

# Clark Drive & East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue

Question and Answer responses from Community 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting, June 7, 2018

## **Questions about VCH operations**

1. What is the plan for people once they are released? Are there enough spaces in residential treatment when people are released?

The assessment of needs for the proposed facility was done at a provincial level, considering current facilities, home-based beds, detox demands, etc., and the proposal fits in with that analysis of how many beds are required. Not everybody who has substance use disorder goes into a residential program. People can be supported at their own home or can continue their recovery through other methods.

Once someone is finished as an inpatient, they work with the team to determine what the best next step is for them. If that next step is recovering at home, they would go home. If the next step in their recovery is residential treatment, that is where they would go. Currently, there is often a delay in getting people into residential treatment. The 20 new transitional beds are intended to address this gap while people wait to get into residential treatment.

2. You say that there are doctors, nurses, counsellors, and methadone on site. Why not put this on the St Paul's Hospital site? Why does this facility need to be in a community setting if people can't go outside? Why not put the transitional beds in a social housing building? Why is a residential neighbourhood chosen for the sobering centre specifically?

The withdrawal management centre is a community-based care service. Current detox facilities are all in community settings, in line with the best practices in treatment. The new hospital campus is dedicated to services that require close proximity to emergency and inpatient departments. Withdrawal management services do not fit this description. Furthermore, the stigma that is often attached to substance use creates barriers for people to access care. Providing care that is integrated in the community is one of the strategies to remove barriers for people to get help.

The transitional beds are designed to provide continued supports for clients having completed detox while they are transitioning to longer-term solutions, such as supportive transitional living residences.

For over 30 years, the current Vancouver Detox Centre (including sobering beds) has been located about 10 blocks away from the proposed site in a residential neighbourhood near housing, businesses and across the street from a school, with no issues.

3. What is the overall plan for looking at all neighbourhoods and situating services throughout the city?

The site was selected because it was the best fit in terms of the needs of the project partners. The City of Vancouver does not have a city-wide Official Community Plan, so decisions about allocating health care and affordable housing are based on existing community plans, community needs, and opportunities that are available to provide these services.

4. Can people drop in off the street while intoxicated?

The vast majority of people entering the sobering centre are brought in under someone else's care. Police always call ahead to ensure someone isn't banned, and will never bring someone in who has exhibited signs of violence. Clients undergoing treatment on an outpatient basis can drop in, but most visits are scheduled in advance.

5. How many people will be going through the sobering centre in a year?

Approximately 900 people went through the existing sobering centre in 2017. The existing site is 15 spaces and the new building is proposed to have 20 spaces. Based on existing user numbers, it could potentially accommodate approximately 1300 people in a year, or 3-4 people per day.

6. Would the withdrawal management centre operate 24/7?

The withdrawal management centre will have 24/7 staffing; however, patient intakes are generally scheduled ahead of time and take place during the day. Sobering centre intake tends to happen more often at night; however, the facility has been designed to enable internal drop-off accessed by the rear lane to avoid disturbances to surrounding neighbours. If ambulances or police vehicles are used to transport people to the sobering centre, sirens are not used as a person experiencing medical emergency would be brought to the hospital.

7. What are the people doing while they are in the transitional housing? Are they free to come and go and walk around the neighbourhood? Are they out looking for drugs?

The transitional beds are to provide short-term housing and continued supports for clients who have completed withdrawal management and are transitioning to longer-term solutions. Once they have completed withdrawal management, they are substance-free and have made a commitment to eliminate their use of substances while they wait for other treatment or housing options, so they will not actively be seeking out substances. It is transitional housing, so yes, they are free to come and go as they wish. During this time, we will support them in their recovery journey, providing access to groups, counsellors, and other resources as needed.

### **Questions about the location, precedents, and community-based treatment**

8. Is there another one of these built somewhere else besides this neighbourhood? You showed two examples of precedents (Victoria Withdrawal Management Services and a new facility in Portland). What is the effectiveness of these facilities?

No two facilities will ever be the same – they may offer a different suite of services, and there will always be subtle or more significant variations between their different contexts. What we can do is provide examples of facilities that are similar or located in similar contexts, while recognizing that there will always be differences from what is proposed for Clark and East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue.

The Victoria Withdrawal Management Services facilities is located in a residential area and has a similar scope of services to the proposed facility at Clark and East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. The example we shared from Portland is under construction now and provides an example of how housing and withdrawal management are increasingly being integrated in the same building as urban land becomes scarcer and more facilities follow the best practice of integrating services within a community setting.

