



BC HOUSING

DESIGN GUIDELINES

For Women's Safe Homes, Transition Houses,
Second Stage Housing, and Long-Term
Rental Housing

2021 UPDATE



BRITISH
COLUMBIA



BC HOUSING

Poem: Finally

I quietly close the door
Quickly securing the lock
Leaning against the door
I close my eyes
Finally I sigh heavily
Realizing I made it
I finally did it
I made it safely
Taking a deep breathe
I can do this
For I'm stronger now
I promised myself that
Things will be different
No more fear-filled days
Nor terror sleepless nights
Awakening to unfounded accusations
Marked with swollen bruises
Shame lowering my head
A smile slowly forms
I raise my head
I had finally left
I open my eyes
Glancing around in amazement
At my new home
Acceptance enters my eyes
My heart starts racing
Because my reality returns
I acknowledge sadly that
I still feel fear
Yet I smile for
Someday fear will leave

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Introduction

BC Housing supports more than 100 transition houses, safe homes, and second stage housing and programs for women – with or without children – who are at risk of violence, or who have experienced violence. In BC, the buildings vary significantly by size, building type, layout, and types of spaces they include – many created through the conversion of existing buildings or homes.

BC Housing has prepared this guide to assist development teams with the planning, and design processes for upgrading existing buildings or constructing new buildings that are to be used for the women safe homes, transition houses, second stage housing and long-term rental housing. [These guidelines have been updated in 2021, and changes are identified in blue throughout the document.](#)

In establishing these guidelines, BC Housing reviewed national and global best practices, guidelines, and research for housing and programs for women and children who are at risk of violence or who have experienced violence. A thorough consultation with multiple development teams was conducted, and operators in the sector were engaged to understand their needs.

The guidelines focus on design and space requirements. The recommended ratio of common and programming areas to the number of units in the building is considered and a set of example drawings provided as a reference in Appendix 1.

Although these guidelines represent best practices, each project may involve some design compromises, reflecting the availability of an appropriate building, site size, or other local circumstances.

In considering the design of new or upgraded buildings, the integration with sound, comprehensive operating policies and procedures, and appropriate staff training is essential. The operators input at each stage is important to ensure the building is appropriate for the requirements of the program.

Societies and development teams should also use BC Housing's most current version of [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#), which provides more detailed building specifications, requirements for interior, exterior materials and finishes, performance guidelines for building systems, BC Housing energy and sustainable goals, Crime

Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies, drawings and other construction documents.

Safe homes, transition houses, second stage housing, and long-term rental housing are part of a housing continuum that helps move from crisis to permanent accommodation and provide supports as necessary. Reference should be made to the most current version of BC Housing’s [Women’s Transition Housing and Supports Program \(WTHSP\) Framework](#), which also provides definitions for terms used in the planning and operations of these facilities.



Glossary of Terms

Affordable housing: Housing is considered affordable when 30 per cent or less of a household's gross income goes towards paying for housing costs.

Anti-ligature design: Design that reduces the risk of people using the construction or refurbishments to self harm, or in extreme cases, to complete suicide.

Commissioning: An integrated set of activities intended to ensure that a project meets both the operator's project requirements and the operational needs.

Considerations vs. Requirements: Within this document, guidelines are either a consideration or a requirement. Considerations must be reviewed for each project but are dependant on the operator's specific program needs. Requirements are mandatory, and must be adhered to.

CPTED: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPDTEd) is a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behaviour and nuisance activity through environmental design.

Development team: The consultants, contractors, funding agencies and other parties involved in the design and construction of the project.

Glazing: The glass component of a building's facade or internal surfaces.

Kitchenette: A common use amenity kitchen that is not intended for commercial kitchen purposes. It should include an upper and base cabinet, microwave outlet and shelf, double bowl stainless steel sink, refrigerator, residential electric range and hood, and a dishwasher (if required by the operator).

LGBTQ2SIA+: An evolving acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, two-spirit, queer, questioning, and additional identities.

Long-term rental housing: Safe, affordable long-term independent rental housing that may include access to support services, typically in apartments or townhouses.

Low barrier or minimal-barrier: Having few requirements for entry into the program or housing.

Operator: An organization, society, or other BC Housing partner that operates non-profit housing.

Safe homes: Safe, short-term shelter and support services, typically for 10 days. Safe Homes operate in a variety of ways depending on the community, such as an apartment or townhouse unit, a hotel or motel room, or a secure room in a private home.

Second Stage housing: Safe, affordable short-term housing with support services. Independent housing typically in apartments or townhouses and length of stay is typically no longer than 18 months.

Self-contained Housing: A dwelling unit that includes a kitchen, bathroom, living area, sleeping area, and dining area within the unit.

Subsidized housing: A type of housing for which the provincial government provides financial support or rent assistance.

Transition houses: Safe, 24/7 staffed shelter and support services, typically for 30 days. Most transition houses are residential homes in confidential locations where women and families live communally. Note that transition houses are different than transitional housing, which is used in a variety of programs, and is usually short term and for all genders to stay between 30 days to three years.

Trauma-informed design: Design that recognizes that the physical environment can have physiological and emotional impact. Trauma-informed design creates a supportive environment that resists the re-traumatization of people.

Universal design: Space that is designed to be understood, accessible and used regardless of a persons age, size, ability or disability without the need for adaption, modification, assistive devices or special solutions.

SECTION A

Overview & Needs Assessment

- 1** About the Women's Transition Housing & Supports Program
- 2** Current & Future Needs

1. About the Women's Transition Housing & Supports Program

The purpose of the [Women's Transition Housing & Supports Program \(WTHSP\)](#) in British Columbia is to assist women – with and without children – who are at risk of violence or who have experienced violence, with access to safe, secure, and confidential services. This includes information and support for decision-making, short term shelter or housing, referrals to other services and links to safe, affordable housing.

