



Municipality of North Cowichan  
Mayor and Council

August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022

**RE: Request for extension to project timelines to fully utilize awarded grant**

Dear Mayor and Council,

I'm contacting you today on behalf of the Village project currently located at 610 Trunk Road in Duncan. As you are aware, the Village project provides 34 sleeping cabins with wraparound support to unsheltered adults in our region, many of whom also experience complex support requirements. The project is provided in partnership between Cowichan Housing Association, Lookout Housing and Health Society, City of Duncan, and BC Housing, with operational funding provided through UBCM Strengthening Communities' Services grant submitted on behalf of the region by Municipality of North Cowichan. As evidence of the positive impact of the project, included with this letter is a document that summarizes some of the statistics we've tracked related to the project, as well as a description of other project successes achieved to-date.

The project funding is for one year, but due to supply chain challenges and delays in the transportation of the cabins, the full start-up of the project was delayed. In addition, we've been able to keep operational costs lower than initially anticipated. As a result, we have unspent funds remaining that we want to use to continue the operation of the site.

It is our intent to operate the Village at the existing site for an additional 8 months (consistent with the TUP extension request to the City of Duncan), which will allow time for us to find a more permanent site for the project, and if not possible, transition the residents to alternative housing. To operate the site over this 8-month period, our plan is to use the unexpended UBCM funds supplemented by funding from BC Housing. Not asking BC Housing to cover the full 8 months of the project extension, makes it more likely for them to support the request. We are providing BC Housing with a financial request in support of this project in early September 2022.

We are optimistic for many reasons that the extension will provide us with the opportunity to continue the project and it's demonstrated successes at another location. However, our ability to do so rests upon having an extension of the UBCM funding. For this reason, we respectfully request that you ask UBCM for an 8-month extension to the project.

Regards,

Shelley Cook, PhD  
Executive Director - Cowichan Housing Association



# The Village: Summary of Success

## Project Overview

The project provides temporary housing in the form of 34 sleeping units (cabins) with individualized support services for unsheltered people in the Cowichan Valley through which their underlying health and social needs can be addressed. Project activities are part of a comprehensive, multi-faceted, and holistic response to homelessness and related issues across the region. In this way, the project is an essential part of the continuum of services for unsheltered people in the Cowichan Valley and represents an important first step in helping those who are street entrenched.

People supported through the project have continued access to multiple on-site services including but not limited to food security programs, case planning, health and safety programming, and community referrals. Site amenities will include c-can washrooms/shower units, an outdoor eating area in each pod, and a secure area for the distribution of medication and for people to meet with outside support services.



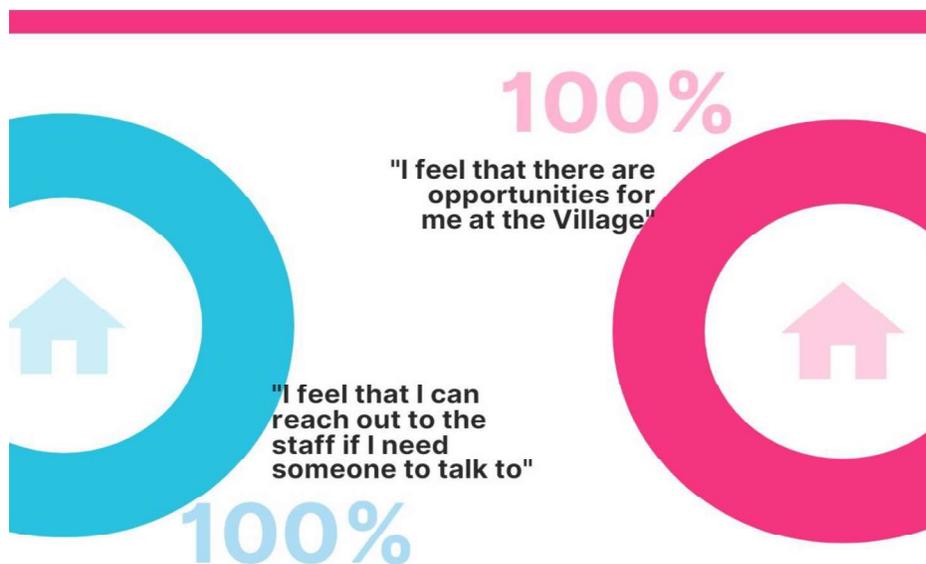
## Village Partnerships:

City of Duncan	Municipality of North Cowichan
Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM)	BC Housing
Lookout Housing and Health Society	United Way BC
Cowichan Tribes	Canadian Mental Health Association
Our Communities Health Network	Cowichan Green Community
Hiiye'yu Lelum House of Friendship Society	Cowichan Women Against Violence
Community Action Team (CAT)	
Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction	Island Health, Mental Health and Substance Use and Public Health Departments (SUIT / ACT Teams)

Operations at the Village site include provision of emergency shelter for 34 residents, including 2 meals per day and access to 2 Shelter Resource Workers 16 hours per day, 7 days a week. Lookout Peer Workers are scheduled 4 hours per day, 7 days a week who assist in daily duties on-site, interacting with peers in the community, and fellow residents on-site. This staffing model and site layout enables community service provider’s meeting with residents on a consistent, daily basis. Blackbird Security provides overnight security from 12 midnight to 8 am daily.

