



April 24, 2020

Lindsay Milburn
Senior Planner – Housing Policy
Sustainable Planning and Community Development
City Hall - 1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Dear Lindsay,

Re: Fairfield Hotel

As you know, since the COVID-19 outbreak Pacifica Housing has put great effort into relocating residents of the Fairfield Hotel because the living situation is not sufficient. As a building with few shared washrooms, showers, and kitchens, it is not acceptable for regular use, and woefully inadequate during a pandemic. It is a risk to the residents as well as our staff. Below, I have attempted to provide some answers to specific questions we recently received from City staff.

1. Urgency

Given the lack of facilities in the building, the highly at-risk population, and the advice from provincial health authorities to isolate and physically distance yourself, we have been operating under the understanding that there is an urgent need to move anyone we can from the Fairfield Hotel. It is simply not possible for these individuals to follow proper advice from provincial health authorities in this building. Shelters that offered similar shared facilities around the province have closed. Although we do not have anything specific from Island Health in writing regarding this, Island Health was one of the members of the Community Access and Assessment Committee that authorized us to use 7 supportive housing units for Fairfield residents because of the inherent risk. We would be happy to organize a site visit for any authorities who would find it helpful to understand the situation at the Fairfield Hotel.

2. BC Housing

We have been in close contact with BC Housing throughout this process. Their resources, including staff, are significantly strained right now due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to new programs that have been launched to help market renters who have lost income, they have also been actively supporting the not-for-profit sector through a variety of means. Pacifica has been working with BC Housing over the last few weeks to support homeless people to move into motels around Victoria so that they can follow provincial health advice. In our conversations with BC Housing at the end of March, due to their strained resources, they are not able to provide any further support for the Fairfield Hotel residents at this time. They are however, temporarily covering the cost of overnight security at the building at a cost of approximately \$10,000 per month. This measure was put in place to prevent non-residents from breaking into the building to access the shared washrooms and limit any additional risk of infection being transmitted to our residents who are immunocompromised.

3. Funding

We have broken down the financial situation at the Fairfield Hotel, as it pertains to relocation. We have secured some funding and donations support to assist in providing food to Fairfield residents,

as well as meet some of the cost of moving up to 40 individuals with modest means. With this funding secured, we estimate that we could need roughly an additional \$300,000 to move Fairfield residents in to permanent affordable homes. That is in addition to the operating losses Pacifica is experiencing as we continue to operate the building while receiving less rent contributions. We will be able to bring this number down if we can come to an agreement with Reliance Properties, which we are actively working on. We have had initial conversations with Reliance, and believe that they are open to finding ways to contribute that would ease some of this burden. The amount is also reduced when we find subsidized units in which to house people sooner than budgeted for.

4. Long-term housing supports

Our goal is to move as many Fairfield Hotel residents as possible, as soon as we can, to ensure that they have more suitable long-term homes. In some cases, Pacifica has homes in our existing buildings that are available where rent is geared-to-income. In other cases, we are helping residents apply for Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) that would help them qualify for Low End of Market (LEM) units that are available. Where a small gap exists and we have the ability to assist, we reduce the rent amount to of available Pacifica LEM units to match what the resident on SAFER can pay. In addition, we have two buildings under construction that will provide new affordable options in 16-24 months time. We will need a number of subsidies to tie people over until they are eligible for SAFER or can move into one of Pacifica's new buildings – therefore providing long term stability. Please find attached a copy of our FAQ which outlines the different routes being taken to ensure long term housing security.

As you know, we have requested help from the City of Victoria so that we can continue to use the funding provided at Fairfield Hotel in a way that allows Pacifica to continue supporting those residents to transition to other Pacifica homes.

For any residents who wish to remain at the Fairfield Hotel, Reliance Properties would assume responsibility for their tenancy. We continue discussions with Reliance related to the expedited termination of our lease. We will provide advance notice to all key stakeholders including residents and the City of Victoria when a date is finalized. At this time, our priority is to focus on moving Fairfield residents to safe homes.

We hope that this information helps answer some of the outstanding questions the City might have, **but would also like to request a meeting with the Mayor and Council at their earliest convenience** to discuss the above issues and move towards a mutually agreeable plan. This is an urgent issue that has implications for the health and well-being of the residents of the Fairfield Hotel and the wider Victoria community. Fortunately we have a solution, we just need support carrying it out.

In closing, our priority is to find more suitable homes for anyone who is interested in moving from the Fairfield Hotel. We are working hard to ensure that anyone who wishes to move, has an option that they can afford. We do not believe that the Fairfield Hotel provides suitable homes in its current state, and we will continue to make every effort to move all residents to homes that are more aligned with their needs.

Sincerely,



Carolina Ibarra
CEO, Pacifica Housing