



August 8, 2017

To: Mayor and Council

**Re: Mount Edwards Court Rezoning Application, Supplemental Information**

At the Council meeting held on July 27th, 2017, regarding 'Rezoning Application No. 00588, Development Variance Permit Application No. 00195, and Heritage Designation Application No. 000167 for 1002 Vancouver Street', Council asked that the following *list of questions* be answered and provided to Council as a condition of the Public Hearing.

***The calls for service by both fire and ambulance, at both the current operations and from when it was an extended care facility.***

**Ambulance:**

October 2012 to April 2013 (7 months)	=	19
October 2013 to April 2014 (7 months)	=	24
October 2016 to April 2017 (7 months)	=	31 *** (See note below)

\*\*\*35% (11) of the calls in 2016/17 (current operations) occurred in December 2016 and were specific to one individual who was not doing well and was subsequently moved to a different building. With this anomaly removed, there is not much variation from the current operation to the previous one.

**Fire:**

City staff is gathering this info.

**Police:**

***The police calls at the new playground and Pioneer Square.***

City staff is gathering this info.

**Other, Security Company:**

See the appended letter (Appendix 1) from Allied Security Services regarding their experience from September 2016 to May 2017.

***Clear definition of transitional housing vs. supportive and affordable housing.***

An **emergency shelter** is meant to provide a short term response to the challenge of homelessness. BC Housing requires that emergency shelter be accessible to anyone

(low barrier), including individuals under the influence of drugs and alcohol, providing their behavior does not endanger the health and safety of other shelter clients or staff. Emergency Shelters like Rock Bay Landing offer both **essential** (accommodation, nutritious meals, security and basic hygiene) and **gateway** (connection to community services and appropriate housing) services to clients. Clients are often in crisis and the population can change daily.

**Transitional Housing** is an intermediate step between emergency shelter and permanent housing. It is more long-term, service-intensive and private than emergency shelters, yet remains time-limited to stays of three months to three years. It is meant to provide a safe, supportive environment where residents can overcome trauma, begin to address the issues that led to homelessness or kept them homeless, and begin to rebuild their support network.

**Permanent Supportive Housing** is subsidized housing with on-site supports to help individuals maintain their housing stability. Support services are generally designed around individuals' needs related to physical or mental health, developmental disabilities or substance use. There is no time limit on how long an individual can access supportive housing; it is based on their individual need for support.

**Affordable rental housing** is for people who have a low-to-moderate income but are not eligible for subsidized housing. Affordable housing is housing deemed affordable to those with a median household income as rated by a province, region or municipality by a recognized Housing Affordability Index, such as CMHC.

***The operational experience at Fairway Woods, Hillside Terrace, Olympic Vista, and Cottage Grove:***

Given that Cottage Grove has only been open a few months we are providing information for Swift House instead – which is Cool Aid's oldest building and our largest to date with 49 units. All the information being provided is for the full fiscal year of 2016/17. A couple of important items to note:

- Hillside terrace is an Assisted Living building, and all of the residents are referred through home and community care; most residents have physical health issues they are managing in addition to other challenges.
- **All** of these buildings are supporting residents with a range of needs from low to **high**.
- Each of these buildings is well integrated into its surrounding neighbourhood.



Stats for 2016/17				Move Outs					
Building	Housing Type	# Units	Occupancy Rate	Internal Transfer	Death	Eviction	Normal	Higher care level	Total
Hillside	Assisted Living	45	98%	2	3	0	0	1	6
Fairway Woods	Seniors Supportive	32	100%	0	2	0	1	0	3
Olympic Vista	Seniors Supportive	36	98%	2	3	0	0	3	8
Swift House	Supportive	49	98%	3	0	0	3	1	7
Totals				7	8	0	4	5	24

Stats for April 2016 to March 2017		Emergency Response				Complaints
Building	Housing Type	Police	Fire	Ambulance	Total	
Hillside	Assisted Living	1	0	41	42	1
Fairway Woods	Seniors Supportive	0	0	36	36	0
Olympic Vista	Seniors Supportive	10	3	29	42	0
Swift House	Supportive	16	1	14	31	0
Totals		27	4	120	151	1

### ***Information regarding the current demographic at the building:***

We have been screening new residents using the new criteria since April of this year. There are currently 24 individuals living at Mount Edwards who meet these criteria, and 14 who will need to be relocated over the coming months: 3 who are over 50 but don't fit the other criteria; and 11 who are under 50. Of the 14 who will need to be relocated we will be working with all of our partners to find the right resource for them; we are confident that some will be able to move into the former Tally Ho when it opens and we will certainly prioritize them for any vacancies within our own portfolio.

### ***Explanation of the Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT).***

The original DESC Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT) was developed in 2003 by staff at the Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) in Seattle, Washington. DESC is an organization that provides a range of services to people experiencing homelessness, including an emergency shelter, permanent supportive housing and mental health and substance use treatment programs.

In 2015, a task force convened by the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and the Mental Health Commission of Canada analyzed 15 different assessment tools and concluded that the VAT was the best screening tool available for use in prioritizing clients for Housing First programs.

The VAT provides a consistent structured way to measure a homeless person's vulnerability to continued instability.

The process includes a structured interview followed by the completion of rating scales in **10 Domains of Vulnerability**. It was originally designed to help assign shelter beds to those individuals who were most vulnerable (i.e. a higher score would result in a higher priority for a bed). The VAT was soon adopted by housing providers to allocate a limited supply of supported housing units to those most in need.

The structured interview is a key element to the VAT as it provides a systematic and repeatable way to gather information about a person, including: their history of homelessness, their history of substance use, their mental and physical health and their ability to navigate community systems.