There are four typical models along the housing continuum for the target client group: Safe Homes, Transition Houses, Second Stage Housing, and Long-Term Rental Housing.

The understanding of who is affected by violence is expanding, and these design guidelines are meant to reflect this. Women come from all walks of life, age, race, sexual orientation, religion, education levels, and socioeconomic status. Women and children have a variety of needs for support, including for physical disabilities, health needs, mental health issues, or substance use issues.

Often there are unique needs and resources within communities, and differences in operator philosophies and organizational capacity. These differences have influenced and changed how support is provided through these housing options.

1.1 Safe Homes

A safe home is safe, short-term housing when a transition house is unavailable, and is often in remote communities (although not always). The length of stay in a safe home is typically 10 days but may be extended to meet individual circumstances. Safe home programs provide emotional support, safety planning, and referrals.

Safe home facilities are provided in a variety of ways and may include a single suite in an apartment building, the use of private residences, or hotel and motel rooms. Some safe home providers use a combination of facility types in order to serve a diverse range of client needs. Some safe homes are communal and others allow women to live independently. Sleeping accommodations should be designed within the Minimum Floor Area as outlined in Section 8, Sleeping Accommodations.

1.2 Transition Houses

Transition houses provide safe, temporary housing with 24/7 staffing. The length of stay is typically 30 days but may be extended to meet individual circumstances. Most transition houses are residential homes in confidential locations where women and families live communally. Support workers in these homes provide emotional support, crisis intervention, and safety planning.

Transition house facilities vary in composition and facility type, but are generally composed of a homelike dwelling with a number of bedrooms, with common areas for food preparation, eating, living, and support services. Bedrooms may have more than one bed in order to accommodate families or single women. However, it is considered best practice to have private rooms and washrooms available when possible. Sleeping accommodations should be designed within the Minimum Floor Area as outlined in Section 8, Sleeping Accommodations.

1.3 Second Stage Housing

Second stage housing is safe, independent, and short-term housing. The length of stay is typically 6 to 18 months but may be extended to meet individual circumstances. Staff are available to provide emotional support, safety planning, and referrals.

Housing is usually a private and secure, self-contained, low-rise apartment or townhouse unit. Provided on-site is support and common spaces such as amenity rooms and staff offices. Dwelling units should be designed within the Net Unit Areas as outlined in BC Housing's [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#). Depending on the operator's need, enhanced safety and security may need to be considered throughout the building.

1.4 Long-Term Rental Housing

Long-term rental housing is safe, affordable, and independent long-term housing. There is no limit on the amount of time a woman can live in this housing.

This type of independent, self-contained, permanent housing is typically in low-cost apartments or townhouses. Dwelling units should be designed within the Net Unit Areas as outlined in BC Housing's [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#). Depending on

the operator's need, enhanced safety and security may need to be considered throughout the building.

1.5 Clientele Who Will Be Accommodated

Women who access safe homes, transition houses, second stage housing, and long-term rental housing are diverse and often have complex needs. Client populations include:

- Single women;
- Women with children;
- Children of every age and gender, from babies and toddlers to teenagers;
- Women come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, some with pets, and have a variety of storage needs;
- Senior's experiencing age-related health conditions, such as diabetes, Alzheimer's, and dementia, as well as women who are older with mobility impairments;
- Indigenous populations;
- Recent immigrants and refugees;
- LGBTQ2SIA+ individuals;
- Women who may be using substances; and,
- People with varying levels of physical abilities, such as those with physical disabilities, mobility issues, or developmental disabilities.



1.5.1 Increasing Access & Inclusion

As a part of the needs analysis, programs should have an understanding of the various cultures, languages, and diverse communities that are in need of special consideration. This includes women who are refugees or newly arrived to Canada. If there is a large population of specific cultures or communities that access services, inclusionary design considerations should be explored. Women often face intersecting identities (i.e. sex, gender, education, race / ethnicity, sexuality, ability, religion) that may increase the level of vulnerability that they face.

Engage with identified cultural communities about the design consideration. Take the time to learn from program users' experiences, checking with past, current, or potential program users.

Indigenous Communities

Indigenous populations continue to be over-represented as women and children who have experienced violence. Designing spaces to have inclusionary considerations, having space to engage with culture, transitional and holistic healing through the following:

- **Space for Elders.** Shared programming or office space for Elders to meet with individual or groups of women.
- **Sacred spaces.** Space for holistic healing, balcony or a ventilated room that can be used for smudging or pipe ceremonies.
- **Communal living rooms.** A living room like setting where users can socialize and build friendships.
- **Indigenous artists.** When possible, consider incorporating the work of local Indigenous artists or carvers into the construction and design of the space.

For additional information on the design and development of Indigenous housing, refer to BC Housing's [Interim Guide to Indigenous Housing Development and Design](#).

Cultural Communities

Some neighbourhoods have higher populations of specific cultural communities that will be accessing services and some operators focus on a specific underserved cultural community. In these circumstances, the creative design of space should have inclusionary considerations

such as language, kitchen design (eg. Halal or kosher friendly kitchens), and design considerations for religious practices.

LGBTQ2SIA+ Access

Intimate partner violence affects many LGBTQ2SIA+people, but they do not always feel welcome or included in traditional programs or buildings. [Create an inclusive space for both program users and their children / teenagers. Provide private bedrooms and washrooms for those not comfortable sharing their personal space and consider using gender neutral language where possible.](#)

Pets and Service Animals

Women leaving an abusive relationship often fear for the safety of their pets and service animals. Abusers may use animals to manipulate women to stay in a violent relationship or return to one. Ideally, women and children will not have to be separated from their animal. Designing housing to accommodate pets and service animals can help women to feel more at-home. In order to design an animal-friendly building, consider materials (such as eliminating carpet as a flooring option) and providing pet-friendly units or rooms. Pets may require a protected outdoor space.

2. Current & Future Needs

Each project will complete a needs analysis, the functional program, consultation with stakeholders, and approval from BC Housing prior to finalizing any design.

