

## **Bridge Street Pathways Shelter – BGCA Meeting Notes**

- Date: February 11, 2026
- Time: 6:30–8:30 p.m.
- Location: BC Housing Victoria Office – Board Room

### **Attendees**

- City of Victoria: Colleen Mycroft, Jocelyn Jenkyns, Peter Rantucci, Sarah Webb
- BC Housing: Jennifer Fox, Heidi Hartman, Emily Kendy
- BGCA Board: Suzanne Cole, Ryan Hart

### **1. Land Acknowledgement & Introductions**

- Led by BC Housing. Participants introduced themselves and their roles.

### **2. Meeting Purpose (BC Housing)**

- Hear BGCA feedback regarding the Bridge Street Pathways Shelter.
- Respond to questions about the 2018 Letter of Commitment.
- Provide information about the Pathways model and Connective as operator.
- Discuss collaboration opportunities, communication needs, and an ongoing relationship.

### **3. Feedback from BGCA**

- Concerns about the lack of advance notice and consultation.
- Burnside Gorge neighbourhood perceived as already carrying a high concentration of housing and services.
- Questions about why this site was selected and how it aligns with the OCP policies on Industrial Lands.
- Fears of increased street activity in an already impacted area.
- Need for clarity on success measures, escalation processes, and key contacts.
- Desire for a clear explanation of why this site, why now, and how it fits within broader housing and safety strategies.
- Request for a future community meeting with key partners.

### **4. Discussion Themes & Responses**

#### **4.1 Communications to the Community**

- BGCA asked how information will be communicated to residents and businesses on an on-going basis.
- BC Housing highlighted the [communityrelations@bchousing.org](mailto:communityrelations@bchousing.org) inbox for neighbours, and direct communication with BGCA board reps in lead up to opening. We also highlighted the

Who to Call info sheet for neighbours with key contacts, including contacts for the building and operator, that will be made available ahead of the shelter opening.

- City staff highlighted ongoing work aligned with the Community Safety & Wellbeing Plan and July 2025 Council direction related to implementing 11 diverse actions focused on prevention and response measures.

#### **4.2 Rationale for Location Selection**

- BGCA questioned why the shelter is outside the downtown core and within Burnside Gorge.
- City explained:
  - As part of July 2025 direction, council directed staff to establish two new shelters outside of the downtown core as part of the first phase of the community safety and wellbeing plan under accelerated timelines.
  - The City owns the Bridge St. building/land, making it feasible within the required timeframe.
  - The site's proximity to Public Works and existing site design / building infrastructure contributed to the decision.
- BC Housing noted several sites have closed in Burnside Gorge since 2023 (e.g., Capital City Centre Hotel, Tally Ho Hotel, Queen's Manor, Howard Johnson Hotel), and new purpose-built supportive housing has opened elsewhere across Victoria (i.e., Meares St., Yates St., Catherine St., etc.).
- City noted that they are also working with BC Housing on adding shelter capacity downtown (Salvation Army ARC site) and pursuing a new recovery housing partnership in Fernwood.

#### **4.3 Neighbourhood Capacity & Fairness**

- BGCA noted Burnside Gorge currently hosts ~680 units of supportive/shelter housing and expressed concerns with this burden compared to other neighbourhoods.
- BGCA referenced Crosstown as an example of new construction that was well communicated and part of a multi-year planning and construction project.
- BGCA expressed concerns about alignment of this shelter with the OCP and long-term land use policies, which identifies the area as urban industrial.

#### **4.4 Temporary Nature of the Site**

- BC Housing emphasized:
  - This funding completes the HEARTH agreement for Victoria.
  - There are several supportive housing buildings currently under construction in other neighbourhoods (e.g., Mason Street; Pandora Avenue; Douglas Street).
- City emphasized:
  - Industrial focus of the area remains; zoning allows for short term and small-scale shelter.
  - The shelter is a three-year temporary HEARTH-funded initiative.

- The City remains the owner of the building and property. Some City operations will continue to be in place at this site while the shelter is operated.

#### **4.5 Engagement & Notification**

- BCH and City acknowledged the lack of advance notice, citing provincial urgency and HEARTH rapid-activation timelines.
- Noted commitment to stronger engagement, such as advanced consultation, for future permanent projects.

#### **4.6 Shelter Model & Operations**

BC Housing and City provided details:

- This model is cohort based, referral-only, 24/7, and designed to stabilize people before moving them into housing. This means:
  - No lineups.
  - No morning exit requirements.
  - No drop-in services.
  - No guests or visitors permitted.
- Operator will not provide services, meals or supplies to non-residents.
- City will provide overnight security patrols of Public Works Yard and Shelter site.
- BCH emphasized intentional case planning and a goal of stable movement into supportive or market housing (“Pathways” model).
- Connective highlighted as an experienced operator; City affirmed strong existing relationships (e.g., operator managing Appaloosa Road HEARTH site well, in Okanagan).

#### **4.7 Perception of “Pandora Moving into Burnside Gorge”**

- BGCA raised concern about street activity increasing around the site.
- City noted coordinated efforts:
  - Police and bylaw staff expansion.
  - Service provider partnerships.
  - Public Works’ role in cleaning public areas/right-of-way.
  - Newly formed Ellice Street Business Networks.
  - New Community Safety Field Hubs pilot launching on Douglas Street and Pandora Avenue, with potential to be a future model for expansion.

#### **4.8 Success Indicators & Accountability**

- BGCA asked what success looks like, what failure looks like, who to call in case of issues, and what the triggers are for intervention.
- BCH described success indicators including stabilization, case planning, flow into housing and reduced street presence.

- City committed to continued service attention from Bylaw Services, Public Works, data sharing, and ongoing coordination with operator and partners.
- BCH referenced provincial data on shelter demand, justice-system impact, and hospital usage.
  - *Source:*
    - [Overview of Findings: Emergency Department Use \(PDF, 127 KB\)](#)
    - [Overview of Findings: Hospital Admissions \(PDF, 89 KB\)](#)
    - [Overview of Findings: Incarceration Rates \(PDF, 100 KB\)](#)

#### **4.9 Shelter Design & Staffing**

- BGCA asked about communal sleeping, storage, and staffing levels.
- City/BCH confirmed:
  - Open concept with bunk beds.
  - All genders, adults 19+.
  - Day use areas.
  - Storage areas and laundry services.
  - Minimum of three trained staff on-site at all times.

#### **5. Opportunities for Collaboration**

- BGCA requested a future in-person community meeting with BCH, City and other community partners (i.e., RCMP).
- BCH/City will consider request.
- BCH/City proposed a comprehensive information package for the BGCA Feb 23, 2026, AGM and will continue discussions with BGCA board on additional engagement elements like a tour of the shelter for the board ahead of opening, and a virtual tour for neighbours.
  - BGCA requesting a structured narrative explaining why this site, why now, why this model, and how it fits into the larger housing strategy.

#### **6. Wrap-Up & Action Items**

##### **Action Items**

- BCH & City (Joint):
  - Build out FAQ, along with Feb 11 meeting recap, to provide as an information package for the BGCA AGM on Feb 23, 2026.
  - Connect BGCA with Connective (operator) to support relationship building. Potential activities may include on-site Board visit prior to opening, virtual tours etc.

##### **Closing Notes**

- Participants agreed on the importance of transparency, ongoing communication, and collaboration.