Demographics								
	March		April		May		June	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Men	19	56%	19	55%	18	55%	19	56%
Woman	15	44%	15	45%	15	45%	15	44%
Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Indigenous	20	59%	21	67%	22	67%	22	65%
Non-Indigenous	14	41%	13	33%	11	33%	12	35%
Total	34		34		33		34	

## Project Successes



The site averages 24 health and wellness visits each day from external community service providers/partners, enabling wrap-around services for residents who experience great difficulty in accessing essential services in the community. This has proven to be one of the most valuable services provided to the site, demonstrating how the site assists in the continuum of care for the site residents.



Daily health and wellness services at the site include visits from:

- Island Health’s Public Health Outreach team, Substance Use Integrated Team, Assertive Community Treatment team;
- Ministry of Children and Family Development;
- Cowichan Tribe’s Community Treatment Coordinators, Community Health Representatives, Youth Outreach, Counsellors, and Elders;
- Local Pharmacists;
- Nurse Practitioners/Healthcare Professionals;
- House of Friendship representatives.
- Cowichan Valley Community Action Team Coordinators and Outreach Staff.

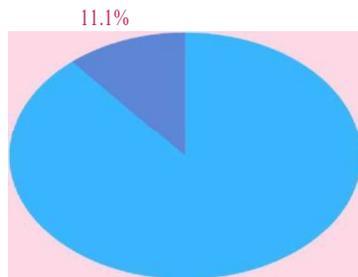
Health & Wellness Supports						
	March		April		May	
	Total	Daily Avg	Total	Daily Avg	Total	Daily Avg
Service Provider Visits	1 26	9.8	290	9.7	757	24.4
Family, Social, Cultural Connections	116	6.8	94	3.1	108	3.5
Meals	1836	102.0	2754	91.8	2890	93.2

Research demonstrates that people who are homeless have high rates of emergency health care utilization (i.e., emergency rooms, ambulance services), and are 5 times more likely to be hospitalized than the general public, often for a much longer time. Homeless people experience a higher rate of a broad range of physical and mental health issues, they routinely have difficulty in accessing healthcare, which increases their reliance on emergency services.

Prior to being supported at the Village, 15% of the residents indicated they regularly accessed healthcare. However, after becoming sheltered at the Village, 68% of the residents noted they were regularly accessing healthcare.

## Has your mental health improved since moving in?

No (OR STAYED THE SAME)



YES  
88.9%

## Programs at the Village

The Village hosts a variety of social and recreational programs that focus on healing, trauma and harm reduction, cultural connections, work experience, and building life skills and practices. These programs include education, arts and crafts (such as therapeutic rock painting, carving, writing in traditional languages, drawing), gardening, carpentry, and site beautification.



The Village employs peer workers who are residents at the site. They provide an extensive array of work experience, responsibilities, and opportunities to give back to the community, which assists in building self-esteem and worth. The peer workers also assist Lookout staff with daily tasks, including harm reduction distribution and education, site cleanup (internal & external), as well as perimeter walks/community engagement. As well as in addition to providing valuable assistance to their peers in a way that trained staff cannot replicate. Lookout partners with the Cowichan Community Action Team (CAT) as well, offering the opportunity for residents to participate in Outreach work, provide harm reduction (HR) supplies, and educate people in the use of HR supplies (including naloxone administration training/Overdose response). The CAT Streetsmart Outreach Team also helps cleaning up garbage in the broader community of Duncan. Of all Village residents, 67% are actively involved in peer work programs.

“Since moving into the site I've managed to maintain full time employment, I've put on weight, I've come a long ways. My family looks at me in a completely different light now.”



## Site and Community Security

Staff on site have been actively monitoring the 150-meter radius of the site since opening, engaging with individuals who may be trespassing, loitering, littering, or openly using substances in the area. In response to feedback and requests from local residents and businesses, we have since increased the number and focus of our walks to include intensive garbage collection. This increase has helped to improve our relationships with community members with increasingly positive support from the neighbouring community.