Projects may depend on factors such as building location and configuration, residents (eg. women only or women with children), community, culture, the importance of neighbourhood features, and the existing infrastructure (eg. serviced or non-serviced sites).

The buildings affordability and life cycle costing will need to be considered as each project progresses in designs.

For these reasons, early and ongoing consultation is critical to creating intuitive and intentional design, keeping a balanced approach among spatial efficiency, flexibility in the program areas, and affordability. This will ensure the project is viable, functional, and operationally sustainable for the life of building.

2.1 Needs Analysis

To support the proposition of a new or renovated building, an analysis should be undertaken to determine the client group(s) to be served, and ensure their needs are fully understood. Where possible, the analysis should identify current and future needs, the required scale of the project, and the best location to provide these services.

Projecting the need is an inexact process. Conducting an analysis does not need to be a large and complex activity, but should draw on core housing need within the community and age group, population trends, existing program use information, an understanding of the community and culture, and discussions with local agencies, including the health authority, municipality, the police, RCMP, victim services, violence against women programs, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). The role outreach workers play within programs and community, as well as that of any existing or proposed similar programs or buildings in the community (if applicable), should be taken into account. BC Housing is also a useful source of information for a needs analysis. Refer to [BC Housing's Housing Needs and Demands Study](#).

2.2 Functional Program

Following the completion of a needs analysis, an architect should be contracted to develop a preliminary functional program that responds to the identified needs, the operator's project requirements, the client group to be served, type of housing, and how the building will be operated. Where possible, buildings should be designed with flexibility to meet needs of changing population groups within the building.

The functional program will determine site needs, building layout, common spaces, the dwelling unit design, and support services requirements. The design team should consider the efficiency of common and circulation areas to the sleeping areas based on operational needs. Cost consultants involvement at various stages of design should be completed to ensure viability of project and funding availability. The capital budget and funding requirements will align with design guidelines and Cost Consultants. Operating policies and budgets for the program must be taken into account.

In addition to the operator's project requirements, the design consultant is responsible for reviewing these guidelines, the BC Housing Design Guidelines for Women's Safe Homes, Transition Houses, Second Stage Housing, and Long-term Rental Housing, as well as the [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#) and all applicable design and regulatory requirements, incorporating them into the project design and specifications.

Safe homes, transition houses, second stage housing, and long-term rental housing provide different levels of support services for women and children. The level of support can change depending on program requirements. It is typical for transition houses to offer robust services on-site, safe homes and second stage housing to offer support services, and long-term housing to offer services as needed. Support services include:

	Transition Houses	Safe Homes	Second Stage Housing	Long-Term Rental Housing
24/7 on-site staffing				
Three meals a day				
Personal hygiene supplies				
On-site laundry where facilities exist				
Initial safety assessment & safety planning				
Support, advocacy & referrals				

2.3 Consultation with Stakeholders

Early and ongoing consultation with stakeholders is critical to ensuring the project is viable, functional, and operationally sustainable for the life of building.

The operator will be involved at each stage of design to ensure the building fits program and design requirements. The design team should consult with operational staff, BC Housing and receive feedback on functional space, [targeted efficiency](#), [early costing report](#), [funding availability](#), clients to be served, and operational capacity. This will ensure the operator’s capacity and staffing levels to efficiently run the facility.

If multiple funders are contributing to the development, there should to be consultations with each funder about their requirements. Other funders should be given an understanding of the costs before incorporating recommended design preferences, requirements, and updates.

2.4 Considerations for Location

When considering a location for a new building or evaluating an existing building, assess the neighbourhood's ability to support residents' regaining independence. This includes access to services, employment, and to maintaining or establishing social connections. Living in a community can be a positive experience for women and children.

Consider if the following is easily accessible:

- Public transportation;
- Health care centres;
- Child care providers and schools;
- Community resources;
- Groceries / drug stores;
- Educational and recreational facilities; and
- Pedestrian and / or bicycle friendly travel.

Consider if the neighbourhood feels safe, particularly when women are walking with children.

2.4.1 Considerations for Rural Communities

Women in need of services in rural areas often face issues such as physical isolation, limited access to information and resources, lack of core services such as public transportation, cellular services, delayed response time from support providers or police, and lack of specialized services. On top of that, in smaller communities everyone may know everyone else, and it is hard to stay anonymous. It is helpful for a woman to have a choice of whether to stay in their own community, leave their community, or leave for a time and return when ready.

Many rural communities consider scattered-site safe homes. In this model, homes are spread out throughout a community rather than in one common building. They can be placed into existing neighbourhoods, be more inconspicuous, and can provide women with increased options of location, depending on need for access to schools, work opportunities,



transportation, or services. With this model, women can be located within an area that provides the most safety and least amount of upheaval.

2.4.2 Confidential Versus Non-Confidential Location

Programs need to consider if they require a confidential location or if the program location will be known to the community.

If a site location is to be kept confidential, the location will require additional considerations. These considerations could include the building's ability to blend into the neighbourhood and minimizing the exposure of residents and guests as they come and go.

Some programs are finding that protecting individual confidentiality does not always require a confidential location. If a program is located at a non-confidential site, programs will focus on security and individual client confidentiality.

2.5 Conversion, Renovation, or New Construction

The need for a new facility, or additional capacity for an existing facility, can often arise quickly, requiring a timely response. Finding a site or building suitable to the scale of need, that is appropriately located, and that will secure community and municipal support for rezoning and other approvals, is often a major challenge.

Consider the best building option that works for the project's functional program, location, approvals, available funding, timing until completion is needed. Possible options could be:

- Conversion of an existing building;
- Renovation / Capital improvement of an existing facility; or,
- New construction projects.

Considerations that will affect the building option could be:

- **Accessibility:** Older residential homes can be challenging to make accessible for people with mobility issues.
- **Confidentiality:** New construction can stand out and be conspicuous in smaller communities. This can compromise site confidentiality.

