.
- The transitional housing component is intended to provide short term accommodation to bridge between successful completion of withdrawal and the next available bed in a residential program or housing opportunity.
- People with substance use problems are often stigmatized and are more often victimized than they are perpetrators of crime. Stigma is a major factor in excluding people from accessing the housing and services they need most.
- The City is working closely with the tenants who currently live on site as per our tenant relocation policy. As we are still early in the project, there is no need for tenants to move just yet.
- The location for the proposed project is on City-owned land. The City will enter into a long-term lease of the land with BC Housing. The City will also be responsible for the social enterprise component of the proposal.

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̍əm (Musqueam), Snw̓x̓w̓č̓w̓mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.