While we do not have metrics on the effectiveness of these facilities, we can look to their design for precedents for how best to integrate the proposed facility into a residential neighbourhood. In terms of operations and being a good neighbour, we look to our own existing facilities. VCH has operated the existing Vancouver Detox Facility, with both sobering and detox beds onsite, in a nearby residential neighbourhood for over 30 years with no issues. Crime is not higher than average near the existing detox centre. Community safety has not been impacted. We are a good neighbour in our existing facility and are committed to being a good neighbour in the new facility.

### **Questions about addictions**

9. What is the success rate for people staying clean and sober? From the day they walk in to out?

A planned withdrawal supports the individual to go through the process of withdrawing from different substances in a safe and effective manner with medical and personal care provided as needed. Making the decision to participate in a withdrawal management program is a significant milestone and for many people withdrawal management will be the first step on a long-term journey of recovery and wellness. Withdrawal management exists within a continuum of substance use services and supports and is most effective when it is integrated into a long-term recovery process. Given this recovery process, some people may not immediately succeed. The program supports different paths of recovery and so it is challenging to quantify success rates. However, the withdrawal management centre will facilitate lifesaving recoveries, which is the main purpose and driver of this work.

### **Questions about traffic**

10. Has there been any traffic analysis? Whose job is it to think about traffic, parking, and pedestrian impacts? What are your thoughts on those impacts and how to mitigate them? Is there a traffic study? What is the rationale for not making that study public?

Transportation studies were completed by a transportation engineering consultant. A traffic study identified that, based on the volume of traffic expected to be generated by the site, the proposal would not have a significant impact on the surrounding roadway network. A parking study identified that the development will likely need more parking stalls than were included in the initial proposal and we are working to respond to those findings. City Engineering staff, who are involved in the regulatory review of the application are continuing to work with the applicant to address parking demand, and encouraging alternate means of transportation such as walking, transit, and cycling. The transportation and parking studies are now available on the City of Vancouver's rezoning website for this proposal at <http://rezoning.vancouver.ca/applications/1636clark/index.htm>.

11. There are often very bad traffic accidents near Clark and 1<sup>st</sup>. Are you putting people's lives at risk by exposing people with substance addictions to dangerous traffic?

Most clients are brought to a treatment facility under another person's care. Clients do not come and go while they are undergoing sobering or withdrawal treatment. The proposal includes the provision of underground loading/parking, which will move passenger loading away from busy streets. The existing Vancouver Detox Centre is located on a busy street, and near the busy intersection at Main and East 2<sup>nd</sup>. We have not had issues with safety related to busy roads nearby.

The proposal includes significant improvements to the public pedestrian realm surrounding the site, including widened sidewalks, curb ramps, upgraded lighting, landscaping, tree planting, and street

furniture. The proposal identifies a 6.1 metre setback from the property line in the lane, a 6.5 metre setback from the roadway on Clark Drive, and a 12-metre setback from McLean Drive. The proposal also includes a canopy near the bus stop on Clark Drive, which will improve comfort for people waiting for the bus. These setbacks and public realm improvements will make it safer and more comfortable for anyone walking past the project site.

12. There is a problem in the neighbourhood with parking. Where will staff park?

The initial proposal included 39 parking spaces, based on a preliminary assessment of parking requirements. A detailed parking analysis has been conducted by a transportation engineering consultant. The analysis identified that additional parking will be required. City staff will continue to work with applicant to increase parking supply and also explore parking and traffic demand management strategies, such as encouraging active modes of transportation, use of public transportation, and car sharing.

### **Questions about the design and consultation**

13. What consultation with existing neighbours happened before the design took place? Why hasn't a working group been formed in the community with GWAC, neighbours, indigenous people to come up with a win-win solution?

The Grandview-Woodland Community Plan offers certain parameters for the site and the area, giving direction for what people wanted to see based on the engagement that went into that process. The GWCP process lasted several years and was approved by Council in 2016, before the partnership for this site was announced in February 2018. After the partnership was announced, an initial community canvass took place to notify the community about the partnership, answer preliminary questions and to collect early feedback.

The proposal for this site has also been informed by extensive engagement with stakeholder groups, such as urban Indigenous groups, business groups, sustainability groups, people with lived experience with addictions, medical professionals, etc. The input of these different stakeholders, the community, planning considerations, and the mandates of the project partners all come together to help inform the proposal.