- **Potential changes to the building and compliance with municipal requirements:** The consultant will evaluate an older building, the degree of difficulty and cost for repurposing. An older building may require significant system upgrades – eg. fire safety and/or electrical and mechanical systems, or structural seismic upgrades to the current code requirements. The zoning should be reviewed to see that use complies with current zoning or if change is required. The amount of required parking, relative to availability, is often an issue with municipalities.
- **Short versus long-term costs:** The owner will look at the current costs to build versus the cost to renovate and long-term maintenance of an existing building.
- **Available location:** The decision may be affected by the ability to find land or an existing building at an appropriate location, and what is available within that location.
- **Hazardous materials:** Older buildings often contain hazardous materials – for example lead paint or asbestos. A hazardous material survey will be undertaken by a specialist consultant hired by the owner to assess the risks and the mitigating measures necessary to manage these risks.
- **Efficiency & sustainability:** A new building allows for more control over energy consumption as it can be designed and built with energy efficiency in mind. Energy assessment (energy audit) will be performed for all renovation and conversion projects by minimum ASHRAE level 2 assessment or equivalent for appropriate project scope. The detailed energy assessment report should be completed by a qualified professional and submitted during design stage. Refer to [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#) (Section 2).
- **Flexibility of layout:** A new build will give greater flexibility in creating the preferred layout. If the preferred layout is not found in an existing building, major renovations may be required.
- **Other site investigation reports:** Other due diligence reports must be undertaken for assessing the site conditions as appropriate. This includes geotechnical report, environmental site assessment, site survey, and topographical report for steep slopes and other potential physical constraints, etc.

2.6 Co-location of Safe Homes, Transition Houses, Second Stage Housing and Long Term Rental Housing

Incorporating safe homes or transition houses into second stage housing forms has the potential to make the best use of a site by providing economies of construction, staffing, and offering opportunities for sharing certain facilities and services. This approach can enable residents to build on existing relationships with support staff as they move from the transition house into second stage housing.

Adding one or two safe home units into a second stage or long-term rental housing building can be useful in increasing the number of emergency units and provide women with options in a variety of neighbourhoods. This can be especially helpful in keeping women connected to their neighbourhood and children to their schools and services.

SECTION B

Guiding Principles & Design Considerations

3

Guiding Principles & Design Consideration

3. Guiding Principles & Design Consideration

The design principles are fundamental and foundational considerations to guide decision making for projects. The principles are gathered from the knowledge and experience of operators who serve women and children fleeing abuse.

3.1 Self Determination

The design of the building should promote women's empowerment and self-determination. When women are in abusive situations, it can destroy self esteem, while independence and dignity is eroded. However, women are the best experts on their own lives and should be encouraged to reclaim their ability to choose within the program environment.

Abusive partners often deny a woman's right to set boundaries, and by creating a space that avoids unnecessary restrictions while at the same time diminishing conflict with other residents, a woman's comfort and self determination can improve space design and can increase women's control over their own decision making.

- **Choice to enter a space:** Consider visual access and sight lines that allow a woman to see who is in a space before entering. Maximize glazing in common area doors.
- **Option for privacy:** When an area is communal, create spaces that have options for privacy. This can be done through seating arrangements that can provide people with a sense of privacy. Private [sleeping](#) room in a transition house and self-contained units in second stage housing is recommended.

3.2 Homelike Environment

Even when a building is intended for short-term accommodation, consideration should be given to creating a warm, welcoming, and homelike environment. Women and children accessing these services are arriving from traumatic circumstances, many of them have left their home quickly. A homelike environment can be comforting and peaceful. An institutional design has the risk of re-traumatizing individuals who have had negative experiences within institutions including prison, mental health institutions, hospitals, and residential schools.

This concept is important for clients, but also valuable for staff members who work in these spaces on a longer-term basis. Design considerations will vary according to the clients served in the program and operator's requirements, but may include [these simple added features](#) without compromising the project cost significantly:

- **Natural daylight:** Window locations should be carefully planned to maximize daylighting, balancing between outside exposure and manage heat loss / gain at the same time. Consider adjusting the window size based on children safety, and glazing assembly based on orientation and reducing overheating. In bedrooms, operable windows should be provided for effective ventilation and natural supply of air. For second stage housing where apartment type building form is considered, whenever possible, incorporate day lighting from exterior windows in stairwells and hallways.
- **Separation of use:** Separate high stimulus, noisy areas such as TV room, common dining from quiet areas such as bedrooms.
- **Child-friendly spaces:** In order to help children return to a normal routine have child-friendly places. These are spaces where they can operate easily as a family and have space to play and learn. Provide a line of sight from common areas and the counselling room.
- **Calming environment.** Consider furniture and other services with a curvilinear rather than a hard edge. Rocking chairs can be therapeutic for self soothing or for a parent comforting a child . An uncluttered environment where all items have a place reduces the feeling of chaos. This requires well thought out storage, shelves, and cupboards.
- **Interior finishes:** Colour choices for floors, walls, and furniture that are homelike and appropriate for people with visual impairments. Provide colour contrast between floor and wall finishes with minimal glare and not be heavily textured.
- **Exposure to nature and beauty.** Exposure to nature, nature-like features, and beauty can promote healing and have a restorative effect on people. Consider outdoor residential gardens to encourage social interaction.
- **Sleeping accommodations.** In order to create home like sleeping accommodations, the following should be considered:
 - **Ability to control & adjust their environment.** Provide women with the ability to adjust their own environment. This could mean control over their own thermostat, flexible furnishings, etc.

