

Update on Status of VIP Motel Temporary Shelter

Since November 2021, the VIP Motel at 414 Island Highway West, has operated as an emergency response shelter under a partnership between BC Housing and Oceanside Homelessness Ecumenical Advocacy Response Team Society (OHEARTS). The facility has provided emergency shelter and support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The lease between BC Housing and the VIP Motel expires on March 31, 2023.

The site has CS-2 zoning, which does not include a supportive housing facility as a permitted use. In order to operate, a valid Temporary Use Permit or a rezoning was required to comply with the zoning regulations. BC Housing applied for a Temporary Use Permit to allow the use on the property until March 31, 2023.

Council held a public meeting in September 2022 to hear concerns about the impact on tourism, surrounding businesses, and from residents both opposed and in favour of the facility operating in this location. Council denied BC Housing's application for a Temporary Use Permit. As a result of the denial, the City and BC Housing entered into a compliance agreement which provided BC Housing with 180 days to find suitable alternative housing options for residents, provide ongoing social supports to individuals during the transition and continue engagement with the neighbourhood on management of the facility.

The compliance agreement between BC Housing and the City has successfully addressed the concerns expressed by residents and businesses while providing BC Housing with sufficient time to find safe alternative accommodation for residents living at this location. BC Housing has not requested an extension to the agreement and the date of March 31 was agreed upon by both parties from the outset.

This site was always intended as a temporary solution in response to the pandemic. The property is zoned Tourist Commercial CS-2 (allowing uses such as hotel/motel, restaurant, resort condominiums, other related tourism commercial uses) and is designated for commercial tourism uses in the City's Official Community Plan. The land use regulations are intended to provide tourist lodging and other services to visitors, contributing valuable economic benefit to the City.

QUOTE – MAYOR DOUG O'BRIEN

"We are confident BC Housing has satisfied the commitments made as part of the compliance agreement to operate the VIP Motel as temporary shelter by providing suitable alternative accommodations for residents housed at the motel. We appreciate the commitment by BC Housing to work collaboratively in seeking long-term solutions, while respecting the safety and security of our citizens and businesses."

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For more information:

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*The City of Parksville is located on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish Nations,
home to the Snaw-Naw-As First Nation and the Qualicum First Nation.*
