

Kamloops Access Hub Leadership Group

November 5, 2024

Dear Resident,

The Kamloops Access Hub Leadership Group was created in 2023 to advocate for and support an expanded model of shelter services for people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The group includes representation from the City of Kamloops, Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, BC Housing, Interior Health, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, the business improvement associations, and shelter and social housing operators.

The vision of an access hub is a 24/7 location where people who are unhoused can access shelter, meals, washroom and shower facilities, culturally safe social and health services, amenity space, and connections to housing, supportive employment, and wellness opportunities. These supports and services would be for registered shelter guests. The first priority of the Leadership Group is to help operationalize a location on the North Shore to fill an existing gap identified by service providers and people who are unhoused.

Following months of advocacy by Council and the Kamloops Access Hub Leadership Group, on June 24, 2024, Housing Minister Ravi Kahlon announced Homeless Encampment Action Response Temporary Housing (HEARTH) funding for Kamloops as part of a major housing announcement. This announcement included provincial commitments to more shelter spaces as well as hundreds of homes across the non-market end of the housing continuum, including temporary housing, supportive housing, affordable rental housing, and attainable middle-income housing.

In July, City Council authorized Administration to secure a North Shore site to provide shelter and services for people who are unhoused in alignment with the access hub vision. The identified site was unable to be secured, and in September, the City, BC Housing, and community partners pivoted to a different potential opportunity at an existing building at 142 Tranquille Road, formerly Kamloops Butler Auto & RV. BC Housing will provide capital and operating funding for this shelter project through the HEARTH program.

This site will require some renovations and upgrades to be completed with urgency. We currently expect the shelter to open by late December 2024. BC Housing currently has funding committed under the HEARTH program until March 31, 2026. The site will provide shelter and services for registered shelter guests in alignment with the access hub vision while longer-term solutions on the North Shore are identified and secured.

Through a public Request for Proposal (RFP) process, BC Housing has selected ASK Wellness Society to manage this site and provide services for shelter guests at 142 Tranquille Road. ASK Wellness Society is a



local charitable non-profit organization with a long history of delivering effective outreach, housing, health, and employment services in the region.

ASK Wellness Society will provide 24/7 shelter services with health and social programming for up to 44 people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The programming provides 3 staff on-site 24/7, three meals per day, storage of belongings, and washroom and shower facilities. As this project will be adapting to the needs of the community and the shelter guests, it aims to grow into providing supports that include cultural programming, the placement of a Housing Outreach worker within the facility to provide connections to housing and support services, and the delivery of medical services offered by ASK Wellness Mobile Health Clinic at key intervals each week.

The Kamloops Access Hub Leadership Group is committed to community safety for guests, staff, and surrounding residents and businesses. In addition to on-site measures including security cameras, fencing, and 24/7 staffing, site operations and community partnerships will support strong community interface management practices to ensure accountability and responsiveness. ASK Wellness Society is committed to being a good neighbour and will respond to neighbour questions and concerns quickly and collaboratively.

The Kamloops Access Hub Leadership Group is aware of community concerns and is committed to supporting the key principles outlined by the North Shore Business Improvement Association for social service facilities for people who are unhoused.

Below is a summary of what these principles are and how each will be addressed at this location.

1. **The site is a 24/7 facility.** The shelter will be fully staffed 24/7 and shelter guests will have 24/7 access to the facility.
2. **The site is a contained site.** The location will be fully fenced and monitored by security cameras. The location will provide a place for people to store their belongings. There will be an outdoor amenity space set near the back of the property where meals can be provided. Additional site improvements including landscaping will take place in 2025 to create a welcoming atmosphere.
3. **The site must be a supervised use site.** The shelter operates with a harm reduction and recovery focus, meaning people who use substances will be accepted into the facility and will be provided with safer practice options while promoting access to treatment and recovery resources. Supervised substance use and testing services will be available. People who use substances can be safely monitored and treated and will have access to shelter services without discrimination. The promotion of recovery will be embedded in the operating model.
4. **Housing placement supports.** Internal housing outreach staff will work with shelter guests and other partner agencies to offers onsite housing placement and supports to promote healthy outcomes.



- 5. **Wellness and mental health supports.** Health support services will be accessible to guests. The operator has an existing relationship and works in partnership with community mental health and substance use teams. The ASK Wellness Mobile Health Clinic powered by TELUS Health will be on site at key intervals throughout the week to provide health services to shelter guests.
- 6. **Site maintenance is constant.** The operator is committed to ensuring the site is clean and will minimize negative impacts such as clutter and litter.
- 7. **Staffing or security onsite 24/7.** Fencing and security cameras will be installed, staff will be onsite 24/7, and the operator will work to build collaborative relationships with neighbours.
- 8. **Community interface management is entrenched.** The operator will establish community outreach teams dedicated to support integration into the community. The operator works in partnership with Community Services officers and provides outreach staff through the CSO Outreach Response team that pairs Community Services Officers and outreach workers to support vulnerable clients and improve community safety.
- 9. **Reputable operators required.** ASK Wellness Society is a local charitable non-profit organization with a long history of delivering effective outreach, housing, health, and employment services in Kamloops and throughout the Interior region. ASK Wellness Society was the successful proponent selected to operate this shelter through a public request for proposals process conducted by BC Housing.
- 10. **Placement off commercial corridors.** The building location is set back from the Tranquille corridor and will be fully fenced along the street frontage.

In advance of this North Shore shelter opening, BC Housing with the support of the Kamloops Access Hub Leadership Group are hosting an in-person, community open house on November 21, 2024, where interested parties can find out more about the supports and services to be offered at the shelter, measures taken to support community safety, where to direct concerns that may arise, and ways to get involved and support the project.

Date and Time: Thursday, November 21, 2024 | Drop-in 5:00–7:00 pm
Location: McArthur Island Sport and Event Centre – Sports Centre Lounge
 1665 Island Parkway

To learn more about the Access Hub vision, collective partnership, and available services and supports for people who are unhoused, visit Kamloops.ca/Housing.