- ▶ **Expandable spaces for families.** Create flexible spaces that accommodate larger or smaller families as needed. Adaptable space is necessary design to prevent displacement and support all family types. Options for double interconnecting doors between a number of suites (depending on the need and priority) will allow larger families to share space yet maintain privacy.
- ▶ **Opportunities for Personalization.** Instead of fully decorating sleeping accommodations, create opportunities for women and children to decorate and personalize their own space. Place cork or magnet boards for hanging art and chalk board doors or walls to display art work, write or draw, and allow for personal customization.
- ▶ **Access to medication and secure storage.** Discuss with the operator the preferred location for women to store medication. In most cases, women will have control of their own medication in locked storage in her bedroom.



3.3 Flexibility in Design

The diversity of women and families should be respected and seen as valuable. Abuse affects all types of people from diverse family sizes, ethnic backgrounds, languages, sexual orientation, gender identity, cultures, and level of ability. Designing with flexibility in mind is not an easy task, but where possible the following can be considered:

- Individual bedrooms / units that are expandable and interconnected to make room for larger families.

- Plumbing and electrical components should be designed to permit amalgamation into larger bedroom / unit in future.
- There may be times when a facility is full and the operator will choose to increase the number of beds beyond the preferred capacity. This should be acknowledged during the design phase, and the best possible provisions made to accommodate overflow. [Include storage space for cots and design amenity spaces that can convert into private rooms \(made possible by having blinds on windows, a secure door, and furnishings that are multipurpose such as a couch that transforms into a bed\)](#). This should be considered a short-term solution, and every effort should be made to create privacy for women regardless of the situation.

3.4 Designed for Parenting

Programs that welcome women and children need to ensure the space is welcoming and appropriate for children of all ages and empowers the parent. Child-friendly spaces help children to return to a routine by creating spaces where they can operate easily as a family and by having space to play and learn. Design features that have the child in mind and enable a mother to parent their child with ease have the following:

- **Diversity.** Designing with children’s diversity in mind. Children will be different ages, genders, sexual orientation, and level of ability.
- **Sight lines.** Create sight lines to enable parents to supervise their children without being in the same space. Use design strategies such as open plans and glazing on walls or doors so that children are within sight while their mom could be preparing food, visiting, sitting, or meeting with a staff member. Have sight lines between the kitchen, communal space, laundry and exterior.
- **Childproofing safety features.** Give peace of mind to mothers by providing power socket covers, secured lower cabinets, windows that open from the top or window restrictors, cordless window blinds, gates for the kitchen, cutlery out of reach, rounded or padded corners on furniture, cooktop controls, inaccessible cleaning supplies, and anti-scald devices to regulate water temperature in the washroom.
- **Accommodating play areas.** A play / toy area, and space that accommodates strollers for small children.
- **Pet friendly facility.** For children, the loss of their pets can be as traumatic as the loss of their home. Bringing their family pet with them can be therapeutic.

- **Common washroom design for parents and children.** Common washrooms should be designed considering the following in order to create child-friendly spaces that support parents:
 - **Washroom design.** Hygienic areas are needed that are appropriate for all ages of children. Provide single washrooms for privacy. Consider washing stations that are outside of washrooms that can be complimentary when there are a number of children around.
 - **Change stations and diaper disposal.** Baby diaper changing stations should be in or near washrooms.
 - **Child height fixtures.** In washrooms that will be used by small children, consider child height fixtures or space for a step stool so that children can access all areas.
 - **Options for bath time.** Consider what a mother will need to bathe her children. Depending on the age of the child, bathtubs for bathing toddlers are recommended for family rooms / units.



3.5 Public Access & Programming

Transition Housing Programs need to be thoughtful about how much public access is given to a location. On one hand, women who frequent a transition house to access programming may find fears are reduced and stigma is diminished about accessing other services. However, inviting the general public into the building can reduce anonymity and the ability of the operator to create a safe environment.

3.6 Reducing Barriers

Women who have experienced violence and who have mental health and / or substance use issues often face restricted access to transition houses, safe homes, and second stage housing. This can place women at greater risk of homelessness and violence. Some programs are specifically serving women who are using substances and experiencing health conditions, other programs are working with all women and children, while other programs are working towards being more inclusive, including for those with behaviours that may be difficult for other program users and staff.

For programs that have reduced barriers, it can be helpful to create separate space for adult women and space for families. This means having spaces that are specific to women with children, such as living areas, common areas and amenity space, in addition to having adult only spaces for women.

Women may be using substances and therefore harm reduction practices and procedures are important, including provision of information, safe supplies, and safe options for syringe disposal.

Reduced barrier programs will have the design features identified in this guide, and those of particular importance include:

- Secure and accessible storage space for harm reduction supplies and medical supplies. Women should have direct access to their storage to encourage autonomy, respect, and dignity;
- Opportunities for accommodating individuals with higher support needs;
- Dependant on the program mandate, structured to support safe drug use;

- Secure outdoor storage for buggies, and bikes;
- Adequate indoor storage space for women’s belongings, such as designated bins or lockers for valuables;
- A meeting room for visiting professionals to serve clients; and,
- Opportunities for accommodating individuals with pets.

3.7 Finishing & Furnishings

Typically, safe homes and transition houses are furnished. Approximately half of the second stage units across the province are furnished, and the other half are unfurnished. Long-term rental housing units are unfurnished.

Operators have different levels of resources and respond to the furniture needs of women in different ways. If space is limited and units are furnished, some programs have a policy that women cannot bring any furniture. Other programs provide storage space for women’s household possessions (this is especially important in furnished second stage housing). Some providers have storage space dedicated to accepting donations from the community to provide to women when they move out.

Furnishings for common areas should be durable, while homelike, and able to accommodate all levels of accessibility. Furniture should allow for flexible space use, accommodating a variety of group seating sizes.

3.7.1 Trauma Informed Design

Trauma-informed design acknowledges that the physical environment effects a person’s feelings of worth, dignity, and empowerment. Certain design elements can trigger people’s trauma, making them feel unsafe. For program users who experience anxiety, panic attacks, depression, hyper-vigilance, concentration disturbances, trouble sleeping, fear or flashbacks, suicidal thoughts or feelings, sensitivity to loud noise, lights or smells, and chronic headaches, the design of an environment can provide and maintain a supportive and healing environment.

