City Grants Rezoning Approval for Pearson Dogwood Redevelopment Project
- Detailed design work will now move forward

In a unanimous decision, Vancouver City Council approved the rezoning application for the Pearson Dogwood Lands. A Public Hearing was held July 20th, where Council heard more than two dozen presentations and considered feedback from the many members of the community and advocacy groups. Council voted on the motion, with an amendment stating the Therapy Pool will remain on site, on July 25. Following debate and discussion at this regularly scheduled Council Meeting, all nine councillors present voted in favour.

“We are pleased to be moving forward with this work,” said Bob Chapman, Director for Residential Care, Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH). “The housing designs and Model of Care Framework reflect the input and priorities of George Pearson Residents, advocacy groups and VCH and reflects the commitments made in the Consensus Document. This is an important milestone for all of us.”

George Pearson Residents Speak Out
Three George Pearson Centre (GPC) residents attended the Public Hearing, five residents expressed their comments via video submission, a submitted petition on housing choice was signed by 55 residents and a letter was read from the Residents Council Working Group. Councillors were very appreciative of the effort made by residents to ensure their perspectives were represented. Other presenters attending the event expressed both support and opposition to the Project including representatives from advocacy groups and the broader community.

Main speaking points: The Transit Station, Therapy Pool and need for Choice in Housing Options
Several speakers voiced their concerns regarding a lack of clarity around the transit station at 57th Avenue, others expressed concerns regarding the replacement of the Therapy Pool, while others spoke of the need for housing choices. The transit station is out of scope for VCH planning activities; significant work has been done to address the commitment to replace the Stan Stronge Pool with another facility on the Pearson Dogwood site; and the housing options requested ran the gamut of replacing Pearson with another institution to offering only individualized units. The rebuild of Dogwood, the Adult Day Care Centre and the Community Health Centre were also mentioned during the course of the evening’s speakers.

“We are aware of concerns and challenges regarding the Therapy Pool and the housing options,” Bob Chapman said. “Working groups, with representatives from user groups, residents and advocacy groups are in place to support this planning process. Today’s approval from Council now enables us to move forward with this work and we look forward to continuing our engagement with the various communities and residents.”

Next Steps
With approval of the high level proposal, VCH, together with the developer Onni, will focus on the detailed planning and design of all components of the rebuild; the Pearson Units, the new Dogwood Lodge, the Community Health Centre, the Therapy Pool, and the Adult Day Care. City Council will need to approve the designs before they issue building permits required for construction. This work will likely be completed this fall to enable construction to commence in 2018.