

Questions and Answers for Housing proposed for 330 Boyce Ave., 2938 Tutt St., and 195 Rutland Rd.

What is being proposed for this (these) properties?

Each of these sites is to be used for a supportive housing apartment building with between 30 to 50 apartments. See the Provincial news release on this initiative: http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2005-2009/2008FOR0039-000389.htm

Why here?

The City was asked to determine if it had lands that could be used for housing to partner with the Province through BC Housing to build housing for people who have little or no other housing choices. Each of these sites has the proper zoning to allow housing of this nature. Most of the land the City owns at present was acquired for purposes other than housing, such as parking lots, road improvements, utilities and parks. The City had to be sure that each site was zoned correctly for housing and that the present use of the properties could be accommodated in some other way. Further, the City conducted a site selection analysis using a mathematical decision making model (Kepner – Tregoe <http://www.kepner-tregoe.com/> <http://www.decide-guide.com/kepner-tregoe.html>) to determine which of its potential sites (6 in all) were best suited. The ones selected scored the highest in this exercise. Two of these sites are parking lots and the Boyce site was acquired to complete the work with the realignment of Water and Pandosy streets.

What is supportive housing?

Supportive housing is conventional apartment housing with some services provided on the site for the people that live there. Similar to other apartment housing, which might have caretakers, meeting space or recreation facilities, these buildings are to have staff available at all times to oversee the buildings and help tenants find the services they need. The City's zoning by-law provides the following definition of supportive housing:

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING means housing consisting of dwellings with support services on-site that may or may not include collective dining facilities, laundry facilities, counselling, educational services, homemaking and transportation. Supportive housing might also qualify as **Special Needs Housing**.

SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING means housing for households that meet the criteria for a core need for housing in the Official Community Plan and includes seniors or persons with or without children who lack safe and secure housing or are leaving an abusive relationship, single parents and children who are at risk, street youth or homeless persons, or people with mental or physical disabilities, illnesses, or dependencies.



Why did the City offer land to the Province for these buildings?

The City was asked by the Premier to partner with the Province by providing land to help provide housing for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the City. By providing land through no-cost leases, the City obtained a commitment from the Province to fund all building and operating costs for 3 buildings providing up to 150 new apartments, as well as on-going operating costs to subsidize rents and provide full time staff 24/7 for each building. The City's commitment represents about \$1.5 million in land, while the Province is committing an estimated \$30 million in building costs, plus an annual \$1.5 million in operating costs to achieve this housing. The City views this as a valuable investment in addressing the serious community interest of providing housing to those in need. It is a partnership that is well supported by City policies that were created in consultation with the community. Excerpts from the City's Strategic Plan and Official Community Plan are provided below:

Strategic Plan:

Goal #3 - To foster the social and physical well-being of residents and visitors.

Objective #1 - Promote health and wellness initiatives.

3.1.8 Work proactively with the community and other levels of government to address homelessness, mental health and drug abuse.

Objective #4 – Realize construction of housing forms and prices that meet the needs of Kelowna residents.

3.4.1 Work in partnership with housing organizations and finance institutions to monitor the range of housing options required in the City.

3.4.2 Identify ways to establish partnerships with builders, developers and other levels of government in an effort to use targeted City owned land, existing resources and legislative tools to influence the supply and diversity of housing and to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Official Community Plan:

8.1.4 Partnerships for Affordable Housing. Encourage the development of partnerships among community groups, non-profit organizations, the business community, professionals and all levels of government to provide affordable and special needs housing;

Is homelessness such a big problem in Kelowna?

Unfortunately, like most other Canadian and American cities, homelessness is a very serious problem in Kelowna. With the help of the City and other levels of government, homelessness counts have been conducted on a regular basis in Spring and Fall seasons when seasonal "transient" populations have left the city.



279 people were counted on the street or in temporary shelters in April of 2007. These counts of the homeless miss a lot of people who are hiding on private property, rooftops and parks. To find out more about Kelowna homelessness see the website for the local Poverty and Homelessness Action Team <http://phat-co.ca/>.

The City has conducted much research on housing needs. A comparison of income levels by household and expenditures on shelter was conducted based on 2001 Census information from Statistics Canada and another one is underway with the information on shelter expense and income from the 2006 Census, which was just released in May of 2008. As set out in the Housing Resources Handbook, which is found on the City website www.kelowna.ca under Residents, Community Development & Real Estate, Community Planning, we know that about 3,800 households with annual gross incomes of less than \$20,000 were paying 50% or more of their income before tax on shelter. These include the homeless and many others who run extremely high risk of losing their homes. Unless serious action continues to be taken to increase the ability of low income families and single people to find housing, the problem will continue to get worse.

How can the City or the Province guarantee that these buildings will not be housing dangerous people or attract drug dealing or crime?

Residents of these buildings are subject to the same laws as everyone else. Any unlawful behaviour in or near the buildings would be addressed by reporting it to the RCMP and with the help of any neighbourhood crime prevention programs that are in place. New residential buildings actually make a neighbourhood safer by placing “eyes on the street” and having residents who want to live in a safe place watch over neighbourhood activity.

What can you tell us about the residents of the buildings?

The Tutt St. property is the only site where it is known who will be managing the housing. Until housing managers are selected for the other two sites, it is hard to be specific about who will live there. At the Tutt St. site, Now Canada will be managing and providing housing for single women and their children. These women will be lower income and need some support to secure more permanent housing, gain employment or more stable sources of income and improve their life coping skills. Day care or other services for children and their mothers may be included as part of the housing. BC Housing is in the process of calling for and selecting housing managers for the other two sites. The best information available is that it will be for single people who are at risk of homelessness and in need of some support.



What else can you tell us about this type of housing?

Right now the provincial and federal governments are prioritizing addressing homelessness in terms of subsidized housing even though there are many people struggling with the cost of housing these days. To solve homelessness, the most obvious answer is to provide housing. When someone has been homeless or risks homelessness, there are often health issues that are either caused by being homeless or that make the person at higher risk of becoming homeless. These are usually best addressed when the person has a stable home. Without that, people will return to homelessness. This is called a “housing first” approach and has proved successful in documented research. Usually, some supports are provided with the housing to ensure that the residents are successful in solving their homelessness. Also, all of the fears associated with this type of housing have proven to be only fears that do not materialize once the housing is built and occupied. It should be remembered that housing is a human right and society is failing when people cannot be housed. Research to support these concepts can be found at the following locations:

Salvation Army article on neighbourhood opposition to housing for the homeless.
<http://www.salvationarmy.ca/2006/03/29/nimby-not-in-my-backyard/>

Towards More Inclusive Neighbourhoods: examines the real effects of social housing on B.C. neighbourhoods, including property value research:
<http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/housing/neighbour/>

Update of Property Value Research by BC Provincial Government:
http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/housing/00_Jan_PropVal.html

Local Responses to Homelessness: A Planning Guide for BC Communities
October 26, 2000 <http://www.housing.gov.bc.ca/housing/LRHomeless.htm>

CMHC Report: **Supportive Housing for Homeless and Hard-to-House Seniors: An In-Depth Case Study** 65672 <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/pdf/65672.PDF>

CMHC Report: **Homelessness, Housing, and Harm Reduction: Stable Housing for Homeless People with Substance Use Issues** 65088
<http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/pdf/65088.pdf>

American Planning Association: Policy Guide on HOMELESSNESS: Adopted by Chapter Delegate Assembly, March 29, 2003: Ratified by the Board of Directors, March 30, 2003 Denver, CO
<http://www.planning.org/policyguides/pdf/homelessness.pdf>