- **Non-institutional.** An institutional environment can remind women of being in prison, hospital, residential schools, or a mental institution. The goal is to create spaces that are a homelike environment that is not reminiscent of an institutional setting. For example,

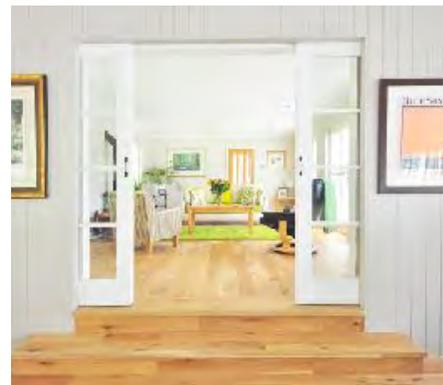
people who have gone through residential schools may find numbers on bedroom doors or sleeping on bunk beds are triggers for them. Some buildings have chosen to have single beds and pictures of animals or colours instead of room numbers. Avoid exposed concrete and choose materials that are reminiscent of home (such as wood-like design).

- **Light and lighting.** Avoid harsh fluorescent lights. A space should be well lit, but not institutional. Consider layers of lighting from lamps, dimming light switches, indirect lighting, and being able to control different areas with a different light switch in order to create intimate spaces. An abundance of natural light is calming for most people. At night, have nightlights or dimmed lights left on in hallways and in washrooms [if washrooms are located outside the bedrooms in a transition house](#).
- **Self determination of ones own space.** Having the ability to open a window, eat food when hungry, or change the temperature in a private space gives people a sense of control over their own environment.

3.8 Minimize Conflict, Guidelines & Noise through Design

Space design can be used to minimize the conflict between residents, reduce the number of necessary guidelines imposed by staff, and decrease the noise that carries throughout different living areas. This can be done by:

- **Number of washrooms.** Ideally, each family has their own washroom, but when they are common, having a generous number of washrooms can reduce stress.
- **Separate noisy areas.** Create a separation between high activity / noisy areas and quiet spaces such as bedrooms.
- **Shared kitchen work areas and food storage.** When a kitchen is shared by residents, have ample kitchen space with multiple work areas and access to snacks. Consider providing storage and additional fridges in this area. This can reduce conflict over missing food and protects residents with food allergies or dietary restrictions.
- **Lockable client storage.** Provide small independent lockers where clients can store valuables and belongings *if necessary*.
- **Outdoor smoking.** Provide an outdoor, protected designated space for smoking away from operable windows, doors (as required by law), and *away from the outdoor spaces used by other residents*.
- **Laundry.** Especially when residents have young children or larger families, the laundry space needs to be easy to access, child-friendly (for when a mom has their children with them), and close *by common areas to provide line of sight*.



SECTION C

Building Form & Design Requirements



Building Form



Design Requirements

4. Building Form

Building form will vary depending on the need analysis within the community, functional program, location, and whether the facility will be new construction or a conversion / renovation of the existing facility. Consideration of communal living versus self-contained units will also significantly impact the building form. While communal living and integration will foster healing of women and children who have experienced trauma, having individual self-contained units allows them to interact with others when they choose, and build skills to live independently.

Projects under BC Housing's Women's Transition Housing and Supports Program will typically take the following building forms. For specifics about the design features required see Section D.

4.1 Safe Home Forms

Safe Homes require specific considerations in terms of location and type of building or unit. They may be a single room or a self-contained unit, dependent on the availability and considerations for safety. Safe homes often use a scattered-site model in order to provide short-term emergency shelter for women and children. Dedicated / permanent locations are preferable over temporary locations.

Safe home facilities are provided in a variety of ways and may include:

- Rooms in local hotels or motels;
- Rooms in residential homes, operated by families;
- Rented or owned self-contained apartments or townhouses;
- Dedicated units in a second stage or long-term rental housing building; or
- Immediate transportation out of the community to a safe location.

Considerations for safe homes include:

- **Access to private accommodation:** At a minimum, safe homes have units with a washroom, sitting area, and sleeping space. Ideally, they are a self-contained unit with a kitchen, washroom, bedroom(s), living room, and secure parking.

- **Safety:** Ensure that doors are lockable, safety measures are in place to control and limited access by visitors to the building, visitors are monitored, and the risk posed to a family in a residential home is assessed.
- **Confidentiality:** Hotels, suites, and communal spaces including private residents need to commit to keeping the resident's name and room number confidential.
- **Control:** Women need to have control over their own space, including who is allowed to enter.
- **Access to transportation and community supports:** When possible, safe homes should be within a reasonable distance to transportation and other community supports.
- **Available on short notice:** Safe homes are used when there are no other options for housing for women and children in case of emergency. They need to be available quickly and on short notice including outside of regular working hours.
- **Variety of locations:** Safe homes need to provide a variety of options in order to fit the diverse needs of the women and children who access them in different regions and locations.

4.2 Transition House Form

Traditionally, transition houses have been the conversion or renovation of a detached home with a number of bedrooms, common areas for food preparation, eating, living, and service provision that offer communal living. It is preferred that individuals or families have private bedrooms and washrooms. However, due to space limitations or programming requirements, some bedrooms may have to accommodate more than one individual or will be shared by single women. When washrooms are shared, the design should consider privacy, safety, control for the users, and a balance between long waiting period.

As more transition houses are being purpose-built, they can be either a:

- Large detached home; or
- Multi-Bedroom space in combination with second stage housing.

