

Applicant Submission



CALGARY DREAM CENTRE

Restoring Dignity, Discovering Destiny, Realizing Dreams

Applicant's Submission Statement

Updated November 2, 2021

Affordable Housing Need

The Affordable Housing Report led by Calgary Housing identifies a large need to increase the non-market housing supply in Calgary. Affordable Housing is a critical resource for Calgary citizens and is essential for combatting homelessness. The goal of Affordable Housing is to provide affordable, inclusive, and accessible shelter to those with little or no income.

The City of Calgary wants to upscale non-profit organizations to provide more Affordable Housing to meet the ongoing need, amplified by COVID-19. Additionally, Affordable Housing would reduce the need for emergency services saving \$34,000.00 per homeless person housed. The University Health Network's (UHN) aim is to help break the cycle of hospitals admitting and readmitting vulnerable individuals due to a lack of adequate housing and community support services. Based on our proposal of housing 68 individuals facing homelessness or those at risk of homelessness in a repurposed hotel for affordable housing, this initiative could potentially save the City of Calgary \$2.3M in emergency services annually.

As mentioned prior, the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified shortfalls and has created a new urgency for Canada's supply of affordable housing—especially for vulnerable populations. The Federal Government has introduced the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI-2) as a solution. This initiative which is led by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) provides funding to expedite the delivery of affordable housing units to vulnerable people and populations targeted under the National Housing Strategy. CMHC will contribute up to 100% of funding to support the acquisition and conversion of a non-residential building to an affordable rental project. Through Cost Sharing with the City and matching donors, we expect CMHC will only need to contribute 80%.

The Calgary Dream Centre (CDC)

The Calgary Dream Centre is applying for the RHI-2 funding to help ease the affordable housing shortage in Calgary. The property to be purchased is the Best Western Plus Calgary Centre Inn located at 3630 Macleod Trail South. This is five blocks north from our current facility at 4510 Macleod Trail SW.

The CDC has been in existence on Macleod Trail since October 2003 and its purpose is guiding people caught in the cycle of homelessness and addiction into lives of purpose. Our vision is life change for the homeless and hurting. Our mission is to help people restore their dignity, discover their destiny, and realize their dreams. Through professional mental health and

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addiction recovery programming, counselling, and compassionate outreach, the CDC empowers Calgarians to overcome the struggles of homelessness and addiction. Our team works tirelessly to provide individuals with the opportunities and encouragement they need to start their journey.

Since the inception of our 4510 Macleod Trail location, the CDC has expanded to provide community housing to men and women over 18 years of age across the city of Calgary. Alongside offering community affordable housing we also operate a women's recovery program and a low-cost housing program. The CDC has 49 locations across Calgary, including single detached homes, duplexes, fourplexes, and apartment buildings. We also operate and manage another apartment for HomeSpace Calgary, which is also primarily affordable housing.

The Dream Centre takes great pride in our property management team, ensuring all properties are well maintained, both inside and outside. We have a good rapport with all neighbors and believe in teaching our clients the value of giving back to their communities. We seldom have encountered complaints about our properties, but should a situation arise we do our due diligence to resolve the matter with respect to the neighbor and/or neighborhood. We will strive to ensure the same relationship with the communities at the new property at 3630 Macleod Trail S.

The proximity of the Hotel to our main facility will allow for sharing of resources and staff. This collaborative relationship will aid in our goal to lower the rental costs for residents below market-rent. The CDC will operate the facility as affordable housing without requiring Operating financial assistance from the government. With seventeen years of industry experience, as well as our capable staff, we are confident in our ability to successfully operate the repurposed Hotel as Affordable Housing.

Our ultimate goal is to provide affordable housing to those who need it the most. We believe that we are offering not only a safe and affordable place, but a place to call home. Our history proves that treating our residents with dignity and offering them hope, is the catalyst for achieving a life of purpose and integrating back into society.

Project Description

This project is to provide affordable and long-term housing for 68 individuals over the age of 18 who are living in homelessness or at risk of entering homelessness. This housing would welcome all demographics including the Indigenous and Black Canadian populations alongside other men and women of all races, gender identities and ethnicities. The project is women centric where 50% plus of the rooms will be for women. This also includes accommodating those with disabilities. The CDC has a well-established intake process that will be used for selecting the residents. This process has been successfully used at the various CDC locations

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and will ensure the best resident's will be selected to alleviate any concerns of the surrounding communities.

The Hotel is to be renovated and repurposed for affordable residential housing. In summary, it is a four story building constructed in 1999 and is in impeccable shape. It is situated on 0.363 HA of land. The hotel has 71 guest rooms (of which 68 are suitable for affordable and transitional housing), and current parking for 70 vehicles. There is an elevator to access all four floors and the lower level. Public restrooms are accessible equipped. The facility also includes a fitness center, a breakfast nook and a pool that will be covered over to provide a multi-purpose room that can also be used for institutional training and future commercial application.

The hotel is also strategically located three blocks from the 39 Avenue LRT station and Macleod Trail. City buses also are available within two blocks of the hotel for ease of access to downtown and shopping areas such as the Chinook Centre. This is a perfect location for the affordable housing due to its distance to the downtown core, its close proximity to our main facility, and easy access to transportation and amenities. Once the hotel is repurposed into Affordable Housing, it will provide services that include full-time security, as well as maintenance, cleaning, and administration

The repurposed hotel will have a social area where the current breakfast nook is located. There will also be laundry facilities on each residential floor and a fitness center for exclusive use by residents. The residents' rooms will be fully furnished along with a kitchenette and all required housewares.

Proposed Renovations

The renovations require changing the hotel front desk into a Security Office, the Administration Office will be maintained and two suites will be converted into staff offices and meeting rooms.

The Existing pool will be shut down and a subfloor will be placed over the pool and deck to create the space for a multi-purpose room that can be used for institutional training, and future commercial and social enterprise applications. Beefed up security will be performed at the front doors and a new roof will be added to the hotel to replace the aging 20 year-old roof.

Guest rooms will be modified by installing a kitchenette in all 68 units, including appliances. There is a sprinkler system throughout the building and the CDC will be adding protective baskets over each of the sprinkler heads to prevent an accidental flood.

Housekeeping rooms will be converted into residents' laundry rooms, one on each of the four floors.

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The security system, door locks, and smoke detectors are in great shape and will be maintained. A review of all security systems (i.e. cameras), fire systems, telecom, internet and Wi-Fi connections will be made and enhancements made where necessary. All of these renovations are to provide cost effective services to the residents.

Commercial Space (Pool Area)

As mentioned, the pool area will be covered over with the intent of using the space for future commercial and social enterprise applications. The existing pool area, the exercise room (which will be relocated), the pool mechanical room (not needed), and the two adjoining washrooms will form part of the commercial space. We are also looking at using the one guest room to the south of the pool area as an office for the commercial venture staff.

Conclusion

The need for affordable housing in Calgary, the timing of the RHI-2 application process, and the will of the Municipal, Provincial, and Federal Governments to act on supplying affordable housing makes this the perfect time for the Calgary Dream Centre to expand our reach and provide our expertise to service more of the vulnerable population in Calgary through Affordable Housing. We have an ideal location and a proven track record that we can deliver.

Thank you!