14. Was there any consideration as to other designs that conform closer to the design intent of the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan (GWCP) and what other alternatives were considered? Is the proposal really within the spirit of the GWCP?

A variety of alternatives are considered during the architectural design process. These designs may take the form of sketches, massing models, and other design studies assessing movement, light/shadows, and programming, for example. The preliminary proposal that was brought forward to the community responds to and balances a range of inputs, including direction from the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan, consideration for the operational requirements of the project partners, and an effort to minimize shadow impacts.

The project team proposed the design for the site after considering many inputs and feels that the preliminary proposal aligns with several of the plan objectives while also achieving operational requirements and other inputs. The plan identifies the opportunity for 6 storey buildings along E 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue (policy 6.4.2), and the existing I-2 zoning of the property on Clark Drive allows heights of up to 100' – approximately the equivalent of a 10-storey residential or institutional building. The implementation of the community plan will result in significant change to the community in the

coming years. While the proposal may be one of the first out of the gate, the proposal is in line with the anticipated development of the community. The GWCP also identifies addictions treatment, as well as health, healing and wellness services (policy 13.4) and affordable housing (policy 7.1.3) as core needs in the community. Providing these services would be an important step in implementing elements of the community plan.

There are areas where the proposal does not specifically adhere with the site-specific vision detailed within the community plan, such as the T-shaped buildings that are contemplated for the area. This T-typology would not function from a practical standpoint for the operational requirements of the withdrawal management centre, and leads to greater shadowing on surrounding buildings, less energy efficiency, smaller amenity spaces for residents, and less natural sunlight within the residential components of the building. On balance, we feel that the proposed form better responds to its surrounding context and the needs of the project deliverables. This is our interpretation of the plan, and ultimately Council will have to weigh these different policies and determine which they feel is the priority.

15. Would a private developer have had to do more engagement on a project like this?

No. The engagement undertaken for this proposal has been greater than what is typically required in a rezoning process. There was a conscious decision made by the applicant team to go beyond the parameters of what is minimally required during a rezoning application, e.g. pre-application open house (and associated public notification of the Open House) and conduct additional community canvassing and community outreach events with various organisations and Indigenous groups. The aim of these events was to help inform these groups about the project in further detail and answer questions accordingly.

16. How can the City be impartial when it is both an applicant and regulator?

The City, as the landowner and operator of the social enterprise component, is a member of the project team; however, BC Housing is the applicant for this rezoning application. The regulatory review of the application is led by Rezoning and Development Planners within the Rezoning Centre and Urban Design Division who are a separate entity to the applicant team and project partners. The proposal will proceed through the standard regulatory review process, and it will ultimately be Council's decision whether to approve the rezoning application at Public Hearing.

**Questions about existing tenants**

17. What are the qualifications for existing tenants to move into the building? What will the units be like in the building and how will they compare to the existing units on site?

The City of Vancouver will work with existing tenants on site to ensure appropriate relocation to alternative housing that meets individual needs. The Tenant Relocation Plan offers right of first refusal for existing tenants who qualify through income testing to live in the building. The project team is still working on determining what the rates for units will be, and individual unit layouts will be refined throughout the process. Separate meetings with tenants are taking place including one-on-one meetings to support tenants. No tenants would be asked to leave the building until permits are in place, which would be mid-late 2019 at the very earliest.

**Questions about landscape and public space**

18. Does the proposal respect nature? What about the big tree? Is there a way to provide greenspace that is useable by the community?

Sustainability is an important consideration in the proposal. The proposed building form is informed by a desire to make the building more energy efficient. Providing employment, services, and housing near transit and near the central parts of the City are also important measures in reducing suburban sprawl, private vehicle use, and greenhouse gas emissions.

While the open space on Clark and East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue is not part of the City's formal inventory of parks, we understand that the community values this informal green space and the trees in the area. We are committed to delivering significant landscape improvements for the site, including new trees and linear open spaces. New street trees will contribute to the beauty, biodiversity, and air quality of the area, while buffering traffic noise and contributing to improving people's wellbeing and overall health.

The Arborist report has recommended the removal of 12 trees, and current landscape plans include 45 replacement trees, far exceeding the City's requirements for tree replacement. Additional trees have also been identified for retention. Most trees currently on the sidewalks on Clark Drive, East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, and McLean Drive can likely be retained, while trees located within the proposed building's footprint will need to be removed. The City's Landscaping Division will also review and determine on the appropriate tree retentions and additional planting required for the site during the technical review of the application.