A typical 8 to 10 bed transition house shall include the following spaces:

- **Private bedrooms for each resident.** The best practice is to have a private bathroom in each bedroom. If single women are required to share a bedroom, there should be no more than two people in a room, with separate, secure closets and storage.
- **Kitchen.**
- **Common dining room.**
- **Lounge:** A living area that can also accommodate children's play area, teen space when programs include children.
- **Amenity areas:** Including common laundry, multi-purpose / group meeting room, children's play area (for programs with children), one three-piece wheelchair accessible common washroom, space for computer station, and common phone access.
- **Support and administrative offices:** Including a reception, staff / manager office, counselling room, intake office, staff room, and three-piece staff washroom.
- **Service areas:** Including janitorial closet, electrical, mechanical room, and bed bug area (if required).
- **Outdoor spaces:** With a children's play area, an amenity space such as patio or covered seating /gazebo, access to nature, bike racks, storage for maintenance / landscaping items, designated smoking area, and garbage recycling space.
- **Storage areas:** Including for tenant belongings or bicycles, program resources, for staff / admin, maintenance, kitchen pantry, linens, for kitchen tables, chairs, high chairs, cots, cribs, medication, and outdoor storage.
- **Parking requirements** (either underground or surface parking): Based on project confidentiality, scale, location, and municipal requirements.

4.3 Second Stage Housing Form

In second stage housing, self-contained units give women a sense of control and dignity as they move towards more independence. For women with children, a self-contained unit offers the opportunity to set up their living space and schedule in a way that works best for them.

Women are able to provide their children with a sense of independence, as their routine is not dependent on others and outside stimulation is kept to a minimum.

The availability of on-site supports, staff, and services varies by the needs of the individual program and the operator. Some buildings combine second stage housing with a transition house or safe home. This allows for program continuity and a sense of community with staff close for support. [See section 6.0 for the design features required for combined transition housing and second stage, as some of the spaces can be shared and efficiencies created.](#)

The following form is based on second stage housing with up to 25 units.

The building form can be either:

- Low-rise apartments; or
- Medium-density housing such as townhouses.

Second stage housing should have space available for:

- **Self-contained units:** With a mix of studio, one, two, or three bedroom units with a kitchen, private living, dining, and washroom. The net unit sizes and dwelling unit designs should follow BC Housing's [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#) (Section 1). Common and amenity spaces are categorized as Type B Program Space in the [BC Housing Social Housing Cost Target Framework](#).
- **Amenity areas:** Including common laundry, multi-purpose room with kitchenette, and wheel-chair accessible two-piece common washroom.
- **Support and administrative offices:** Including staff / manager office, counselling room, and two-piece staff washroom.
- **Service areas:** Including janitorial closet, electrical and mechanical room, storages for maintenance items, tenant's belongings or bikes, bed-bug area (if required).
- **Outdoor spaces:** With children's play area, an amenity space such as patio or covered seating / gazebo, access to nature, bike racks, storage for maintenance / landscaping items, designated smoking area, garbage recycling space.
- **Parking requirements** (either underground or surface parking): [Based on project confidentiality](#), scale, location, and municipal requirements.

4.4 Long-Term Rental Housing Form

The net unit sizes, dwelling unit design, and program area design for long-term rental housing is outlined in BC Housing's [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#). Common and amenity spaces are categorized as Type A Program Space in the [BC Housing Social Housing Cost Target Framework](#).

The long-term rental housing for women and children can be either:

- Medium-density housing such as townhouses;
- Low-to-high rise apartments; or
- Any other form as outlined in BC Housing's [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#).

Long-term rental housing should have space available for:

- Self-contained units with a mix of studio, one, two, three, or four (if required) bedroom units with a kitchen, private living, dining, and washrooms.

5. Design Requirements

The following design requirements are for all facilities, whether they are new construction or a conversion / renovation of the existing facility. The way in which these requirements are realized will vary depending on the building form, location, and functional program.

5.1 Healthy Interior Environment

A healthy environment can minimize respiratory and health issues including asthma. Consider using natural finishes and furnishings, air-tight construction, insulated windows, positive ventilation, resilient flooring (instead of carpet), and doormats to reduce dirt in the home. Select low emitting materials and products for interior paints, coatings, adhesives, sealants, flooring, composite wood, ceilings, walls, and thermal and acoustic insulation. Refer to BC Housing's [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#) (Section 2) for low emitting materials requirements.

5.2 Durability, Operational Needs & Operating Costs

Design decisions should consider cost-effective building operations, which can be impacted by the number of beds per floor, ease of supervision, and sight lines for common spaces. Consideration of required staffing levels and their schedules is also important.

Operational costs are impacted by the durability of materials used in the building's construction, ease of maintenance, as well as the various fixtures, fittings, and furniture.

5.3 Efficiency in Design

The building form and design should be simple, spatially efficient, and meet the operators needs in serving the community at the particular location. Consider space over time while designing an efficient and more functional building to avoid dead or under-utilized spaces. As much as possible, maintain continuity of load bearing walls, vertical circulation and shafts between floors, and standardize unit types, kitchen, and bathroom layouts within a project. The overall building efficiency is calculated as the total residential area divided by the Gross Livable Area. Space efficiency targets specific to the Women's Transition Housing and Supports Program project types are listed in this section, and they supersede the generic space efficiency targets listed in BC Housing's [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#).

- The amenity and support service spaces should be coordinated, avoiding multiple spaces and being flexible when designing common areas to maximize efficiency of circulation for both clients and staff.
- Use of double-loaded corridors should be maximized and single loaded corridors should be minimized.
- Zigzagged circulation pattern with many-fold twists and turns should be avoided.
- Amenities should be located centrally and grouped for efficiency ,to encourage social interaction, and to provide line of sights. The project team should judiciously evaluate and prioritize needs for amenity areas and consider the use of multi-use amenity spaces whenever possible.
- To increase space utilization over time, consider shared and bookable spaces instead of having dedicated-use separate rooms (eg. for meetings, counselling and intakes).
- Avoid multiple laundry rooms, dining, and service areas (such as janitorial closets) except in low-rise projects without an elevator.

Staff office space should be separate from the living spaces, preferably close to the front entryway to reduce disruption to the living space.

Efficiency Targets

The space efficiency-based approach allows defined flexibility to balance between program, space, and cost efficiency needs.

