

Sunshine Coast Community Services Centre Incorporating Affordable Housing for Women

FAQ's

What benefits will this development provide to community members living along the Coast?

- 30-35 units of affordable housing for women
- A redeveloped Community Services space that is purpose built and better able to accommodate our programs and continue to meet current and emerging community needs
- Increased ability to use food to build health and community through the incorporation of a Community Food initiative that will include community gardens, food bank services and offer increased food programming that will bring people together to grow, share and advocate for good food.
- Increased safety and security of the neighbourhood through thoughtful design that will increase lighting, improve the pedestrian walkway, increase organized activities and build connections between neighbours.
- Flexible community meeting spaces

Who are the people that will live in the residences?

The proposed development will embrace a mix of women including single women, women and children, single women who are older, and young women who are aging out of care; creating a community of women and families who have similar life experiences such as struggles with homelessness, poverty and experiences of violence/abuse. Priority will be given to women who currently live on the Sunshine Coast and who are homeless (e.g. living in a transition house) or precariously housed (e.g. paying more rent than they can afford, living in a small or poorly maintained basement suite, etc.) and to women who were forced to leave the Sunshine Coast in search of safe, affordable housing, but who may still have family and support networks on the Coast.

Why is the housing only for women?

Study after study shows that safe, affordable and appropriate housing plays a central role in allowing women and families who are marginalized to re-establish their lives. Stable housing is, in fact, the foundation for positive change in the lives of women and their children. It reduces levels of stress and can change the perspectives of women by providing them the opportunity to empower themselves and therefore generate a positive, healthy and nurturing environment for their children. Housing at our Inlet site will provide a safe, welcoming, affordable home for women and children, a home from which hope and possibility can flow.

We recognize that access to affordable housing on the Coast is an issue for many people. We are focusing on the provision of safe affordable and dignified housing for single women and women and children because we have the experience, relationships and expertise required to provide the best possible housing experience for this population. We understand the unique challenges faced by women and we feel we are best positioned to address these challenges.

How much rent will people pay?

This has not been finalized but our goal is to base rents on the following:

- One third of the rents will be targeted at maximum shelter allowance for women and families in receipt of income assistance or eligible for a [Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters \(SAFER\)](#) subsidy.
- One third of the rents will be targeted according to [Housing Income Limits \(HILs\)](#), a rent that is established based on 30% of gross annual household income.
- One third of the rents will be targeted at low end of market rents, which will be established towards the completion of the project. Low end of market rents will likely be between 10 and 20% below local-area market rents.

How many units will be provided?

30-35 units of affordable women's housing will be developed including one, two and three bedroom units.

How will this project be funded?

We are currently evaluating the financial feasibility of this project. In order to achieve the goals of our redevelopment plan there is a need for funding from a variety of partners, including BC Housing, the District of Sechelt, SCCSS and investments from community members.

What will happen to the Food Bank?

Our Community Services Centre will be a facility that incorporates a number of food security initiatives into a Community Food Centre program that will provide traditional food bank services, space to cook, grow and eat food together.

What will the rent up process look like?

Prospective tenants will be vetted through a typical tenanting process, e.g. references and credit history checked, and all tenants will be required to sign a standard residential tenancy agreement. As this will be long-term housing, tenants will typically enter into a one-year lease, after which tenancies will revert to month-to-month.

Where will tenants park?

Parking will be provided on site, at the back of the property with a loading zone and accessible parking located in front of the building.

What will happen to the community gardens?

Community Gardens are part of the redevelopment design and part of our Food Security work.

What will happen to programming at the Inlet site during construction?

All of our programs will continue to provide services to the Sunshine Coast. Some programs will be relocated to our other sites in Sechelt and Gibsons. We will rent additional space in Sechelt if needed. Many of our programs are provided through outreach – in homes, in other organizations and at events. We do not anticipate any significant impact on our services.

When will this happen?

We hope to have project approval in the **Fall of 2018**
Pre development work: **Fall/winter 2018/19**
Construction: **TDB**

What is your consultation process?

Over the past two years, Community Services has been involved in a number of conversations with the community regarding affordable housing. We have conducted a study on homelessness faced by women over the age of 50, met with representatives from municipal and provincial governments and sat on a number of forums discussing housing affordability and poverty on the Sunshine Coast. During our Strategic Planning process we invited community members to provide input on Community Services long-term plan. Affordable housing came up as a key issue facing the community and Community Services was identified as a local organization who should play a role in addressing this issue.

At our Open House on May 29th we are providing a survey for community members to get initial feedback on this very preliminary plan allowing us to make changes in response to this feedback.

We will host a number of focus groups and open houses over the course of this development.

How can I support this this initiative?

- Stay informed: sign up for SCCSS E-news
- Attend future consultations on this project
- Share your support for this project with your neighbours
- Email or write your district councillors, your MLA, Nicholas Simons and your MP Pamela Goldsmith-Jones indicating your support for this project
- Email or write a letter of support for this project c/o SCCSS affordable housing

How does this fit in with Sechelt's Official Community Plan (OCP)?

The OCP describes the vision for the community as well as the objectives and policies regarding land use, environment, housing, economic development, transportation and infrastructure, waterfront, parks and open spaces, and community services and social well-being. Our proposed redevelopment is aligned with the OCP as it supports a number of the priorities and guiding principles outlined including:

- Provide a Range of Housing Opportunities - Sechelt supports the development of diverse housing types to increase affordability, and to meet the needs of the changing demographics in the community.
- Compact Development – Sechelt seeks to limit sprawl and will support approaches to development, including redevelopment, renewal and adaptive reuse, that will create a more compact and well- designed community.
- Diverse Age Groups - Sechelt will recognize and support all age groups in the community, particularly initiatives to retain youth in the community and become an intergenerational community with a balanced age profile.
- Caring and Accessible Community - Sechelt will be an accessible and inclusive community that provides opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities.