



INFORMATION FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Proposed Land Use Amendment for the Temporary Relocation of Bedford House

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About the Calgary John Howard Society

The Calgary John Howard Society (CJHS) is a not-for-profit and community-based charitable organization dedicated to reducing the incidence of crime and increasing community safety.

The CJHS works at many different levels within the community to help prevent crime, integrate people who have been in trouble with the law back into community life, and to build safer communities. The organization offers a wide range of programs and services from literacy programs to programs to reach youth who are at-risk, as well as housing programs.

One of the many services CJHS offers is helping federal offenders safely transition to the community after they have served part of their sentence in prison.

One way CJHS does this is through providing housing to newly released offenders, through the operation of Community Residential Facilities (CRFs) – otherwise known as Halfway Houses.

In 2010, before CJHS found its permanent home for the new Bedford House in the southeast industrial area of Manchester, CJHS went through an intensive and comprehensive effort to gain the trust of the neighbouring communities and industrial neighbours. This process involved many community meetings, open houses, one-on-one meetings, permit applications and much conversation over a few years.

Through these many public engagement activities, CJHS sought the opinions of neighbours, addressed any concerns, and created a Good Neighbour Agreement with interested neighbours consisting of community members, local business owners, the Calgary Police Service and the CJHS. The Good Neighbour Agreement ensures there is an effective and open channel of communication between the community and the CJHS and Bedford House to ensure any questions, comments or concerns by either party are addressed in a timely fashion.

Requesting approval to temporarily relocate to 2404 – 50 Street SE

Now, the CJHS is seeking approval from the City to temporarily relocate our CRF for men to an existing building located at 2404-50th Street SE. There are currently no plans to change the outside of the building. We are simply seeking approval to use the building as a temporary location for a CRF.

We would like to share our plans with you, and invite your questions and comments, prior to temporarily relocating to your neighbourhood. An open dialogue environment is very important to us and we look forward to gaining your trust, as we have in all the neighbourhoods where our facilities exist elsewhere in Calgary.

We have a number of ways that we are hoping to reach out to you:

- Through one-on-one meetings upon request
- Through one of the open houses we plan to have
- Through your community association
- Through your local churches and community groups
- Through a direct mail drop
- Through our website and open online forum
- Through emailing us
- Through the media

We are also looking for interested neighbours and community members to be a part of our Good Neighbour Agreement. Please contact us at info@cjhs.ca if you are interested in learning more or getting involved.

About Bedford House and Correctional Residential Facilities (CRFs)

Community Residential Facilities (CRFs) are an integral part of Correctional Services Canada's program to safely and successfully reintegrate offenders into the community. Through CRFs, individuals are supervised and given the opportunity to develop the tools they need to become fully functioning members of society after a time in prison. This step "halfway" between prison and the community has been shown to be essential because most offenders are more likely to become law-abiding citizens if they participate in a program of gradual, supervised release. Importantly, those offenders given the opportunity to live in a CRF must have demonstrated motivation to change and demonstrate remorse for their previous offences.

The CRF program has been shown to not only be the best route for offenders to reintegrate into society, it's also safer for society to have this step available. History has shown that those offenders who are directly released into the community without this essential transitional step, are much more likely to reoffend.

For the residents of the Calgary John Howard Society's CRF for men – Bedford House – it is a safe and non-judgemental place to learn how to live in the community again. Bedford House has been peacefully and safely co-existing in Calgary alongside residences, schools and businesses, for over 35 years. Operated by the CJHS, it has staff on-site at all times. The residents are monitored by the staff at Bedford House and their parole officers. Their parole officers will often do physical checks on the residents to ensure they are where they say they are. Bedford House also has a positive working relationship with Calgary Police Service.

When a new resident arrives at Bedford House, staff already has information on the new resident and often, has met with them in their institution prior to their coming to live at Bedford House. In addition to this helping the resident have a more positive transition into the CRF, it also helps them reintegrate into the community and into society. Upon arrival at Bedford House, the new resident meets with staff and their parole officer to set a curfew as well as appropriate community access. The safety of the community is always of utmost importance when setting the new resident's appropriate curfew and community access guidelines.

Some residents are accompanied by staff whenever they leave the house until they have set activities that staff approve of, or they are employed. As the resident gains confidence and demonstrates that they accept the restrictions of their curfews or community access, their curfew may change over time. All residents, regardless of their curfews or community access, must phone when they reach their destination as well as every three hours after that, or when they change destination. If they are not back within 10 minutes of their curfew time, a Correctional Services of Canada duty officer is advised and warrants may be issued for their immediate arrest.

The CJHS cares deeply about the safety of the community. Bedford House has demonstrated an excellent safety record over its 35 years in Calgary. The crime rate of residents at Bedford is comparable to the population-at-large. In fact, with the close monitoring of its residents, the regular police presence, and the desire of its residents to reintegrate into the community in an unassuming way, Bedford House is considered to be a peaceful neighbour.

For more information

To learn more about the Calgary John Howard Society and its programs, please visit www.calgaryjohnhoward.org

For more information about the Land Use Redesignation Application, please email info@cjhs.ca or contact:

Gordon Sand
Executive Director
Calgary John Howard Society
email: gord.sand@cjhs.ca
403-266-4566

Or

Kathy Oberg
Partner, Brown & Associates Planning Group
email: koberg@bapg.ca
403-692-4532