

Design Charrette Feedback Report  
Charman Creek Affordable Housing  
Project in Gibsons, BC

Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society & New  
Commons Development

August 23, 2018



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**Ms. Lesley-Ann Staats, MCIP, RPP**

747 S Fletcher Rd  
Gibsons, BC V0N 1V0  
lstaats@gibsons.ca  
604-886-2274

**RE: Design Charrette Feedback Report  
Charman Creek Affordable Housing Project in Gibsons, BC**

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Dear Lesley-Ann,

Thank you for your help organizing and participating in the Design Charrette for the Charman Creek Affordable Housing Project. You will find enclosed a draft report summarizing the event and the responses we received from participants, in addition to a copy of the discussion materials from the charrette. We trust that you will find this information helpful.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Chipman', written in a cursive style.

**Joe Chipman**  
New Commons Development

Vancouver | #90-425 Carrall St. | V6B 6E3  
Toronto | #400-119 Spadina Ave. | M5V 2L1

info@newcommons.ca  
[www.newcommons.ca](http://www.newcommons.ca)

## Event Summary

On Tuesday, August 7th, 2018, the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society, the Town of Gibsons, Urban Matters CCC, and New Commons Development hosted a design charrette for the proposed Charman Creek Affordable Housing Project. Loosely defined, a design charrette is a collaborative design and planning session where a diverse group of people work together to explore a particular design problem and develop potential solutions. In this case, the project team brought forward two conceptual project designs for participants to discuss the potential benefits and shortcomings of the designs, propose potential solutions, and raise issues that require further study.

The charrette began with a brief site visit with the project team introducing the project and the work completed to date, in addition to highlighting specific site planning issues as informed by a recent site survey. The thirteen participants then moved to a meeting room at Christenson Village, where the project team introduced two high-level design concepts intended to provide a starting place for visualization and critique of various planning and design features.

Participants formed small groups and worked through a series of worksheets which explored topics ranging from site-scale land use planning principles, down to building-specific design features. Participants were also encouraged to bring forward ideas which had not been included in the worksheets. The charrette concluded with representatives from each group sharing the results of their discussion with the broader group.

A summary of the feedback received during the charrette has been provided below. Please refer to the appendices for additional information.

## Feedback Summary

### Environmental Issues

Participants appreciated that a comprehensive survey locating all trees over half a meter in diameter had been completed and that a core design principle was to limit the number of trees which would need impacted. In addition, some participants thought that a more comprehensive habitat assessment/ bio-inventory should be conducted by a Registered Professional Biologist to document and mitigate impacts to wildlife which may inhabit the area. Special consideration should also be given to understanding and mitigating edge effects associated with increased human activity along the boundary of the forest.

At a macro level, it was highlighted that the Town should consider conducting a comprehensive study on the ecological significance of large natural areas in Gibsons as they relate to one another, understanding that large, contiguous natural areas such as the Charman Lands serve a special role in supporting migration and other key ecological functions. One participant likened the Charman parcel to Stanley Park in terms of size and potential significance to the Town.

At a site level, it was noted that the landscape design must be more fully thought out, and that the border between public and private property should be clearly demarcated. Developing a storm water management plan was also considered a key next step for the design process.

### Community, Safety and Accessibility

Participants generally agreed that the project would foster a strong sense of community, particularly under Concept A which positions the buildings to frame an interior courtyard. Participants also noted that the project will likely be a very desirable place to live given the natural setting and the character of the established neighborhood and easy access to shopping and schools.

It was noted that the forest which surrounds the site could be perceived by some potential residents as unsafe, particularly at night, and that attention should be paid to lighting and visibility to improve safety. However, it was also raised that safety not been a significant concern for similar projects such as the Roberts Creek Cohousing Project.

Both design concepts were considered relatively accessible, however the distance between the parking area and the homes under Concept A was considered potentially burdensome for moving goods. A potential solution put forth is to ensure the pathways are wide enough to occasionally accommodate a vehicle.

### Built Form

Many participants believed that the privacy impacts to adjacent homes had effectively been minimized through staggering of building heights and providing buffers between the northern lot line and buildings. Participants appreciated that the buildings take advantage of the site's natural slope to help reduce the building heights.

However, many participants believed that the project is not dense enough given the need for affordable housing in Gibsons and the environmental impact of the project. It was also noted that denser built forms may be more cost-effective in terms of construction cost and the on-going cost of operation and maintenance. A denser built form such as one apartment building could also reduce the total building footprint and environmental impact of the project. Gradually increasing the height of building toward the southern portion of the site was seen as an opportunity to increase density while providing a transition in scale to the adjacent single-family homes.

It was also highlighted that the ten-plex design was selected for a number of reasons, including that it could reduce construction and maintenance costs. For example, sprinkler systems are not required as there are no shared hallways or indoor areas. Similarly, by restricting the building height to below four-storeys, there is no requirement to provide (and maintain) elevators.

It was noted that the project must incorporate specific design features, such as accessibility and energy efficiency, to be eligible for provincial or federal funding. Providing evidence of this would be useful for future discussions.

Participants appreciated that every unit has a front door as it could foster pride of ownership. It was raised that this design feature could be expanded to include small front porches or stoops to foster interaction with neighbours.

Some participants noted that the building feels like an apartment building and that the design could be adapted to break up the massing. Some suggested staggering roof lines and using flat roofs to reduce the perceived mass of the buildings and to provide visual interest, while others clearly opposed flat roofs, citing the build-up of debris from the adjacent wooded area.

### Suite Mix & Unit Design

It was noted that the project should include studio units to diversify the tenant mix and potentially improve housing affordability. Smaller units were seen as beneficial for housing transient populations, though it was raised that a high proportion of transient residents may be detrimental to building a sense of community. It was also noted that the proportion of three-bedroom units should also be increased as they are particularly rare in the market.

In terms of unit design, it was highlighted that the three-bedroom units could benefit from having a second bathroom to improve both functionality and marketability. In-suite laundry was also considered more desirable than communal laundry facilities, though this would likely increase operating costs. An option put forth is to include one shared laundry facility in each ten-plex, rather than in the separate common buildings.

### Common Space and Amenities

The standalone common areas received a mixed reception, with some questioning whether the shared laundry could be replaced with in-suite laundry, while others wonder whether there is an opportunity to incorporate the amenity space into the base one or more of the residential buildings. More clarity was

required around how the guest suites would be operated in a rental complex. One option put forth is the replace the guest suites with an exercise room or other amenity space. Another is to add additional stories to the common areas to accommodate some bachelor units.

Participants noted that residents could benefit from a car share/ co-op, which could also help reduce the number of parking spaces and reduce the site's impermeable surface area. Similarly, the cost of providing below grade parking was considered prohibitive, however some residents may appreciate a car port stall. Adding a children's play area and community garden space were also raised as potential improvements.

### Brainstorm

Some participants questioned whether this site was the most appropriate site for development. An alternative site within the Town's existing built boundary could be considered preferable as it could reduce the environmental impact of the project, accommodate a denser built form, and be better located in terms of services and amenities. It was also raised that there may be community partners who wish to develop their own land holdings for this purpose.

### Comparison of Concepts A & B

Generally, participants appreciated the design principles exemplified in Concept A over Concept B. Concept A was perceived to have less of an impact on the existing forest and trails, provide more permeable surface area and take advantage of the site's natural slope to assist with storm water management. Concentrating the parking away from the buildings was considered preferable as it acts as a buffer to the neighbouring properties, while allowing the buildings to be centered around one another thereby improving the sense of community.

However, the placement of the parking lot in Concept A was also viewed as potentially hindering the project's integration with the existing neighborhood fabric. It also creates accessibility challenges for the southernmost units as they are quite removed from the parking area.

### Next Steps

The project team would like to sincerely thank all participants who took time out of their day to work on this important project. The input and feedback received from participants will greatly improve the next iteration of the project design.

