



Co:Here Housing – Growing Community Together

An Initiative of Salsbury Community Society

Operations & Property Management Plan
East 1st Avenue / Victoria Drive, Vancouver, B.C.

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Introduction

Salsbury Community Society

Salsbury Community Society (SCS), a non-profit society and registered charity, was incorporated in 1997. SCS operates under the leadership of a volunteer board of directors, which is legally responsible for the actions of the society.

SCS has established itself as an organization focused on building relationships and reducing barriers between people of different economic or ethnic backgrounds. Unlike the more traditional client/service-provider model, SCS work is grounded in a philosophy of mutual transformation which holds that relationships established and maintained between diverse community members enrich us all.

Our Mission

Our purpose is to encourage intentional communities shaped by solidarity with the poor, hospitality, friendship, prayer and simplicity as well as to provide vulnerable people with affordable supportive housing.

Our Vision

Through a holistic and relational approach to mutual transformation we seek to nourish individual, local, and global well-being. Co:Here Housing will create an authentic community that offers a continuum of support for vulnerable people in our neighbourhood and will be an alternative model of community housing for other groups.

The Society embraces diversity and accepts all people as they are, whatever their ethnicity, culture or faith. Since 1997 the *Co:Here* initiative has provided supportive community housing for people coping with mental illness, homelessness, isolation and low-incomes, and SCS's initiative *Kinbrace* has provided transitional housing for refugee claimants.

The concept of an intentional community¹ of support is not new for Salsbury Community Society; it is based on the lived experience of operating three intentional community homes. This approach has proven effective in helping people achieve stability and well being. They have done this by building relationships characterized by “walking alongside” - not shaming, blaming, giving advice, confronting, or judging but rather helping people discover their own worth by being a “constant” in their life.

The SCS housing model is a similar model to the L'Arche communities in Canada and throughout the world. L'Arche is a unique vision of care-giving and community building that fosters inclusion, understanding and belonging. In nearly 200 small homes and day settings across Canada, caregivers and volunteers from diverse cultures and backgrounds share deeply committed relationships with people with developmental disabilities.²

¹ An **intentional community** is a planned residential community designed to have a much higher degree of teamwork than other communities. The members of an intentional community typically hold a common social, political, religious, or spiritual vision and share responsibilities and resources. (Wikipedia)

² www.larche.ca



Operations & Property Management Plan

As they have always done in their 13 years of community service, SCS and Co:Here intend to operate the housing in a business-like manner, while maintaining a welcoming and supportive environment for all tenants. Their operations and property management plan is based on their experience operating affordable rental homes that are anchored by intentional communities of support.

Staffing

Co:Here Community Housing will employ both staff and volunteers to operate and manage the development. Two offices and a one-on-one counseling room are provided on-site for the employees' use.

A **Building and Maintenance Manager** will be employed part-time (0.4 FTE) and will be accountable to the SCS Board of Directors. This employee is responsible for collecting and depositing rent, looking after maintenance and repairs, paying bills, overseeing the applicant database, collaborating with members of individual pods to address conflict or disputes, as well as filling vacant suites. The Building and Maintenance Manager will enforce the tenancy agreement.

A **Community Support Worker** will be employed part-time (0.6 FTE) and will report to the SCS Board of Directors. This employee will play a key role initiating structures of support and care for the core residents. S/he will guide core residents in taking responsibility for the care and maintenance of the various areas in the building. The Community Support Worker will also help empower the intentional community of support, providing guidance, leadership and accompaniment.

The **intentional community of support** will be made up of individuals, couples and small families who are drawn by a vision of living alongside and supporting low-income people, as well as committing to a life of material and social simplicity. These volunteers will be integral members of the housing community, paying rent and fulfilling all the obligations of responsible tenants. They will offer friendship and support to the “core residents” (see Tenant Selection below).

The intentional community of support living in the Co:Here Community Housing will be made up of members of Grandview Calvary Baptist Church and other people of faith. Their shared values and spirituality will help to foster a unity of purpose, as they face the inevitable challenges of walking alongside individuals who may be struggling to cope with life. While the people entering into the intentional community of support will be informed by their faith, there is no expectation of other residents to be or to become Christian.

