



## **Temporary Bridge Housing at 555 Fuller Ave – FAQs**

### *Who will live there?*

People who apply to live at 555 Fuller Avenue need to be Kelowna residents who are over the age of 19 and meet the eligibility requirements around income, homelessness, and required housing supports and programming.

This means that every potential resident is considered on an individual basis to ensure that the housing and services provided by the program match the support services that they need, such as life skills training, employment assistance, and help with accessing a range of social and health care services. Staff will be on-site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to ensure residents are supported and that the property is well maintained.

The Journey Home Strategy, our community's 5-year plan to address homelessness, reported that there is a need for diverse housing options to meet the needs of the community. Bridge housing is one of those options: housing that provides an immediate and important first step to getting people off the street and out of local shelters. The goal is to help people stabilize their lives and assist them with obtaining and maintaining housing while waiting for the long-term housing to become available.

### *Who will operate the housing?*

The housing will be operated by the John Howard Society of Okanagan & Kootenay, who are experienced at supporting people experiencing homelessness. Their responsibilities will include property management, operations management and resident selection, in collaboration with BC Housing and community partners. Once people move in, staff will be on-site 24/7 to support residents.

### *When will residents move in to 555 Fuller Avenue?*

Renovations are required before the building is ready for occupancy. The goal is to open in mid-December 2019. When the bridge housing opens, this will free up 40 spaces in local shelters for those currently living outside.

### *How long will the housing be operating?*

These supported beds will address an urgent, immediate need to ensure the community's most vulnerable members have safe, secure, warm housing until the new supportive housing options open. It will close on March 31, 2020. This bridge housing will provide people moving into supportive housing which will help to alleviate the urgent need for community shelter space.

### *Is this a shelter?*

555 Fuller Avenue will be bridge housing. People will not be lining up to be admitted on a daily basis. People living here will have to apply and go through a thorough assessment process and will be considered on an individual basis to ensure their needs are matched with the supports

provided through bridge housing. Each resident will have their own designated bed as well as access to support services 24/7.

*Are people allowed to use drugs inside the housing?*

BC Housing, Interior Health, and the John Howard Society of Okanagan & Kootenay work from a Housing First principle. The goal is to provide stable housing, and then work with people to promote recovery and well-being. If we exclude people with substance use issues, they would remain on the street with deteriorating health. Harm reduction best practices, based on Interior Health's guidance, would be followed within the housing in order to prevent overdoses. This means drug-use will be permitted on site however only in a designated area that would be monitored by staff and require safe-disposal of needles. Although we anticipate most drug-use will happen inside the housing, the society would be sweeping the streets daily for garbage as a courtesy to neighbours.

*How can I reach out with any questions about this bridge housing?*

If you have any questions, please email [communityrelations@bchousing.org](mailto:communityrelations@bchousing.org)