

**Paradise Valley:
Centre for Change**

**Information Report
Addressing
Neighbourhood Concerns**

**Cliff Doherty
June 22, 2007**

Background

Paradise Valley: Centre for Change, a residential treatment centre for society members with addiction issues, is proposed for the northern area of Squamish, in the Cheakamus Valley specifically between the Midnight Way area and North Vancouver Outdoor School.

The proponents are currently undertaking neighbourhood meetings with an anticipated Public Information Meeting in the fall of 2007.

Through neighbourhood discussions, issues were raised from the residents with concerns for public safety, including the following:

Drug Dealers attracted to the area to supply patients

Neighbourhood Break and Enters will increase with clients leaving the grounds and stealing to support their habit

Incidents of violence will Increase

The proponents have gone on record during these meetings stating they will not entertain “*high risk*” clients which includes referrals from the legal system. They feel treatment centres are supposed to be safe places, and thus safety will be one of their key issues and they will not accept clients who will compromise the safety of other clients or their staff.

In addition, the proponents want to ensure that the neighbourhood is safe and plan to implement operational procedures whereby clients will have an active programming schedule for up to 10 hours per day and will not be wandering around the complex or leaving the facility on their own. Any clients requiring to leave the grounds, such as an appointment in town, will be accompanied by a staff member.

The facility would attract and work only with those clients who are “dry and clean” and committed to wanting a change in their lifestyle. This will be accomplished through an intensive screening process.

The proponents contacted me and asked if I would research the above issues and offer some insight in the flood alerting process.

Terms of Reference

Research was guided by these agreed upon terms of reference:

" To research similar established residential treatment centres and ascertain the extent of recorded concerns or issues affecting their community neighbours, particularly relating to crime and police response"

" To research the extent of vulnerability and /or risk to clients of the Paradise Valley: Centre for Change if and when a "flood alert" is issued for the Cheakamus River"

" To offer Emergency Preparedness and Response recommendations to the Paradise Valley: Centre for Change, including evacuation procedures, for consideration of inclusion within their Operational Guidelines."

" To document the knowledge and information obtained and produce a report by June 22"

Experience and Credentials

A career member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, over 15 years were served with Squamish Detachment, the last 5 posted as Detachment Commander which included management of the 9-1-1 Dispatch Centre. I retired from the Force in 2004 just short of 29 years of service to become Director of Protective Services with the District of Squamish which included an oversight responsibility for emergency management and preparedness. Through both roles, I have extensive involvement with flooding in the Cheakamus Valley and liaison with BC Hydro. Early in 2007, another career opportunity became available; so after 2 ½ years with the District of Squamish, I relocated to the Salmon Arm area, currently with Columbia Shuswap Regional District as their Shuswap Emergency Program Coordinator, responsible for approximately 35,000 full time residents in more than a dozen communities with up to a 200,000 population in the summer.

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Research and Investigation Criteria

Across the continent of North America, there appears to be hundreds of Residential Treatment Centres (RTC) in operation, with at least 30 up and running in the Province of British Columbia.

Two websites were particularly useful during this research:

Canadian Drug Rehab Centres at
www.canadiandrugrehabcentres.com

National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers at
www.naatp.org

I thought it prudent to research those established RTC's in British Columbia which most matched the proposed facility and Squamish.

While there are dozens of RTC's in B.C., I have focused on four which bore a resemblance and similarity to this proposed centre.

Evaluation of Policing Concerns

" To research similar established residential treatment centres and ascertain the extent of recorded concerns or issues affecting their community neighbours, particularly relating to crime and police response"

#1 www.sunshinecoasthealthcentre.ca

The **Sunshine Coast Health Centre** is located on the shores of Malaspina Strait on the Sunshine Coast in Powell River. Opened in March 2004 as a residential treatment centre, the grounds and buildings prior to this date were operating as a centre for mentally challenged individuals. In speaking with the police representative, they can recall no opposition to the Sunshine Coast Health Centre being established, the speculation being that it was already an "in operation" facility for some time. The detachment could not recall the last occasion they had to attend the Sunshine Coast Health Centre for a call, and further added that in recent history, officers have rarely been dispatched to the location.

#2 www.comoxvalleyrecoverycentre.com

The **Comox Valley Recovery Centre** has been operating for over 30 years and the facility is located on the community outskirts. The Detachment has absolutely no policing concerns with CVRC, and in fact, work together with them on the RCMP Community Crime Reduction program. They term it a Good News story. In addition to the official relationship, the police rep. had a complimentary personal comment - a distant family member had been a successful client. Coincidentally on the day as this research contact, a group of clients had been observed by the officer out for a walk within the community.

While the Edgewood Treatment Centre - www.edgewood.bc.ca was not one of the facilities selected for research contact, it was brought up by the Comox Valley Detachment and given high grades for their program, especially the aspect where Edgewood remains in touch with clients for 2 years after they “graduate” from the program.

