

## FW: Victoria Decampment Sites

From: Helliwell, Jacob AG:EX <Jacob.Helliwell@gov.bc.ca>  
To: Thomson, John OHCS:EX <John.Thomson@gov.bc.ca>  
Sent: March 11, 2021 2:39:14 PM PST

FYI – site specific details on the two industrial sites.

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**From:** Jennifer Iten <jiten@bchousing.org>  
**Sent:** March 11, 2021 2:35 PM  
**To:** Helliwell, Jacob AG:EX <Jacob.Helliwell@gov.bc.ca>  
**Cc:** Malcolm McNaughton <mmcnaught@bchousing.org>; Jonathan Rubin <jrubin@bchousing.org>; Abbas Barodawalla <abarodawalla@bchousing.org>  
**Subject:** Victoria Decampment Sites

**[EXTERNAL] This email came from an external source. Only open attachments or links that you are expecting from a known sender.**

Hi Jacob,

As we've been discussing, s.13; s.17  
s.13; s.17  
s.13; s.17

The Capital

City Centre Hotel at 1961 Douglas is under contract.

Here are a few details on the new sites (I've also copied Malcom our Director of Regional Development on the island in case you have any other specific questions):

	s.13; s.17
Contract	
Purchase Budget:	
<i>Purchase Price</i>	
<i>Closing/Due Diligence</i>	
Reno	
Units	
Size	
Operator	
Shelter type	
Redevelopment potential	
Zoning Considerations	
Lease considerations	

Jenn Iten, MPA, CPA  
Executive Director, Finance  
BC Housing  
Direct: 604-439-4730 | Cell: 604-306-0905  
Email: [jiten@bchousing.org](mailto:jiten@bchousing.org)

## **FW: AG - Signed Decision Letter**

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From: May, Cheryl OHCS:EX <Cheryl.May@gov.bc.ca>  
To: XT:HLTH Ramsay, Shayne <sramsay@bchousing.org>  
Cc: Thomson, John OHCS:EX <John.Thomson@gov.bc.ca>  
Sent: March 19, 2021 2:56:37 PM PDT  
Attachments: d AG Alternative Site for Victoria Decampment DL.pdf



Ad Hoc Minor Meeting Date: March 18, 2021  
480508

Confidential

Honourable David Eby, QC  
Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing  
Room 232 Parliament Buildings  
Victoria BC V8V 1X4

Dear Colleague:

Re: Alternative Site for Victoria Decampment Response – 225 Russell Street

I am writing to inform you that Treasury Board has approved the BC Housing Management Commission (BC Housing) to complete negotiations and proceed with purchase of 225 Russell Street in Victoria for a total of \$17 including purchase price, redevelopment, closing and other associated costs.

Treasury Board approved corresponding transfers of Property Transfer Tax revenues into the Housing Priority Initiatives Special Account and transfers out of the special account to BC Housing in 2020/21 to support this purchase.

This approval is conditional on the following: before final execution of the purchase and sale agreement, BC Housing and your ministry are to secure a letter of intent from the City of Victoria demonstrating support to rezone the Russell Street site to allow for long-term use of the location as supportive or affordable housing.

Sincerely,

Selina Robinson  
Chair

cc: See attached Distribution List

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**Ministry of  
Finance**

Treasury Board

Mailing Address  
PO Box 9469 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8V 9V8

Location Address:  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor – 617 Government St  
Victoria BC

Distribution List:

cc: Richard Fyfe  
Deputy Attorney General  
Ministry of Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing

Heather Wood  
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Ministry of Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing

Jim Hopkins  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Finance

Teri Spaven  
Assistant Deputy Minister and Executive Financial Officer  
Ministry of Finance

## **FW: For ADM review: Victoria Russell St. shelter purchase comms materials**

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From: Rabinovitch, Hannah R OHCS:EX <Hannah.Rabinovitch@gov.bc.ca>  
To: Helliwell, Jacob AG:EX <Jacob.Helliwell@gov.bc.ca>  
Sent: March 30, 2021 11:02:48 AM PDT  
Attachments: QA\_Russell Street Purchase\_29March2021\_4pm.docx, NR\_225 Russell Street\_29March2021\_450pm.docx

Assuming this one has come your way already. QA says funds came out of SHF so wanted to flag for your review.

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**From:** Butler, Liam GCPE:EX <Liam.Butler@gov.bc.ca>  
**Sent:** March 29, 2021 4:16 PM  
**To:** May, Cheryl OHCS:EX <Cheryl.May@gov.bc.ca>; Thomson, John OHCS:EX <John.Thomson@gov.bc.ca>; Kelly, Avery OHCS:EX <Avery.Kelly@gov.bc.ca>  
**Cc:** Rabinovitch, Hannah R OHCS:EX <Hannah.Rabinovitch@gov.bc.ca>; Ramsay, Launa P OHCS:EX <Launa.Ramsay@gov.bc.ca>; Schollen, Tasha GCPE:EX <Tasha.Schollen@gov.bc.ca>  
**Subject:** For ADM review: Victoria Russell St. shelter purchase comms materials

Hi Cheryl,

Attached for your review are the comms materials for Wednesday's Russell St. shelter purchase in Victoria –

- NR w/ draft AG and MLA quotes - aiming for a 9 a.m. release.
- KM/QAs – we're just confirming the operating budget with BCH.

These have been approved by BCH. Please let me know if you have any questions.

If possible, can you return these by tomorrow morning? Apologies for the tight turnaround.

Thank you,

**Liam Butler** | Senior Public Affairs Officer  
Government Communications and Public Engagement  
Ministry of Attorney General and Responsible for Housing  
778 584-2433  
*he, him*

**CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE – MARCH 31, 2021**

**225 Russell Street Purchase - Victoria Decampment  
Questions & Answers**

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**Key messages:**

- We have purchased a new building to provide approximately 70 new temporary shelter spaces for people experiencing homelessness in Victoria.
- These new spaces are part of our commitment with the City of Victoria to find safe and secure housing with supports for approximately 220 people in Victoria experiencing homelessness by April 31, 2020.
- When vulnerable people have stable housing with supports, they can access things like health care and skills training to help rebuild their lives, supporting healthy and safe communities for everyone.
- We will continue to work with the City of Victoria and community partners on temporary and permanent housing solutions for people who are living outside.

**Questions and Answers:**

**1. What are you announcing?**

- The Province, through BC Housing, has purchased 225 Russell St., a building with approximately 70 temporary indoor spaces to support moving people living outdoors in Victoria inside.
- These new spaces are part of our commitment with the City of Victoria to find safe and secure housing with supports for approximately 220 people in Victoria experiencing homelessness by April 31, 2020.
- Our Place Society, an experienced non-profit operator, will operate the building and provide support services including daily meals, access to sanitary and hygiene facilities, and storage for belongings.
- Staff will also provide residents with access and referral to health and wellness programs.
- The temporary shelter will remain open for 18 months with an option to extend for an additional six months, if needed.
- Following its use as a temporary shelter, BC Housing will engage the community on a redevelopment proposal for supportive housing, which will follow the municipal rezoning process.

**2. Was the neighbourhood notified of the purchase and use of the building for decampment?**

- BC Housing will be reaching out to neighbourhood associations, local businesses and other stakeholders and will be inviting neighbours to a virtual information session to learn more about the project.
- Engagement details will be shared on BC Housing's Let's Talk Housing page: [Letstalkhousingbc.ca](https://letstalkhousingbc.ca)

**CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE – MARCH 31, 2021**

**3. When will residents move in?**

- The building is currently undergoing renovations to improve the site's ability to operate as a temporary shelter and provide wraparound supports for residents.
- Renovations are expected to be completed by the end of April, with residents moving in shortly thereafter.
- The exact number of available spaces will be determined once renovations are completed.

**4. How many more spaces are needed to meet the commitment to move people living in encampments indoors by April 30, 2021?**

- Since January 2021, 116 people experiencing homelessness in Victoria have been moved into housing.
- As part of our response, the Province and BC Housing have secured hundreds of new spaces that either have already opened or will open soon, such as:
  - Reactivated the Save-On-Foods Memorial centre, 55 spaces;
  - Youth hostel, five spaces;
  - Capital City Centre Hotel, 52 spaces;
  - Shelter spaces, 15;
  - Victoria Cool Aid Society vacancies, five spaces;
  - Supporting the Tiny Homes development, 30 spaces; and,
  - Provided 40 new rent supplements.
- We also extended the lease on the Travelodge, retaining 94 temporary supportive housing spaces until the end of 2021.
- There is an immediate need to provide shelter spaces for the approximately 100 people who remain outdoors throughout the city.
- As we have always said, BC Housing is looking at all viable housing options to make sure everyone living outside has access to a safe and secure place to stay.
- More details on the new locations will be released in the coming weeks.

