

COMMUNITY FAQ

Proposed Development
Supportive Housing and Affordable Rental Housing
39900 Government Road & Centennial Way, Squamish

Last updated June 2025

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THE NEED IN SQUAMISH

More affordable rental housing is needed in Squamish.

- Squamish is experiencing a serious shortage in secure, affordable rental homes. This is in part due to a very limited supply of secure purpose-built rental housing, as well as very high demand due to population growth in our community and region.
- Rents in Squamish have increased over 50% in the past 5 years, and vacancy rates continue to be well under 1% (a healthy rate is 3%).
- Many people in Squamish are unable to afford rental homes on the market – including seniors, families, people with disabilities and essential workers. This has real implications for the diversity, vibrancy and resiliency of our community and local economy.
- The most recent [District of Squamish Housing Needs Report](#) found that 6,840 new housing units are needed by 2031 to meet both current housing needs and the additional demand generated by continued population growth. 24% of these new housing units will need to serve households earning less than \$45,000 per year.

More supportive homes are urgently needed in Squamish.

- Homelessness is increasing in Squamish and gaining access to supportive and affordable housing remains a challenge.
 - The last Point in Time Homeless count conducted by Squamish Helping Hands Society on April 24 & 25, 2023 identified 119 people experiencing homelessness in Squamish. Of these, 86% were unsheltered, with many staying outside.
 - Of the 119 people experiencing homelessness in Squamish, 24% were seniors and 32% identified as Indigenous (while representing only 3% of the census).
 - The leading reasons for housing loss include not enough income (41%), mental health issues (16%), and conflict with spouse or partner (14%).¹

PROPOSED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

What are you proposing for this site?

- BC Housing, Squamish Community Housing Society and Squamish Helping Hands Society, in partnership with the District of Squamish, are proposing to build approximately 165 new homes at 39900 Government Road and Centennial Way.

¹Point-in-Time. Squamish Helping Hands Society. squamishhelpinghands.ca/stories-and-news/point-in-time/
(Please note that this point-in-time count represents only those who participated during this survey period. It is typically considered to be lower than the actual number of people experiencing homelessness in a community.)

- This project would include two buildings. The first building would provide approximately 60 to 65 supportive homes operated by Squamish Helping Hands Society (SHHS). The second building would provide approximately 100 affordable rental homes operated by Squamish Community Housing Society (Housing Squamish).
- This project is a major part of our effort to build much-needed rental homes for Squamish residents across a range of incomes.

Who would live in the supportive homes?

- The supportive housing would provide approximately 60 to 65 studio homes to local adults (19+) including seniors and people with disabilities or any others who need supports to maintain stable housing.

Who would live in the affordable rental homes?

- The affordable rental building proposed for this site would provide approximately 100 two- and three-bedroom apartments. We would offer these homes to low- to moderate-income individuals and families. Residents would need to meet income and family-size criteria and be able to live independently without on-site supports.

PROJECT PARTNERS

What are the roles of the organizations / partners involved in this project?

- **BC HOUSING** would fund the development and construction of the project, as well as provide ongoing operational funding to each the supportive housing and affordable housing projects.
- **DISTRICT OF SQUAMISH** would provide long-term leases for the land for where the supportive housing and affordable housing buildings would be located.
- **SQUAMISH COMMUNITY HOUSING SOCIETY (HOUSING SQUAMISH)** would own and operate the affordable rental housing building.
- **SQUAMISH HELPING HANDS SOCIETY (SHHS)** would operate the supportive housing building and provide staff support for resident care and safety.

DEVELOPMENT

What is the project timeline? *

- **June 3, 2025** – Open Regular Council meeting included an ‘in camera’ announcement on a closed motion for the Supportive Housing project lease
- **June 25, 2025** – Community Information Session for neighbours and the wider community to learn more about the project, meet the project team, and ask questions

- **Summer 2025** – Development Permit Application submission for each building
- **Winter 2025/2026** – Site preparation
- **Spring 2026** – Building Permit Application submission for each building
- **2026/2027** – Construction start

**BC Housing will follow all District of Squamish approvals and requirements in the development of these buildings. These timelines are estimated and may shift.*

Why this location?

- The site at Government Road and Centennial Way is District-owned and vacant. It was selected after thorough discussions between BC Housing and the District of Squamish. This is one of the last District-owned sites where this type of housing can be affordably built in Squamish.
- The site is in an existing neighbourhood on three major bus routes and is a 10–15-minute bus ride to downtown or 5-minute bus ride to Garibaldi Village. It is within walking distance of the Squamish Business Park and is close to amenities such as Brennan Park Recreation Centre.
- Access to transportation, shopping and community amenities and services is essential for the well-being of low- to moderate-income people and families who are pursuing healthy, stable lives and may not own vehicles.