In the near term, the project team is working to a create new design concept which will subsequently be brought forward for further public input at an open house this fall. The project team and the Town of Gibsons will work to notify all community members once a date for this open house has been finalized.

## Appendix A – Design Charrette Materials

**Affordable Housing at Charman Creek Site, Gibsons  
Design Charette Agenda**

Date **Tuesday August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018. 6:00pm to 8:00pm**

Location **Meet south end of Shaw Rd, Follow up at Christenson Village Activity Room**

- |            |  |                   |                    |
|------------|--|-------------------|--------------------|
| <b>1.0</b> | <b>Site Tour and Background – meet at the south end of Shaw Road</b> |                   | <b>6:00 – 6:15</b> |
| 1.1        | Introductions  | Matt              |                    |
| 1.2        | Background – why this project? why this site? What comes next?       |                   |                    |
| 1.3        | Summary of process to date.  |                   |                    |
| 1.4        | OCP and Zoning process overview                                      | Leslie Anne       |                    |
| 1.5        | Short walking tour   | Teryl             |                    |
| 1.6        | Description of existing site survey information                      |                   |                    |
| 1.7        | Discussion of key site design principles                             |                   |                    |
| <b>2.0</b> | <b>Presentation of Concepts – move to Christenson Village</b>        |                   | <b>6:25 – 6:35</b> |
| 2.1        | Summary of design principles and Charette process                    | Teryl             |                    |
| 2.2        | Concept components: 10 plex and common house                         | Teryl             |                    |
| 2.3        | Concept A and Concept B  | Teryl             |                    |
| <b>3.0</b> | <b>Discussion in 3 Groups at small tables</b>                        | Matt, Dionne, Joe | <b>6:40 – 7:30</b> |
| 3.1        | Design and Land Use Principles                                       | Leslie Anne intro | 6:40 – 6:50        |
| 3.2        | Concept components   | Teryl intro       | 6:50 – 7:05        |
| 3.3        | Comparison of Concepts A and B                                       | Matt intro        | 7:05 – 7:20        |
| 3.4        | Brainstorm   | Dionne intro      | 7:20 – 7:30        |
| <b>4.0</b> | <b>Organize notes for presentation</b>                               |                   | <b>7:30 - 7:35</b> |
| <b>5.0</b> | <b>Summary of Group Comments</b>                                     | Matt t            | <b>7:35 – 7:50</b> |
| 5.1        | Matt's table   |                   |                    |
| 5.2        | Dionne's table   |                   |                    |
| 5.3        | Joe's table  |                   |                    |
| <b>6.0</b> | <b>Closing Comments and Next Steps</b>                               | Matt and Dionne   | <b>7:50 – 8:00</b> |
| <b>7.0</b> | <b>Adjourn</b>   |                   | <b>8:00.</b>       |

## PROJECT & DESIGN PRINCIPLES

### Charman Creek Affordable Housing Project, Gibsons, BC

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#### DESIGN PRINCIPLES

1. Minimize site disturbance and impact on the existing forest and trail system.
2. Transition to the scale of the existing neighbourhood.
3. Create a vibrant social environment and sense of community.
4. Provide a variety of affordable housing types – 1 bedroom to 3 bedroom
5. Provide about 1/3 of units and a variety of unit sizes with level entry for accessibility
6. Front doors for every occupant, no internal hallways.
7. Employ construction methods that are as affordable as possible while being durable and providing visual interest.
8. Break up parking into pockets to avoid large areas of paving.
9. Work with the existing sloping grades as much as possible to avoid excessive cut and fill.

#### PROPOSED PROJECT PRINCIPLES

1. **Affordable Housing.** Provide high quality housing at affordable rents to low- and moderate-income residents of Gibsons.
2. **Create Community.** We will create a neighborhood welcomed by Gibsons with effective property management and extensive tenant resources.
3. **Minimize Our Environmental Footprint.** Design with environmental sustainability in mind, using best in class materials and design techniques to ensure the project has a minimal impact on the environment now, and into the future.
4. **Achieve Financial Sustainability.** The project will be financially sustainable and practically access available public resources to create affordable housing. To this end, we will seek financial support from local, provincial, and federal levels of government and from non-profit partners.
5. **Build Capacity of Community Partners:** The project proponents will work in partnership with other local non-profits interested affordable housing and providing resources to residents of the Sunshine Coast
6. **Unceded Territory:** Work with the awareness that we are operating on the unceded territory of the Skwxwú7mesh people.



