



STATEMENT FROM THE BGCA RE: 2920 BRIDGE STREET ANNOUNCEMENT

On January 20th, the Burnside Gorge Community Association was contacted by BC Housing regarding their media release announcing a 34-unit shelter at 2920 Bridge Street. The BGCA was caught off guard by the BC Housing/City of Victoria's announcement, and neither the Association nor the broader Burnside Gorge community was consulted in advance of this decision. This is despite our long-standing role as the recognized neighbourhood voice and our ongoing engagement with the City, BC Housing, and other community partners on housing and community wellbeing.

The Burnside Gorge neighbourhood has consistently stepped up to support housing and shelter initiatives. Our neighbourhood already hosts a significant concentration of supportive housing, shelters, and social service facilities relative to its size. Residents are increasingly concerned that our community is being asked to absorb more than its fair share, without a comprehensive plan to address cumulative impacts or ensure equitable distribution across the city.

Equally concerning is that this announcement appears to run counter to the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed in 2018 by then BC Housing CEO, Shayne Ramsay. The MOU included commitments to meaningful engagement, transparency, and collaboration with the neighbourhood, on which the community relied, including the statement that ***"BC Housing has committed to no additional supportive housing projects and shelters in the Burnside Gorge area..."***. That MOU was intended to rebuild trust and ensure communities are partners in decisions that directly affect them. This process did not reflect those commitments.

We believe strongly in the need for compassionate, effective responses to homelessness, and we support solutions that help people move indoors with dignity and appropriate supports. However, successful outcomes depend on community trust, advance engagement, and a clear understanding of neighbourhood capacity.

We are calling on the City of Victoria and BC Housing to pause, engage directly with the Burnside Gorge community, and clearly explain how this decision was made, how neighbourhood impacts will be addressed, and how future projects will align with the principles outlined in the MOU. Burnside Gorge residents deserve to be informed, respected, and meaningfully involved in decisions impacting them.

We encourage residents to review BC Housing's letter to neighbours as well as the project's "Let's Talk" webpage and associated correspondence, which provide further details about the shelter and its operations. Residents are also invited to reach out to the contacts identified in those materials to ask questions, share perspectives, and better understand the project's potential implications for the neighbourhood. Please see the neighbour letter and the "Let's Talk" webpage link below.

[BC Housing's Neighbour Letter](#)
[Let's Talk Webpage](#)

Ryan Hart
Board Chair, Burnside Gorge Community Association