What is the purpose of co-locating supportive housing and affordable housing on the same plot of land?

- Squamish is experiencing a serious shortage of supportive and affordable rental housing options. Constructing both buildings on this District-owned property maximizes land use. This allows more Squamish residents to access much-needed housing while ensuring the most responsible use of public resources.
- BC Housing works to provide housing solutions across the full housing continuum—from emergency shelters and supportive housing to affordable rental housing and homeownership. A person's housing needs can also evolve over time. Providing a range of housing in the same community allows us to better serve our residents longer-term.
- SHHS and Housing Squamish would work closely together to ensure the two buildings operate smoothly.

Are bylaw approvals (such as rezoning) required?

- Rezoning is not required for these housing projects as the land is currently zoned for the proposed use. The District of Squamish permits supportive and affordable rental housing in residential zones.

- The District of Squamish has endorsed in principle long term (60-year) leases for the use of this municipal property.
- These housing projects would require Development Permits. BC Housing currently plans to submit a Development Permit Application for each building in Summer 2025.

How much parking would there be, and how would it be allocated?

- The site would contain approximately 100 surface-level parking stalls, with approximately 85-90 allocated to the affordable rental building and 10-15 to the supportive housing building.
- Parking would include resident parking, accessible and visitor parking, and staff parking for the supportive housing building.
- There are plans for 13 electric vehicle (EV) parking spaces. The property will also provide space for 200 bicycles in compliance with District of Squamish bylaws.

Would there be any new public parks or green space provided on site?

- The development will not provide new public parks or green space on site.

What would happen with the multi-use path?

- The existing gravel path would be re-routed around the site to accommodate construction throughout the process, while maintaining public access to the path.
- We would build a new multi-use path that would extend to the existing paved path south of the site.

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING - GENERAL**What is supportive housing?**

- Supportive homes are deeply affordable self-contained studio apartments intended for people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and need ongoing supports to maintain housing stability.
- All supportive housing residents sign program agreements and pay rent.
- Supportive housing is an evidenced-based approach for reducing homelessness and creating healthier, more inclusive and liveable communities. The overall goal of supportive housing is to provide people in need with access to safe, secure and affordable homes. Services provided are tailored for each resident to help them maintain stable housing and work towards other life goals.

How would the supportive housing be funded?

- The Province would fund the development and ongoing operation of this housing through its [Supportive Housing Fund](#).

How is supportive housing different from the current transitional housing at Under One Roof?

- Permanent supportive housing offers secure, long-term homes for people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and need ongoing supports to maintain housing stability.
- The 40 units of transitional housing at Under One Roof are designed to provide temporary shelter and services. Transitional housing is intended to help people move towards permanent housing, including supportive housing.
- Unlike transitional housing, residents of permanent supportive housing rent their own self-contained studio apartment. They have access to 24/7 on-site staff support to help them stay housed and connected to health and community services.
- Permanent supportive housing does not provide an emergency shelter or drop-in services such as the programs and services offered at Under One Roof.

How is supportive housing different from a shelter?

- Shelters provide free, emergency, short-term accommodation. A person could stay in a shelter from one night to a few months or longer.
- Unlike shelters, permanent supportive housing offers secure, long-term rental homes with 24/7 onsite staffing and support services.

Who lives in supportive housing?

- Supportive housing residents are as varied as any other neighbour. In this building, residents would be single adults (19+) of all genders, including seniors, people with disabilities or any others who need supports to maintain stable housing.

How do you select supportive housing residents?

- BC Housing, Squamish Helping Hands Society (SHHS) and community partners will work together to assess potential residents and offer the supportive homes to people based on their individual needs and supports available. This Coordinated Access and Assessment process helps ensure residents are set up for success and more likely to remain housed.

How long do people live in supportive housing?

- Eligible residents can stay in supportive homes as long as they wish and require support services. Residents must also continue to adhere to their program agreement.
- Every resident is different. For people with ongoing support needs, supportive housing can become their permanent home. Others may move on to other independent or market housing as they stabilize their living situation and continue along their housing journey.

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING – OPERATIONS AND SERVICES

Who would manage the supportive housing?

- SHHS would manage the supportive housing building and provide services to the residents.
- SHHS is a community-based non-profit society that has been operating since 2006, offering food and shelter programs to Sea-to-Sky communities.
- SHHS operates Under One Roof, located in downtown Squamish. Under One Roof provides 44 units of transitional housing and an emergency shelter to those in need. Under One Roof also contains a low-barrier primary care clinic, supervised overdose prevention site and community food hub including the Food Bank, clothing and supplies.
- Learn more about Squamish Helping Hands by visiting squamishhelpinghands.ca.

What services do supportive housing residents receive?