Existing Site Survey with Aerial Photo  
1" = 100'



Existing Trees: trunk larger than 0.5m  
1" = 100'



Existing Trees: trunk larger than 0.7m  
1" = 100'

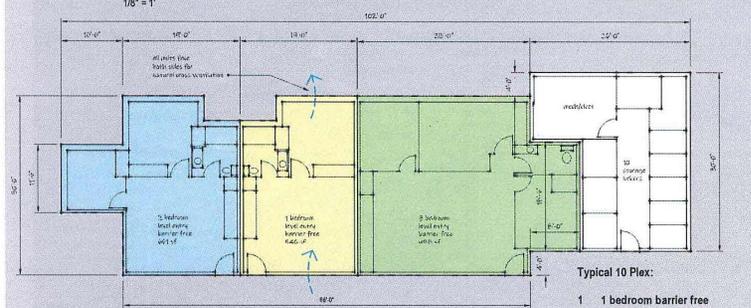
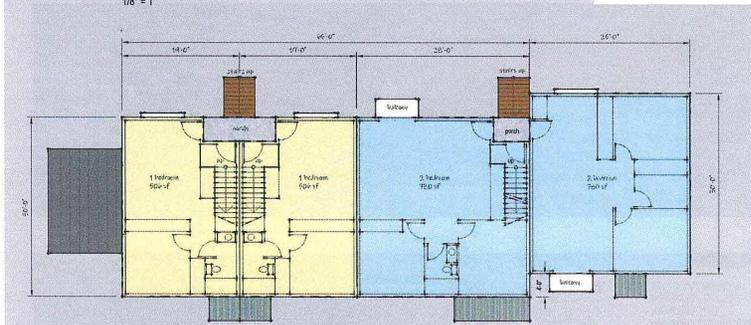
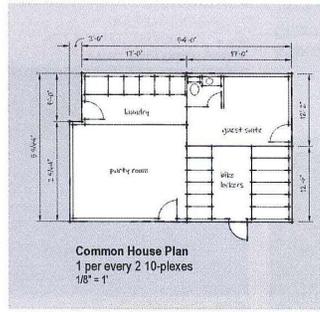
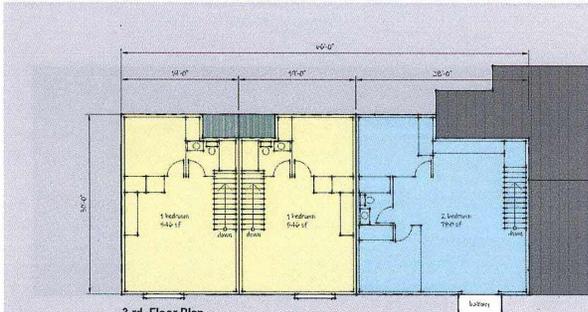


Existing Trees: trunk larger than 1m  
1" = 100'

Affordable Housing Concept Study  
Charman Creek Site

Teryl Mullock Architect Ltd July 30 2018

Existing Site Survey



- Typical 10 Plex:
- 1 1 bedroom barrier free
  - 4 1 bedroom
  - 1 2 bedroom barrier free
  - 3 2 bedroom
  - 1 3 bedroom barrier free
  - 10 total



Affordable Housing Concept Study  
Charman Creek Site

Teryl Mullock Architect Ltd July 30 2018

Typical 10 Plex



Site Plan Concept A  
1" = 50'



South Elevation  
1" = 20'



West (Shaw Road) Elevation  
1" = 20'