**5. Is this a permanent shelter? Where will residents go at the end of the 24 months?**

- The temporary shelter will remain open for 18 months with an option to extend for an additional six months, if needed.
- Following its use as a temporary shelter, BC Housing will engage the community on a redevelopment proposal for supportive housing, which will follow the municipal rezoning process.
- In addition to these spaces, the Province has recently announced more than 280 new spaces in the Capital Regional District (CRD), including more than 190 supportive housing units in the Victoria.
- Including these supportive homes, the Province has more than 3,000 homes either completed or underway in the CRD, including more than 900 underway in Victoria.



**CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE – MARCH 31, 2021**

**6. Who will operate the building and what supports will be offered to residents?**

- Our Place Society, an experienced non-profit operator, will operate the building and will provide residents with support services including daily meals, access to sanitary and hygiene facilities, and storage for belongings.
- Staff will also provide access and referral to health and wellness programs.

**7. Does the building require rezoning?**

- No. We are moving forward with the opening as a temporary shelter through cooperation and approval by the city.

**8. How much did the Province pay for the building?**

- The Province invested \$8 million for the purchase, renovation, and operating costs for the building through the Supportive Housing Fund.
- The operating budget is approximately XX

**Commented [BLG1]:** Confirming with BCH.

**CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE – MARCH 31, 2021**

**9. Will alcohol or drug use be permitted on-site?**

- Residents may make personal choices regarding their consumption habits.
- 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.
- 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.

**If pressed:**

- No overdose prevention site is planned for the building.
- Staff are available to support any residents who use substances and provide access and referral to health and wellness programs.

**10. How will you address community and neighbourhood concerns?**

- Our Place Society will set up a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) that will oversee the temporary shelter's integration within the community and will address any concerns raised by people in the neighbourhood.
- CACs are a key part of how we ensure that supportive housing buildings integrate well into their neighbourhoods, and our experience is that they have been very effective at helping communities work together to address concerns and endure a positive connection with neighbours.
- Neighbourhood questions can also be sent to [communityrelations@bchousing.org](mailto:communityrelations@bchousing.org).
- In addition, the society will provide a phone number to call if a neighbour identifies an issue.

**CONFIDENTIAL ADVICE – MARCH 31, 2021**

**11. If we see people living in tents beyond April 30, will you provide additional supports at these encampments?**

- The Province and the City of Victoria have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that formalizes our commitment to work together to end the homeless encampments in the city and help prevent encampments in the future.
- The MOU clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Province and city in securing accommodation for people currently living outside to decamp parks and other public spaces by April 30, 2021.
- The MOU outlines provincial and municipal commitments to help prevent future encampments in Victoria. These include:
  - the Province working with the city and other partners to develop temporary and permanent housing options to meet community needs; and
  - the City of Victoria working with the Capital Regional District to bring forward available land and buildings for housing or shelter, and to expedite land use decisions necessary to rapidly respond to housing need. The Province continues to work with the City of Victoria and community partners on temporary and permanent housing solutions for people who are living outside.
- Outreach services through our contracted partners will continue to support our vulnerable populations and ensure they have active applications and receive referrals to appropriate services.

**12. Why don't you just increase the rent supplements?**

- The rent supplements are targeted for people who are able to live independently and rent in the private rental market. Many people will be transferring from supportive housing and into the private rental market.
- This opens spaces for people living in these encampments to move into supportive housing.

**-END-**

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
[release number]  
March 31, 2021

Ministry of Attorney General and  
Responsible for Housing

### Province secures new spaces for people living outdoors in Victoria

VICTORIA – The Province, through BC Housing, has purchased a building with approximately 70 new temporary indoor shelter spaces for people experiencing homelessness in Victoria.