- The first step for supportive housing residents is to bring them indoors and provide the necessities of life (i.e. bed, food, hygiene, community). Once these basic needs are met, a person is no longer homeless. They can then move out of “survival mode” and work towards other life goals.
- Supportive housing residents receive individualized case planning to further develop skills and work towards achieving their goals. A commitment to continued case planning and goal setting is often required by the housing operator. Services and supports include:
 - Daily meals
 - Life-skills and employment training
 - Connections to primary health care, mental health care and/or treatment for substance use disorders

Would there be drop-in services at this building?

- There will be no emergency shelter or drop-in services in this building. Services will be available to registered supportive housing residents only.

What kind of training do supportive housing staff receive?

- SHHS staff receive training in First Aid, Advanced Overdose Response, Nonviolent Crisis Intervention, Mental Health First Aid, and Indigenous Cultural Safety.
- SHHS staff also work closely with local clinical teams, community resources and primary care providers to address safety and wellness concerns of all their supportive housing residents.

How would residents of supportive housing get around to run errands, attend appointments or access services?

- Residents of supportive housing are part of the broader community and get around in many of the same ways as their neighbours—by walking, cycling, taking transit or arranging rides.
- Some residents may use mobility aids, and others may participate in programs that assist with transportation to appointments or errands. We support residents to live as independently and actively as possible.

Do supportive housing residents integrate well into the neighbourhood?

- Supportive housing residents become members of the community like any other neighbour. With stable housing and the right supports, many supportive housing residents have successfully transitioned out of homelessness, formed positive relationships with neighbours and become contributing community members.

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING – SUBSTANCE USE AND HARM REDUCTION

Would alcohol and drugs be allowed onsite?

- We do not deny supportive housing to people who may use substances. If residents choose to use substances onsite, the housing operator follows a harm-reduction approach (more below) and can provide linkages to mental health and substance use recovery services.
- Housing is crucial in a person's health journey, including recovery from substance use disorders. After a person can access a warm bed, washrooms and meals, they are in a much better position to improve their well-being, including accessing health care such as substance use treatments.

It is also important to note not all supportive housing residents use substances, and this would not be a substance-use recovery facility.

What is harm reduction?

- Harm reduction is an important and life-saving health care practice. It aims to educate people about how to keep themselves safe and minimize death, disease and injury from any activity or behavior that involves risk.
- Harm reduction programs and services are proven to not only reduce harms such as infections, injuries, and deaths, they have also been proven to increase social and vocational functioning, and to reduce public disruption.

Would drugs/substances be supplied to residents?

- Supportive housing staff will not supply illicit or illegal substances to residents.

- Supportive housing staff may support residents to use various medications as prescribed by a physician or nurse practitioner and as part of a residents' personal care plan.

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING - SAFETY & SECURITY

Would supportive housing cause safety and security issues in the neighbourhood?

- Every person in every community wants to feel safe. Homelessness affects people, families, neighbourhoods and communities.
- Supportive housing is an important part of community safety. People experiencing homelessness are some of our most vulnerable neighbours. Supportive housing in a community means there are fewer people sheltering outdoors. This increases people's personal safety and well-being and contributes to community safety overall.
- Research shows that supportive housing in a community:
 - Reduces health care and corrections costs by 33%²
 - Reduces hospital stays by 50%³

How would site safety and security be managed?

- BC Housing Design and Construction Standards apply Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) practices in all building projects. This includes security measures such as fenced grounds, a single point of entry, fob access, 24/7 staffed reception, security cameras and lighting.
- We would share a direct phone number for the supportive housing with neighbours when it is available. Staff would be on site 24/7 to support residents and provide a point of contact for neighbours. Staff commit to working with supportive housing residents and the surrounding community on an ongoing basis to address any safety concerns quickly and collaboratively.

How would you address neighbourhood safety concerns if they arise?

- Overall neighbourhood safety must be a collective effort.
- BC Housing is mandated and funded by the Province to deliver safe, accessible and quality housing for people living in B.C. BC Housing is not mandated or funded to provide safety services for areas outside our housing properties.
- BC Housing and our non-profit operators remain committed to working with partners who are best positioned to address safety issues beyond our housing sites. These

² Patterson, Michelle, et al., 2008. Housing and Support for Adults with Severe Addictions and/or Mental Illness in British Columbia. Centre For Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction, Simon Fraser University

³ Malatest & Associates Ltd., 2019. Measuring Supportive Housing Outcomes Evaluation.

include bylaw, law enforcement, or other emergency services for whom public safety is their mandate.

- BC Housing also supports housing operators to work directly with community members to address any concerns that may arise.
- As in all neighbourhoods, in an emergency, neighbours should call 911 and wait for help to arrive.

Who would be responsible for keeping the housing and the neighbourhood clean?