Tenant Selection

The target populations for the housing will consist of:

- Individuals, couples and/or small families who are on assistance, under-employed, working poor, elderly or on a fixed income
- Those who currently have no housing, cannot afford the housing that they are in, or are having difficulty finding adequate housing
- Individuals, couples and/or small families who are prepared to provide active supports to residents by walking alongside them during their transition to stable lives

Application forms will be available from all SCS partners, as well as on the SCS website. An applicant database will be maintained and regularly updated. Tenants will be selected by a joint committee with representatives from Co:Here Housing, Just Work and GCBC.

Eighteen to twenty units will be occupied by people on low-income (the *core residents*). Applicants for these units will be assessed based on their date of application and the following criteria:

- Limited or low-income as defined by CMHC³
- Connected or rooted in the Grandview-Woodland neighbourhood
- Currently homeless, living in inadequate housing, or paying more than 30% of their income on their housing
- Show a positive attitude and willingness to live in a diverse community
- Do not need higher levels of support than this community offers (e.g. people requiring 24 hour supervision and professional care).

Six to eight units will be occupied by people intentionally facilitating community building, relationship building and support for the core residents. Tenants qualifying for the *intentional community of support* will be committed to:

- An ‘economy of enough’ grounded in an economic and material simplicity.
- A vision for creating places for community and relationship-building.
- Participatory, collective decision-making processes regarding community life.
- A local Christian faith community.
- The Grandview-Woodland neighbourhood.

During the construction period, the tenant selection process will get underway as the joint selection committee considers applicants who have been identified through the partners GCBC and Just Work. In the unlikely event that all units have not been filled by two months prior to completion, the SCS will draw on the resources of the Housing Registry and the Supportive Housing Registry, both operated by BC Housing.

³ <http://www.bchousing.org/applicants/Eligibility/income>

Tenancy Management

All tenants, including core residents and intentional community members, will initially enter a fixed-term tenancy of 4 months. At the end of the four months the Building and Maintenance Manager will review the tenancy with the tenant to determine whether to enter into a month-to-month tenancy agreement for the long term, to continue with another fixed-term agreement, or to end the tenancy.

A condition inspection will be conducted at the start of each tenancy, using the format required under the Residential Tenancy Act; the same form will be used to assess the condition of the unit at the end of the tenancy, and will be used to calculate the return of the security deposit.

Rents will be collected and deposited on the first day of the month. Rents will be considered overdue on the second day of the month. If rent is not paid by the 10th day of the month a Notice to End Tenancy (NET) will be issued to the tenant. If the tenant pays the rent within 5 days, the NET will be set aside. Otherwise, the tenant will be asked to vacate the unit at the end of the month.

The Building and Maintenance Manager is authorized to allow tenants to pay rent late under extraordinary circumstances, but only if the tenant has made arrangements before the rent is due. The new due date must be approved in writing. Such arrangements apply only to the current month's rent and are limited to no more than four times in a calendar year. Repeated rent arrears may be grounds for eviction.

SCS will collect a security deposit equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the monthly rent for the unit. The security deposit will be kept in a separate account and returned to the tenant at the end of the tenancy, less any amount withheld for damage caused by the tenant that is beyond normal wear and tear.

Maintenance and repairs

The Building and Maintenance Manager will be responsible for performing or arranging all repairs and maintenance for the building. Preventative maintenance will be undertaken based on the results of annual suite inspections, semi-annual and/or monthly inspections of the grounds, the building exterior and interior common areas. Corrective maintenance will be attended to promptly, with priority given to more urgent repairs. A statutory maintenance schedule will ensure that all required servicing of safety equipment, elevators, and other building components are carried out according to legislation, regulations, warranties and guarantees.

Management of the main floor areas

Management of the main floor areas will be shared between the Building and Maintenance Manager and residents in the building. Rent collection for office spaces and rental by outside groups are the responsibility of the Building and Maintenance Manager. A Common Area Committee will develop and enforce policies and standards for cleanliness. This committee will be made up of tenants and will liaise with the Building and Maintenance

Manager. They will make joint decisions on the use of the kitchen, dining room, living room, and quiet space by outside groups as well as by residents.