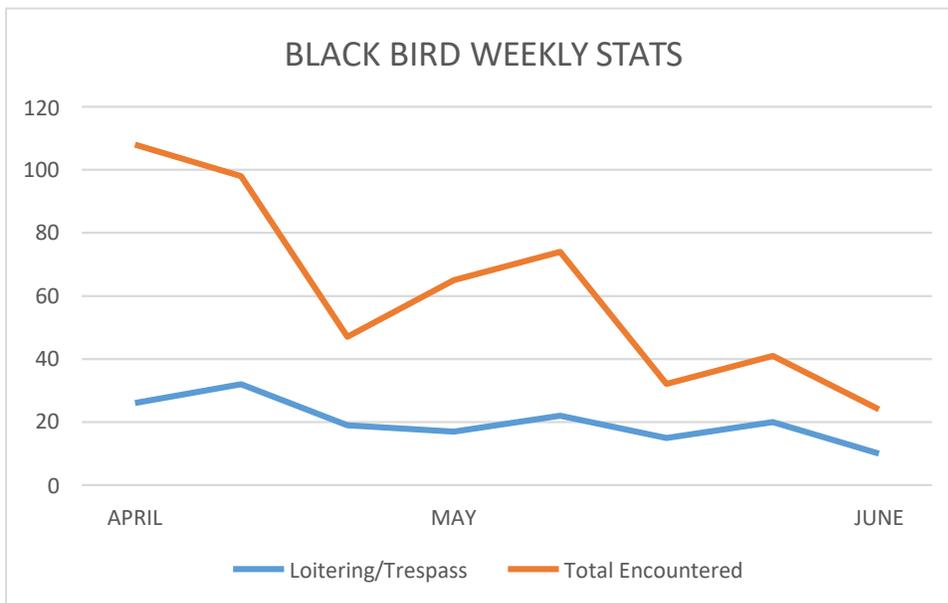
Security & Community Walks		Total Walks	Loitering/Trespass - Total	Total Encountered	Disturbance	Open Fires	Bylaw	Non-Emerg Police	911-RCMP	911-EMS	Sharps	Garbage	Clear
March	Total	238	205	N/A	15	1	6	7	1	3	N/A	198	143
	Daily Avg	17.0	12.8	N/A	0.8	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.2	N/A	14.1	10.2
April	Total	541	740	740	19	0	8	8	2	5	10	279	236
	Daily Avg	18.0	24.7	24.7	0.6	0.0	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.3	9.3	7.9
May	Total	561	484	494	8	0	10	3	1	2	7	153	282
	Daily Avg	18.1	15.6	15.9	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2	4.9	9.1

Blackbird Security and Duncan Bylaw Statistics reflect the combined efforts of the security team responding to community needs and feedback in the residential and business vicinity of the Village site.

Since increased monitoring was put in place through the Village, the number of people encountered in the area has reduced significantly. The number of incidents follow this trend, displaying the effectiveness of the site security team's efforts in the community.



BLACKBIRD	April	May	JUNE
Loitering/Trespass	77	68	10
Total Encountered	253	210	24
Disturbance	0	0	0
Open Fires	0	0	1
Non-Emerg Police	3	6	2
Emerg-Police	0	0	0
Emerg-EMS	0	0	0



DEAR My Wonderful Neighbors

I AM A RESIDENT HERE AT THE "VILLAGE",  
WHICH IS THE TINY HOMES THEY BUILT FOR HOMELESS  
AND PEOPLE OF ADDICTIONS.

AS FOR MYSELF I HERE AND HAVE FAITH THAT  
YOU CAN EXCEPT ME AND MY FELLOW PEERS (OTHER RESID-  
-ENTS)<sup>2</sup> AS WE LIVE HERE, I MYSELF AM WORKING  
HARD TO OVERCOME AND TACKLE THE AWFUL DISEASE  
OF ADDICTIONS,

WITH THE HOMES AND THE STAFF WHO WORK  
HERE A LOON WITH THE LOCAL OUTREACH TEAMS  
WHO GIVE THERE TIME TO HELP US IN ALL WAYS  
THERE TO MAKE SURE WE ARE NOT MISS LEAD  
OR FORGOTTEN.

PLEASE SEE US AS WE SEE YOU!?

I SEE STRUGGLES EVERYDAY IN EVERYONE  
AND JUST A SIMPLE "HI", OR HOW YOU DOING?  
AND A SIMPLE HELLO FROM MY NEIGHBOR OR  
JUST ANY KIND OF INTERACTION.

ANYWAY I'M HERE LIVING IN YOUR  
NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGING MY LIFE,  
MAKING BETTER CHOICES TO FIND  
THE FATHER OF MY KIDS THEY  
PLEASE CONSIDER ME  
AS YOUR NEIGHBOR AND  
HAVE NO STIGMA