



May 20, 2020

Re: Short-term tenting site at 100 Trunk Road

Dear resident or business owner,

We are writing to let you know about a new program to help vulnerable people in our community during COVID-19. Normally, we would like to talk to you face-to-face, but with physical distancing rules in place we are providing this letter.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, BC Housing is working with communities and local health authorities to provide safe places for people living on the streets to practice physical distancing and reduce the risk of spreading the virus. Public buildings, like community centres and hotels, are being used for short-term sheltering. In some communities that do not have enough indoor spaces available yet, temporary organized outdoor living sites are being set up. These new sites will allow individuals who are suited to outdoor living to stay in a managed location. These sites will also free up space for people who are most at risk – such as the elderly and those with existing health concerns – to access other safe spaces like shelters and isolation sites.

In the Cowichan Valley, the City of Duncan, Cowichan Tribes and other local municipalities have been working with the COVID-19 Vulnerable Population Cowichan Task Force and the Province of BC to find safe places for people experiencing homelessness. Several small-scale temporary tenting sites have been identified. Work to secure hotel and motel rooms in the region is also ongoing.

In the Duncan area, in consultation with Cowichan Tribes staff and elected officials and local social agencies, **100 Trunk Road** has been identified as a short-term tenting site. The site is temporary and will operate during the COVID-19 health crisis; funding is currently available until June 30. The Cowichan Housing Association, a local experienced service provider, will be operating the site with support from the Canadian Mental Health Association Cowichan Valley Branch, Island Health, Cowichan Tribes and other public health organizations. The site will include food, outreach, hygiene and security services. Garbage collection, cleaning and sanitation will happen regularly.

Specialized health teams will visit the site regularly to assess individuals' mental and physical health and check for COVID-19 symptoms. Dedicated security will be on-site daily between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., and a rotating security team will patrol between all Cowichan sites during daytime hours.

There will be no more than 12 people staying at this site. Preference will be given to Cowichan Tribes members. Only individuals identified and nominated by the COVID-19 Vulnerable Population Cowichan Task Force will be invited to self-isolate on the site. This site will not be for individuals who are symptomatic or have tested positive for COVID-19.

Emergency response sites like this one are a short-term solution to the COVID-19 pandemic until longer-term solutions can be found. BC Housing recognizes the urgent need and is committed to working with partners to develop permanent supportive housing in the region.

We greatly appreciate your understanding of the need to protect the most vulnerable during these difficult times. We are available to answer your questions and hear your concerns; below you will find contact information for Cowichan Housing and our partners who are working with us to support the site.

Sincerely,

John Horn
Chair, Covid 19 Vulnerable Populations Cowichan Task Force
(250) 597-1938, john.horn@cowichanhousing.com

Cowichan Tribes
Lulumexun Lands and Governance Department,
(236) 800-4023, lands@cowichantribes.com

Contacts

- **Blackbird Security:** 778-971-0078
- **Medical and policing emergencies:** 911
- **Housing Task Force site coordinator:** Mary Lionas, marylionas54@gmail.com
- **Questions or comments about Emergency Response Plan:** Cowichan Housing Association, 250-597-1938, john.horn@cowichanhousing.com
- **Questions or concerns about the well-being of site residents:** Canadian Mental Health Association Cowichan branch, 250-597-1372, cmhacvb@cmha.bc.ca
- **Questions for Cowichan Tribes:** Lulumexun Lands and Governance Department, (236) 800-4023, lands@cowichantribes.com