Tenants will be responsible for cleaning and maintaining the main floor areas for the common use of all residents. Similarly there will be a Garden Committee that will be responsible for the upkeep of the community garden. Ground areas apart from the garden are the responsibility of the Building and Maintenance Manager. The Community Support Worker will help initiate the set up of these committees. The guestroom may be used for family or friends that are visiting and will be the responsibility of the person hosting the people in the guestroom.

Financial Management

The Board of Directors of SCS has ultimate authority and accountability for managing the financial aspects of the housing project. Day to day financial transactions and recording will be the responsibility of the Building and Maintenance Manager, who will report monthly to the Board.

Revenues for the project will come primarily from residential rents, supplemented by rents charged for the use of community space and offices, storage, parking, and the guest room. Affordability is a key goal, and the rent structure will be based on what each tenant can afford, either 30% of their gross monthly income or the shelter portion of Income Assistance or Disability Pensions. The operating budget (Appendix D) provides a detailed breakdown of the projected residential rent revenues.

Rents for the two office spaces will be \$500 per month. The rate for the guest room will be a sliding scale of \$35 -50 per night. Tenants will be charged \$10 per month for storage lockers. The community kitchen will be available for rentals from time to time at approximately \$400 per day. A large storage area in the underground has been planned for use by Just Work at a monthly rent of \$500.

Accounts payable will be settled within 30 days or before the due date of the invoice. Cheques require two signatures, one of which must be a board member. The building manager will have cheque signing authority for all payments except payroll.

The pay period for SCS staff is bi-weekly. All mandatory employment related costs are collected, recorded and submitted when due.

Community Liaison

The Community Housing Director, as the designated community liaison, is responsible for addressing any issues related to the ongoing operation of this facility. Her contact information is as follows, and will be made available to the public:

Name: Johanna Suttor-Doerksen
Phone: 604-629-2966
Email: johanna@salsburycs.ca
Mail: P.O. 21732 - 1424 Commercial Drive Vancouver, BC V5L 5G3

A phone number to get in contact with the Building and Maintenance Manager will be provided once the building is built.

Community Responsiveness

As part of Salisbury's commitment to responding to concerns of residents and businesses and keep communication open a neighbourhood committee has been established. This is an advisory group, not a decision-making body, which fulfills its purpose by being solution-focused and responsive to community concerns. The committee will meet on a monthly basis, or as determined by the group.

The purposes of this group are:

1. to give space for neighbours to provide input into the project design and operation
2. address the impact of the project on the community and provide input to address these concerns
3. review Salisbury's response to complaints

All are welcome to join this group. Salisbury will advertise at the Grandview-Woodlands area council as well as the Business Improvement Association and with immediate neighbours about date and location of these meetings.

Salisbury Community Society will ensure that careful consideration be given to any concerns or issues expressed by members of the community about the building and will take appropriate actions to address problems within its control.

Any situation that affects the safety and security of residents, staff, or members of the community will be dealt with immediately. In case of immediate danger inside or outside of the building, 9-1-1 will be called.

The procedures below will be followed to address community concerns:

1. When a complaint comes in, the Building and Maintenance Manager will respond to the question or concern.
2. In case that the Building and Maintenance Manager cannot respond to the question or concern to the satisfaction of the individual, the issue will be brought to Salisbury's Community Housing Director.
3. In most cases, Salisbury's management should be able to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the individual. Where the issue is not resolved satisfactorily, the individual has the option of launching a complaint, following the issue resolution process outlined below.

Issue Resolution Process

Occasionally, there may be concerns that arise from members of the community. While the intent is to address these concerns through dialogue, if the individual feels the situation warrants an official complaint, Salisbury Community Society will ensure that an objective and thorough response is provided.

1. An individual wishing to make a formal complaint should do so in writing to the Community Housing Director within 30 days of the situation that resulted in the complaint.
2. Upon receipt of a written complaint, the Community Housing Director, or appropriate designate, will confer with the individual as to how the complaint is to be addressed, and the individual will be informed in writing as to the action to be taken regarding the complaint, within 15 days of receiving the written complaint.
3. If the individual is not sufficiently satisfied as to the outcome of this procedure, they may write to the Salisbury Board of Directors, and should do so within 15 days of being notified of the outcome of the initial dispute procedure.