

Supportive Housing Project for Oceanside Region

This document will provide some history and background information to the supportive housing project for the Oceanside District 69 area. The process first began in 2010 with the formation of a task force to address the issue of homelessness.

Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness

Formed in 2010 by the City of Parksville, the Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness is committed to addressing homelessness and related issues in the catchment area of School District 69.

- Since 2010, the task force has provided locally based coordination, collaboration and action on the issue of homelessness. Membership includes local and regional governments, various service agencies and concerned citizens and is supported by the region's MLA and MP.
- The task force is co-chaired by the executive directors of the Society of Organized Services, Forward House and Island Crisis Care Society whose time is donated by the non-profit agencies they work for and the staff themselves.
- At start up, the task force received funding provided originally by Island Health to the Regional District of Nanaimo to be distributed throughout the region.

Extreme/cold weather shelter

The Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness was responsible for bringing the extreme weather shelter to this community and supplemented the funding provided by BC Housing required to operate the shelter. Under the auspices of the task force, an extreme weather shelter was operated by the Salvation Army from 2011 to 2015 and in 2016 and 2017, the extreme weather shelters were operated by the Island Crisis Care Society. In 2016/2017, 101 unique individuals accessed the extreme weather shelter. 2017/2018 is the first year operating as a winter or cold weather shelter.

Homeless counts

The Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness provided the resources for two point-in-time homeless counts; the first in 2011 and the second in 2013. From these counts, gaps in services and solutions were identified.

- 66 homeless individuals
- 66% of respondents were residents of Oceanside for more than one year
- 40% were older than 45

A homeless count will be conducted in the Oceanside District 69 area on April 18, 2018. This count will be conducted under a provincial strategy with Oceanside as one of nine communities participating across the province.

More information about the work of the task force may be found at <https://oceansidehomelessness.com/>

Other services provided by the Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness:

In addition to generating necessary information to secure a long-term solution, the task force funded immediate opportunities to help homeless residents.

- Showers, socks, underwear, t-shirts and toiletries.
- Hosting of annual Project Connect Health Fair, connecting individuals to much needed health and wellness services, including vision exams and glasses, haircuts, nurses, hearing exams, clothing, etc.
- Fresh fruit and vegetable donations from Costco. These are picked up by the Salvation Army and distributed through the food bank and the van operated by Manna Homelessness Society.
- Developed Homelessness Outreach Support Team (HOST), an inter-agency support team to help the most vulnerable in our community to access and maintain housing.
- Provide help for people needing housing.

BC Housing Partnership

Partners include the Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness, City of Parksville, Town of Qualicum Beach and Regional District of Nanaimo, Island Crisis Care Society and BC Housing. The task force and social service agencies have been working together to address the lack of affordable housing and supportive housing. Residents have approached Council requesting the City take action to address the issues related to homelessness in our community.

In March 2017, the City and RDN announced the purchase of 222 Corfield Street for the purpose of building affordable and supportive housing. BC Housing funded the Island Crisis Care Society to develop plans for supportive housing, a shelter and ancillary services.

On March 9, 2018, BC Housing and the provincial government announced \$6.9 million in funding to build about 50 new units of modular housing at 222 Corfield Street South. The three-storey project will be designed to suit the architectural style of the neighbourhood and each home will include a private bathroom and a kitchen, with occupancy expected early next year. Services will be provided 24/7. Key factors in site selection for the supportive housing included close proximity to amenities, transit, community services and employment areas.

At a meeting on March 19, Parksville Council directed staff to create a bylaw to rezone the property for appropriate use. The next step is a public hearing, before development and building permits are sought. On March 20, the Island Crisis Care Society in partnership with BC Housing and the Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness, held a drop-in open house to share information about the project and its future operations.

BC Housing Proposal

- About 50 units of supportive housing for low-income individuals who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness.
- Additional space for cold weather shelter use, between November and March.
- Allow people to move from the streets or shelter beds into stable housing with supportive services.
- Combination of housing and supports will give people the opportunity to transition from temporary housing to secure, longer-term housing options.
- Important step towards addressing housing needs in Oceanside.
- Safe and secure self-contained (own bathroom and kitchenette) studio and one bedroom, with shared amenity space.

Island Crisis Care Society has prepared a document, "Questions About Supportive Housing Planned for 222 Corfield Avenue South" which is available on the City's website.

For more information:

Deb Tardiff, Manager of Communications

250 954-3073