Birdseye View From Southwest

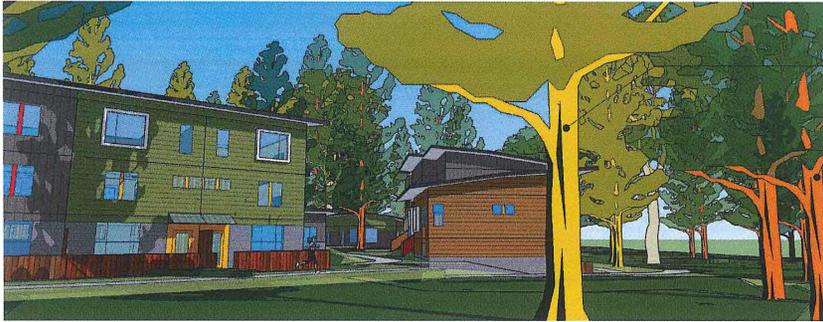


Birdseye View From Northeast

Affordable Housing Concept Study  
Charman Creek Site

Teryl Mullock Architect Ltd July 30 2018

Concept A



View 1 from trail

yellow trunk indicates tree trunk larger than 1m in diameter

orange trunk indicates tree trunk between 0.7m and 1.0 m in diameter



View 2 from trail

brown trunk indicates trunk between 0.5m and 0.7m



View 4 from end of Shaw Road



View 3 from neighbour's yard



View 5 of Courtyard

Affordable Housing Concept Study  
Charman Creek Site

Teryl Mullock Architect Ltd July 30 2018

Concept A



Site Plan Concept B  
1" = 50'



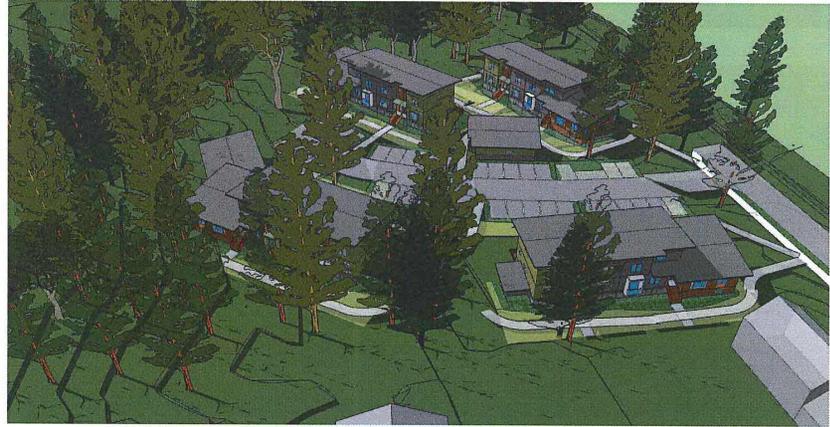
South Elevation  
1" = 20'



West (Shaw Road) Elevation  
1" = 20'



Birdseye View From Southwest



Birdseye View From Northeast

Affordable Housing Concept Study  
Charman Creek Site

Teryl Mullock Architect Ltd July 30 2018

Concept B



View 1 from trail



View 2 from trail



View 3 from neighbour's yard

yellow trunk indicates tree trunk larger than 1m in diameter

orange trunk indicates tree trunk between 0.7m and 1.0 m in diameter



View 4 from end of Shaw Road



View 5 of Courtyard

brown trunk indicates trunk between 0.5m and 0.7m

Affordable Housing Concept Study  
Charman Creek Site

Teryl Mullock Architect Ltd July 30 2018

Concept B

## SCHEDULE B

August 24, 2018

Lesley-Ann Staats  
Director of Planning  
Town of Gibsons  
474 South Fletcher Rd.  
Box 340  
Gibsons, BC V0N 1V0

**Re: Memorandum of Understanding - Charman Creek lands, Shaw Road, Gibsons**

Dear Lesley-Ann:

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to establish the terms under which the Town of Gibsons (the Town) and the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society (SCAHS) will continue their collaboration on developing approximately 40 units of affordable rental housing on an approximately 3-acre parcel that is to be subdivided from a larger Town-owned parcel at the southern terminus of Shaw Road in Gibsons (the Site).