#3 www.cedarsatcobblehill.com

The **Cedars at Cobble Hill** is within the policing boundaries of the Shawnigan Lake Detachment situated on over 30 acres on the edge of the village of Cobble Hill. It has been a residential treatment centre for approximately 1 year; previously, it was a facility for brain injured patients. The detachment advises the Cedars at Cobble Hill has not been any problem; the operation and facility described as being very quiet. In contrast, as a former clinical setting for “brain injured patients”, the police were attending often to deal with issues. When asked are there any issues at all now; answer – “nothing”.

#4 www.orchardrecovery.com

The Bowen Island Detachment is very complimentary of the management of the **Orchard Recovery and Treatment Centre** describing them as very supportive to the police and the community. The representative has been involved with policing on the island for slightly less than 2 years, and cannot recall any complaints lodged from the public or neighbourhood about the actions of clients of the facility or perceived concerns from the neighbourhood community.

Vulnerability During Flooding and Flood Alerts

“ To research the extent of vulnerability and /or risk to clients of the Paradise Valley: Centre for Change if and when a “flood alert” is issued for the Cheakamus River”

The chosen location for the Paradise Valley: Centre for Change is within the flood plain of that portion of the Cheakamus River which flows between Daisy Lake and confluence with the Squamish River within the municipal boundaries of the District of Squamish.

This particular section of the river emanates from the spillway of the BC Hydro dam on Daisy Lake which plays an important role and critical function during any high water levels or flooding.

BC Hydro prepared a Cheakamus Project Water Use Plan for the acceptance of the Comptroller of Water Rights, after consultation - www.bchydro.com/rx_files/environment/environment30811.pdf -dated October 1st, 2005 which was accepted in February 2006.

Review of the implemented Cheakamus Project Water Use Plan -

www.bchydro.com/rx_files/environment/environment41676.pdf

outlines in Section 4.4.1 that BC Hydro dam operations will limit reservoir levels during the period October to December to provide additional storage capacity to assist in managing high water inflow events and that during flood events, BC Hydro will coordinate their operations with the District of Squamish.

In Section 10 BC Hydro has prepared Notification Procedures for floods and other emergency events in their *Power Supply Emergency Plan* and *Cheakamus Dam Emergency Planning Guide* which have been filed with the Office of the Comptroller of Water Rights.

The purpose of the *Cheakamus Dam Emergency Planning Guide* is to explain the roles of BC Hydro and the role of authorities; local, regional, and provincial emergency program and response agencies.

The *Cheakamus Dam Emergency Planning Guide* is a copyrighted BC Hydro document that both District of Squamish and SLRD receive a copy of and are required to maintain.

To comply with the provincial Dam Safety Regulation, BC Hydro must have an emergency plan with notification procedures to downstream emergency management programs and emergency responders.

Local authorities – municipalities and regional districts – to comply with the provincial Emergency Program Act, must have emergency plans and procedures in place for warning the public of an emergency and outlining their response capability to such emergencies, including for the evacuation of large areas if necessary.

The Cheakamus River Valley Emergency Notification System is the public warning and notification process utilized by the District of Squamish when BC Hydro begins an alert progression – consisting of a Green Alert, Yellow Alert, and finally an anticipated Red Alert.

Green Alert occurs when BC Hydro is forecasting that river flows will increase up to potentially “bank full” status; the Squamish Emergency Program (SEP) and relevant first responders should be planning and taking appropriate emergency preparedness actions.

Yellow Alert occurs when flow levels are anticipated to increase such that there will be some flooding of residential areas to impact public safety and property. SEP and RCMP at this stage would be initiating the public notification system if not already activated, and organizing the operational procedures of the evacuation plan.

Red Alert occurs when the dam spill levels will definitely result in extensive flooding and the Squamish Emergency Program may declare a State of Local Emergency and Issue Evacuation Orders.

The existing Cheakamus River Valley Emergency Notification System involves 9-1-1 or SEP contacting designated areas in the Cheakamus Valley primarily by telephone. If the phone systems, both fixed and cellular are not operating, then the contingencies would include for other manners of contact to be initiated.

The 9-1-1 Call Answer Centre in the Emergency Services Building receives the incoming notifications from BC Hydro and a dispatcher or SEP staff will contact the designated “Area Captain” or a delegate who are then responsible for alerting others within their area with that information. A potential drawback or flaw with this portion of the system is the reliance on

designated contact persons for residential areas to be home when the Dispatch Centre begins the fan-out.

Two of the designated areas are particularly well suited for a phone fan-out process – the North Vancouver Outdoor School with an established on-site administration office and the Cheekeye Reserve with the 24/7 contact through Squamish Nation Peacekeepers.