Located at 225 Russell St., the building is currently undergoing renovations to improve the site's ability to operate as a temporary shelter and provide wraparound supports for residents. Renovations are expected to be completed by the end of April, with residents moving in shortly thereafter. The exact number of available spaces will be determined once renovations are completed.

"We're working to bring vulnerable people throughout the province safely inside to supportive environments so that they can start rebuilding their lives," said David Eby, Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing. "With this purchase, we're able to offer new safe, secure and warm indoor spaces to people currently living outdoors in Victoria so they can begin their recovery journey. We remain committed to working with our partners to shelter people experiencing homelessness with dignity." **NOT APPROVED**

This purchase is part of the commitment between the Province and City of Victoria to move more than 200 people currently living in encampments indoors by April 30, 2021.

Our Place Society, an experienced non-profit operator, will operate the building and provide support services including daily meals, access to sanitary and hygiene facilities, and storage for belongings. Staff will also provide residents with access and referral to health and wellness programs.

The temporary shelter will remain open for 18 months with an option to extend for an additional six months, if needed. Following its use as a temporary shelter, BC Housing will engage the community on a redevelopment proposal for supportive housing, which will follow the municipal rezoning process.

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said Lisa Helps, mayor, City of Victoria. Copyright

BC Housing will be reaching out to neighbourhood associations, local businesses and other stakeholders and will be inviting neighbours to a virtual information session to learn more

about the project. Engagement details will be shared on BC Housing's Let's Talk Housing page: [Letstalkhousingbc.ca](https://letstalkhousingbc.ca)

**Commented [BLG1]:** BCH will provide

#### **QUOTES:**

**Grace Lore, MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill –**

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**Rob Fleming, MLA for Victoria-Swan Lake –**

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**Julian Daly, chief executive officer, Our Place Society –**

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#### **Quick Facts:**

- The Province invested \$8 million for the purchase, renovation, and operating costs for the building through the Supportive Housing Fund.
- Since January 2021, the Province, City of Victoria, and outreach workers have partnered to move 116 people experiencing homelessness throughout Victoria into supportive housing units and shelter spaces, including Save-On-Food Memorial Centre and the Capital City Centre Hotel.
- In addition, the Province has recently announced more than 280 new spaces in the Capital Regional District (CRD), including more than 190 supportive housing units in the Victoria.
- Including these supportive homes, the Province has more than 3,000 homes either completed or underway in the CRD, including more than 900 underway in Victoria.

#### **Learn More:**

A map showing the location of all announced provincially-funded housing projects in B.C. is available online: <https://www.bchousing.org/homes-for-BC>

To learn about the steps the Province is taking to tackle the housing crisis and deliver affordable homes for British Columbians, visit: <https://workingforyou.gov.bc.ca/>

To learn more about the new supportive homes underway in Victoria, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021AG0037-000530>

To learn more about the commitment between the Province and City of Victoria to end encampments, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021AG0022-000521>

A backgrounder follows.

**Contacts:**

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778 678-1572

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[media@bchousing.org](mailto:media@bchousing.org)

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## BACKGROUND

For Immediate Release  
[release number]  
March 31, 2021

Ministry of Attorney General and  
Responsible for Housing

### **Services and supports provided for supportive housing**

All new supportive housing buildings in the province have around-the-clock staffing to help young people, people with disabilities, seniors and others in critical need of housing.

The Province is providing annual operating funding to help those with the highest housing needs to build new beginnings. Experienced staff provide support to tenants, based on their assessed needs.

Services and supports provided to young people, seniors, people with disabilities and others who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, include:

- on-site supports and connection to additional specialized supports in their community;
- supports that are tailored to the needs of the residents, including education and employment opportunities, and health and wellness services, including mental health and addiction treatment programs;
- individual or group support services, such as life skills, community information and social and recreational programs;
- meals;
- case planning and needs assessment;
- other supports designed to assist residents in meeting their personal and housing goals, including culturally specific programs;
- help accessing income assistance, pension benefits, disability benefits, obtaining a B.C. identification card or establishing a bank account;
- support for residents to learn how to operate and maintain a home; and
- no-cost laundry services, either on-site or off-site.

### **Contacts:**

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