The following is acknowledged:

- 1) A feasibility analysis was completed by Urban Matters CCC for the Town which documented the significant need for affordable rental in Gibsons, the type of housing needed, and the basic suitability of the Site;
- 2) An Open House in regard to developing affordable rental housing in the Town hosted by SCAHS, Urban Matters, and the Town was held on June 8, 2017 and was attended by approximately 80 people;
- 3) At its November 7, 2017 meeting, Town Council resolved to designate the Charman Creek lands site as a prospective site for a 40-unit rental housing project to be developed and funded in partnership with the SCAHS and senior governments
- 4) At its November 7, 2017 meeting, Town Council resolved to work with the SCAHS to execute and report back on a three-step consultative process: a world café to discuss the proposal; a design charrette to evaluate design principles appropriate for the Site; an open house to present these design principles and a more refined concept plan.
- 5) A World Café meeting was held on February 1, 2018 at Christensen Village in Gibsons facilitated by Urban Matters, Town staff and Board members of the SCAHS to hear from neighbours and community members about this proposed development; twenty-nine residents attended and a report was submitted to Town Council on April 3, 2018.

- 6) At its November 7, 2017 meeting, Town Council resolved to support fundraising efforts for the project development costs with an application to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC); The SCAHS submitted an application on May 8, 2018 for predevelopment financing to help cover the cost of architectural and engineering services required for planning and the rezoning of the site;
- 7) An architect was retained to help further develop the concept and support the design charrette. McElhanney Associates Land Surveying Ltd. was retained to provide a site plan and elevations, and identify and plot all trees over 0.5 meters on the plan.
- 8) A design charrette was held on August 7, 2018 with stakeholders and residents invited to participate. A report was submitted to Town Council on September 4, 2018.
- 9) An Open House, the third step in the consultative plan, is planned for September 2018.
- 10) A traffic study has been ordered and a broader ecological review of the 2-acre Site is being ordered to identify particularly sensitive areas and mitigate development impacts on such areas to support the refinement of the plan and preparations for rezoning submission;
- 11) The SCAHS would like to move forward on the development of the Site and the Town of Gibson would like to support the development.

For its part, SCAHS shall proceed as follows:

- 1) Support the preparation of an Agreement that outlines the conditions of subdivision and rezoning of the site, the terms of a lease agreement, and the delivery of affordability, operations, and other appropriate conditions;
- 2) Continue to coordinate closely with Town staff on the design development of rental housing on the Site and prepare for a rezoning submission in regard to the Site in November of 2018;
- 3) Seek funding from BC Housing and CMHC to support the affordability of the proposed rental housing project;
- 4) Continue to make sure all costs related to the project development are covered by sources other than the Town;
- 5) Work collaborative with Urban Matters and New Commons Development to carry out the development;
- 6) Work primarily with local contractors and professionals to carry out the development;

- 7) Collaborate with critical service providers on the Sunshine Coast such as Sunshine Coast Community Service to ensure that the housing developed furthers the housing needs of the Town of Gibsons.

For its part, the Town would like to proceed as follows:

- 1) Lead the preparation of an Agreement that outlines the conditions of subdivision and rezoning of the site, the terms of a lease agreement, and the delivery of affordability, operations, and other appropriate conditions;
- 2) Endorse the SCAHS in fundraising efforts to finance the development;
- 3) The Town encourages the SCAHS to submit a rezoning application for the proposed development with an expectation that it will include measures to reduce negative impacts on the remaining portion of the parcel and the neighborhood.

Should the terms set forth above reflect the mutual understanding on how Gibsons and SCAHS intend to move this work forward please indicate your agreement by signing below.

We look forward to our continued work with you on this important matter.

Sincerely yours,

**SUNSHINE COAST AFFORDABLE HOUSING SOCIETY**

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dion Whyte  
Board Chair

*This memorandum of understanding is accepted by:*

**TOWN OF GIBSONS**

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Corporate Officer

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_