The rating scales are used to determine an overall score for an individual. This score is compared to other clients to determine relative vulnerability. All the domains assign a higher score to a more acute condition. For example, under **Basic Needs** a person who has no trouble meeting their basic needs would score a 1 compared to a 5 for someone with severe difficulty meeting their needs.

The one exception to this is under **Social Behaviour** where someone who has a history of taking advantage of others (predatory behaviour –bullying, not sexual) would automatically be given a score of 1, thus lowering their overall score and relative vulnerability.

At Mount Edwards Court, the VAT was not used initially as a screening tool for the first cohort of residents as the main goal was to move people quickly from the courthouse camp into housing. VATs were completed with those residents after their move in as a way to assess their needs and assist with planning and goal setting.

On a go forward basis at Mount Edwards we will be using the VAT as a screening tool to ensure that prospective residents meet a specific criteria or profile:

- Low to moderate support needs
- No history of violence or predatory behaviour
- No current problematic / intravenous substance use issues

The VAT can be used in this manner by applying the following parameters:

- A low to moderate overall score, under 25
- A score of 2 or 3 on the **Social Behaviour** domain.
- A maximum score of 2 on the **Substance Use** domain
- A maximum score of 3 on the **Mental Health** domain
- No score of 5 on any domain



***Clarification on the operating agreement regarding the use of illicit substances not being permitted on premise and will the VAT process limit that use.***

The VAT Screening assessment of Mount Edwards residents will ensure that no one currently engaged in any kind of problematic substance use (particularly intravenous drug use) will be admitted.

Some residents may have a past history of problematic substance use and will be actively engaged in recovery. Recognizing that relapse is a natural component of recovery, if a resident does relapse we will work with them to quickly assist them back on their recovery path; if they are not successful we will relocate them to a different building within the Cool Aid portfolio.

Concerns that residents may use drugs in the surrounding neighbourhood because they are not allowed to use on-site are unfounded as residents will be screened prior to moving in to ensure that they are not currently engaged in any kind of problematic substance use.

***A break down on how many low and medium need individuals will be placed according to the VAT assessment.***

We would actively balance our intakes to maintain a 50/50 split between low and moderate needs individuals, keeping in mind that none of the residents would have current problematic substance use challenges. It is also important to note that over time, as residents receive the support they need they do stabilize and may move from moderate to low. Over time, this may mean that more of our intakes are of moderate needs than low to keep the overall balance of the building at 50/50.

***Whether the applicant is looking at working with the Ready to Rent Program for residents.***

Yes. We have staff who are qualified to deliver the program and offer it whenever we have an interested cohort. To date four Mount Edwards residents have received certificates of completion.

***Whether or not pets are permitted, especially dogs and cats.***

Yes, both dogs and cats are permitted. Residents have to demonstrate that they are capable of caring for their pets and have to complete a pet agreement as an addendum to their rental agreement.

***Whether there are accessible units.***

There is an accessible entrance to the building off of Vancouver Street and the building has an elevator. None of the supportive housing units are fully accessible by Building Code, but the interior courtyard units have bathrooms that can accommodate a wheelchair. There is an

accessible shower on each of the supportive housing floors. On the third floor, 2 of the 15 affordable units will be fully accessible.

***The rationale for the ratio of supportive housing to affordable housing and whether there is opportunity to change that ratio.***

The breakdown of supportive and affordable units within Mount Edwards Court should not be looked at as ratio that can be adjusted. There are currently 83 units on the first two floors; the most timely and economical approach is to update the existing unit configuration. We are losing one unit on each floor to create a staircase to the third floor. Three units on the second floor will be reserved as 'swing' units, to use if any of the 78 units need to be closed for repairs or maintenance.

It would be both costly and disruptive to convert the existing units into self-contained affordable apartments. Unlike floor levels one and two, the third floor needs to be completely redone which is why it makes sense for that floor to be converted into affordable housing.

The building's floor plan and interior courtyard design is remarkably conducive to supportive housing. There are no long hallways, there are common spaces on each floor, and an interior courtyard that creates a sense of community that is not always found even in purpose built supportive housing projects. The size and total floor space of the building relative to the property size is low in comparison to most other apartments, whether they are supportive housing, affordable rental housing or market housing projects and further benefits the intended use and unit mix.

***Would changing the ratio of supportive housing in the building impact the people receiving the supports they need?***

No, both Cool Aid and BC Housing would ensure that all residents were placed in an appropriate unit, suitable to their needs. That being said, if a significant number of units were converted from supportive housing to affordable housing, the number of staff needed to manage the support needs within the building overall would be reduced.



## Appendix 1



May 29, 2017

**Client: Mount Edwards Court**

**Subject:** Summary of incidents before and after school watch in both the morning (0745-0845) and afternoon (1500-1700)

At Mount Edwards Court, Allied Universal Security is pleased to provide the highest level of service possible. We continue to work hard to keep the neighborhood a safe and friendly environment for everyone.

Summary of incidents that occurred from September 2016 to May 2017:

- No incidents reported during school watch times
- A total of 34 incidents were reported outside school watch times
- All 34 incidents were related to loitering and were resolved by asking the person to move along
- None of the 34 incidents involved Mt Edwards residents or visitors

Our security professionals at Allied Universal have received various compliments from community members throughout our time at Mt Edwards. We are very happy to continue to provide our excellent service for the community surrounding Mt Edwards Court.

Kindest Regards,

Dakoda McGregor – Duty Supervisor

Allied Universal Security Services