The Paradise Valley: Centre for Change proposal indicates there will be a maintained 24/7 presence of staff for supervision purposes and thus on a 24/7 basis will be able to receive alert information from the Squamish Emergency Program or RCMP and commence appropriate actions or procedures as specified in the facility operations manual.



Emergency Management Recommendations

“ To offer Emergency Preparedness and Response recommendations to the Paradise Valley: Centre for Change, including evacuation procedures, for consideration of inclusion within their Operational Guidelines.”

To assist the proposed facility uphold its Mission, Philosophy, Values, and Objectives document as well as the “on record” commitments as well as address perceived concerns from the neighbourhood, I would like to offer the following recommendations:

#1 – the Operational Guidelines are well structured similar to those already in existence with established RTC’s to include very detailed off-site restrictions and rules, items and materials not allowed on site or to be brought to the facility, very clear expectations of client behaviour and clearly understood specific outcomes if these expectations are not met or followed, etc.;

#2 – the operational guidelines include extensive and detailed emergency preparedness and response actions for all potential site and facility hazards, risks, and/or vulnerabilities beyond flooding such as wildfires, structural fires, train derailments, hazardous material incidents, ground and drinking water contamination, to list a few (see evacuation plan format eg.);

#3 – contact the Squamish Emergency Program to ensure the facility is added to or included in the notification process

#4 - ensure emergency procedures are not only learned but practiced through organized training and exercises for staff; and

#5 – reinforce established procedures through strong and sustained management of the facility, programs, and clients and audit on a predetermined schedule.

Summary

During the past several years, both as an RCMP officer and later with Protective Services, it was very obvious to me and many colleagues that our geographic area was lacking in addiction treatment facilities.

There simply were not enough “beds” available and when any were, they were often very distant from the community.

This facility when in operation I believe to be a very large step in the right direction of helping those within our community who truly wish to change their lives around.

As I spoke to representatives, both residential treatment centre and the police community, I was pleasantly amazed at the answers to my questions. While I had a sensing there may not be significant crime or policing issues, I was astonished at the consistent No Problem responses especially from the policing community; the issues raised from the Paradise Valley neighbourhood meetings simply were not occurring and there were no identified concerns at all relating to the clients or the operation of those four residential treatment centres.

But it was also emphasized by two police representatives that special mention be given to the on-site management of the centres, those two specifically were the Orchard on Bowen Island and Comox Valley Treatment Centre and it was felt this may be key to such success.

The comments regarding the Cedars at Cobble Hill were heartening – when it used to be a brain injury clinic, police were attending often. When it transitioned to a residential treatment centre, the police no longer have to respond for problems or issues.

A positive comment from Powell River representative regarding the Sunshine Coast Health Centre – a large industry in the community funds employees who substance addicted to attend the program.

With the Paradise Valley: Centre for Change offering a reduction in fees and priority to local residents, this would be a great asset for the community of Squamish.

With regards to the Cheakamus River Flood Alerts, with established operational emergency response and evacuation procedures that are

practiced, the facility is in an excellent position to deal with high water levels and respond appropriately when the existing Cheakamus River Valley Emergency Notification System is activated.



Systems and procedures are established for authorities to provide sufficient high water level or flood warnings for this section of the Cheakamus River. When those alerts are issued, the key is for residents and other persons located in the valley to not delay in evacuating when an evacuation is being recommended or ordered.

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SAMPLE EVACUATION PLAN FORMAT

INTRODUCTION

i.e. - provides policies and procedures for alerting, controlling access, and moving persons from threatened or hazardous areas to safe refuge during emergent situations.

- Outlines Evacuations – Mandatory, Precautionary, or Voluntary
- Outlines Potential of Sheltering-in-Place
- Outlines Potential of Rescue Scenarios

AUTHORITIES – if applicable, contact with SEP and ESS

OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN:

- Evacuate or Shelter in Place
- Base on type of threat, client #'s, time, weather, resources, capabilities
- Notification and Instructional Info for Staff and Clients
- Control and expediting of evacuees
- Provision of adequate means to transport
- Instituting Access Control Mechanisms for the Vacated Property
- Sufficient resources to implement the Plan
- Audit and monitor the Plan, making changes when warranted

ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

- Coordination with other agencies and support organizations
- Clean Identification and delineation of facility and neighbourhood
- Develop easily understood alerts, directions and evacuation procedures
- Establish staff requirements and equipment
- Establish the sheltering locations
- Arrange for alternate modes of transportation
- Develop clear, complete, and concise announcements and notice content
- Develop an Evacuation Plan Checklist

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

- Preparedness – planning, training, exercising
- Increased Readiness – orientation meetings and discussions
- Pre-Impact – projections of what evacuation will look like
- Sustained Response – activities to effect safety of life and property
- Recovery – lifting of evacuation, and return to normal operation