- Squamish Helping Hands Society is committed to being a good neighbour. They would manage and maintain the building and property as any other neighbour would.
- We would share a direct phone number for the supportive housing with neighbours when it is available. Staff would be on site 24/7 to support residents and provide a point of contact for neighbours. Staff commit to working with supportive housing residents and the surrounding community on an ongoing basis to address any cleanliness concerns quickly and collaboratively.
- Many supportive housing programs also include a “Clean Team” where residents are hired to take on cleaning and maintenance duties on and around the property. (Note that specific programs have not yet been decided for this site.)
- The District of Squamish would continue to maintain public spaces as in any other neighbourhood.

Would there be camping be allowed on the supportive housing property?

- There would be no camping allowed on the supportive housing property. Staff would conduct regular walkabouts and monitor the property for this type of activity.

Do you expect camping/encampments around the supportive housing property?

- Encampments result when there is a lack accessible, affordable housing options in the community for the residents who live there. When people have access to housing with appropriate supports, they are far less likely to congregate in encampments.
- The proposed permanent supportive housing would not provide an emergency shelter or drop-in services such as the programs and services offered at Under One Roof. Onsite services will be available to registered supportive housing residents only. This will also limit foot traffic and reduce the likelihood of people camping or congregating in the area.

AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING – GENERAL INFORMATION

What is affordable rental housing?

- The affordable rental housing proposed for this site includes studios, one-, two- and three- bedroom apartments. These will provide secure rental homes for low- and

moderate-income households in Squamish, prioritizing seniors, people with disabilities and families.

- Residents of affordable rental housing must be able to live independently without on-site supports.
- A minimum of 5% of the affordable rental apartments (5 units) would be wheelchair-accessible or with adaptable features to suit a range of individual accessibility needs.

How would the affordable rental housing be funded?

- Housing Squamish is applying to the [Province's Community Housing Fund \(CHF\)](#) to build these affordable rental homes. This funding is not yet confirmed.

How much would rent be for the affordable rental homes?

- Under the CHF program:
 - Residents of 70% of the units pay rent geared to income, where rent is generally based on 30% of household income as determined based on annual income testing. This includes 20% of units for residents with very low incomes, such as those receiving income or disability assistance.
 - The remaining 30% of units are made available at below-market rents for households with moderate incomes.

AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING – OPERATIONS

Who would operate the affordable rental housing?

- Housing Squamish would manage this building. Housing Squamish was established in 2021 by the District of Squamish and community partners as an arms-length non-profit housing provider with the mission of catalysing housing solutions in Squamish.
- Housing Squamish currently operates the affordable rental homes for families at Highline at Garibaldi Springs and co-owns and operates 40 existing affordable rental homes at Tantalus Manor alongside the Hiyám ta Skwxwú7mesh Housing Society.
- Learn more about Squamish Helping Hands by visiting housingsquamish.ca.

How would residents be chosen? Would there be a waitlist?

- The proposed building has a mix of unit sizes and features. Residents would need to meet income and family-size criteria. We would also consider accessibility needs.
 - More details on the application process for housing will be made available to the community by Housing Squamish once construction is nearing completion.
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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

How are you engaging with the community?

- Rezoning is not required for these housing projects as the land is currently zoned for the proposed use. As such, a public hearing or community engagement is also not required.
- Still, BC Housing and all project partners are committed to being good neighbours. We will respond to questions, share project updates and keep lines of communication open throughout this multi-year development project.
 - **ANNOUNCEMENT & LETTER:** On June 4, 2025, we mailed a letter to neighbours to introduce the project and share an invitation to a Community Information Session. This letter also included BC Housing's Community Relations email address for questions.
 - **EMAIL ADDRESS:** Community members can email **communityrelations@bchousing.org** at any time with questions about the project and we will respond in a timely manner.
 - **PROJECT WEBPAGE:** On June 4, 2025, we published a Let's Talk Housing BC project webpage (**letstalkhousingbc.ca/squamish-government-road**). We will keep this webpage updated with the latest project information as it becomes available.
 - **COMMUNITY INFORMATION SESSION:** We have invited interested neighbours to a drop-in Community Information Session on Monday, June 25, 2025, at Mamquam Elementary School to learn more about the proposed housing project, meet project team members, and seek answers to questions.
 - **PHONE NUMBER:** We would share a direct phone number for the site with neighbours when it is available. We would also work with residents, staff and the surrounding community on an ongoing basis to address any questions or concerns about the supportive housing and/or affordable rental housing buildings.
- Project partners will consider all community engagement and feedback to help support the integration of these new homes and residents into the neighbourhood.
- BC Housing will also prepare a summary of all community engagement and feedback regarding this project. We will make this summary publicly available and share it with the District of Squamish Council.