The program and support areas described in Section 6: Common Areas Design Features and illustrated in example drawings in Appendix 1 are provided to demonstrate the feasibility of adhering to the space efficiency requirements targeted in table below. Section 6 and Appendix 1 are representative of typical projects that have been developed for different providers across different regions, and are meant for illustrative reference only.

Design teams can create customized versions of the program and support areas to meet unique needs of their project, provided that the overall space efficiency targets listed in the table below are adhered to.

The overall building efficiency targets shall be as below:

BUILDING TYPE				
				
	Standalone Transition House	Standalone Second Stage Housing	Combined Transition House and Second Stage Housing	Long Term Housing
NUMBER OF BEDS/UNITS	8-20 beds	25 units and above	8-20 bed Transition House + 25 and above units of Second Stage Housing	Family and Independent senior housing and shall follow BC Housing Design Guidelines and Construction Standard
EFFICIENCY TARGETS	40%-50%	75% - 77%	70% - 72%	Type A, typically 82%

5.4 Energy Performance and Sustainability Requirements

All buildings must meet BC Housing’s current [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#) and minimum Energy Step Code Targets for new BC Housing projects as per Section 2, Energy and Environmental Design section. The building form and thermal performance of building elements (including architectural, structural, envelope, and mechanical elements) should be carefully considered, optimizing the passive strategies in design. Recommended passive strategies are described in Section 2 of the [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#).

Buildings must also meet BC Housing's current sustainability requirements. The targets should be verified through mandatory building and energy modelling, as per the Provincial Energy Step Code. All buildings need to be tested to determine Envelope Air Leakage Rates, as airtightness of the building envelope is critical to its performance. Follow BC Housing requirements on incentive and rebate documentation and construction waste management tracking.

Select low emitting materials and products for interior paints, coatings, adhesives, sealants, flooring, composite wood, ceilings, walls, and thermal acoustic insulation. More information is found in Section 2 under Building Material Selection of the [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#).

Follow the current BC Housing sustainable waste management targets through sustainable demolition, construction, and contractor obligations. Details are found in the [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#).

5.5 Universal Design and Accessibility

Projects should be planned, designed, and built to be understood, accessible, and used by women and children regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability. The built form, all areas of the site, and all parts of the building that will be used by the residents should be wheelchair accessible and designed to meet the needs of all women and children who need to use it and consider the safety of all ages and degrees of abilities. Designing for adaptable units will allow residents to age in place if they desire or allow adaptations in their units to meet possible changes in their physical abilities. This applies for both renovation and new construction projects.

Accessibility requirements should be designed in accordance with the BC Building Code, and reference shall also be made to BC Housing's [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#).

Design should consider the following, but is not limited to:

- At least 5% of the bedrooms in transition houses or dwelling units in second stage and long-term rental housing will be wheelchair accessible. Programs supporting older women may have additional accessibility needs. Consult with the operator to determine the level of accessibility that is required.

- The number of adaptable units in projects, allowing residents to age in place, will be based on the operator's requirement supported by a need and demand in that geographical location.
- All exterior areas intended for tenant use, including landscaped open space and outdoor recreation areas, should be universally accessible to persons of all ages and abilities. Outdoor seating area is to be durable, low maintenance, and universally designed.
- Provide accessible parking, with all required pavement markings and signs, as required by municipal regulations and the BC Building Code.
- Stairs and ramps must be easily usable by people with reduced mobility and impaired vision.
- Provide a shorter and accessible path for underground garbage and recycle area, ideally close to elevator if the site configuration allows.
- For community resident gardens, provide raised beds to facilitate access for tenants with wheelchair or restricted movement.
- Provide an accessible path from the main entrance to all parts of the building inside. Ground surfaces will be stable, firm, and slip-resistant.
- All amenity and common areas must be fully wheelchair accessible.
- [Locate wheelchair accessible units on ground floor where possible to avoid elevator breakdown issue.](#)
- All appliances in residential and common area intended for tenant use will be ADA compliant.
- Choices of furniture type in the outdoor and indoor area will accommodate accessibility.
- Accessible washrooms, including common and in dwelling units, must have resilient, non-slip floors, knee clearance under the sink, ADA compliant toilets with seats at 430 mm - 480 mm (1'4" to 1'7") from the floor, solidly backed grab bars as required by code, and clear door openings.
- Roll-in showers should be provided for wheelchair accessible showering.

- All doors, faucets, and shower heads should have lever handles.
- Light switches, thermostats, controls, and storage should be mounted at a height that is accessible for a person in a wheelchair.
- When common laundry is provided, at least one pair of laundry room appliances, both washer and dryer, should be side by side, raised and front loading.
- If the common laundry is not in a convenient location, consider in-suite laundry for wheelchair accessible units.
- Use contrasting surfaces and finishes to make areas easier to see (eg. contrasting coloured baseboard and door trim to more easily identify door locations).
- Shared kitchens shall incorporate work surfaces and storage for both standing and seated use.
- Install low resistance, delayed action closers for all doors on accessible routes, including suite entrance doors in accessible sleeping areas.
- Consider adaptability in design wherever possible, so that it can easily accommodate change. This could include a removable cupboard in the kitchen or washroom to create knee space for a person in wheelchair or rough-in wiring in the building entry / lobby for future automatic door opener.

5.6 Safety & Security

Safety is important for all program users, staff, and visitors. It is especially important that women are able to trust that they are safe and secure, otherwise they may avoid seeking support or leave the site, which has the possibility of greater risk or harm.

Buildings should be designed with safety as the primary goal. The building design should create immediate safety, as well as a feeling of physical and emotional safety. Living in a safe and secure environment can support women to begin rebuilding their lives.

Site planning and building design should consider Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies, eg. territoriality, natural surveillance activity support, and access control, as well as other recognized CPTED principles as outlined in BC Housing's [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#) (Section 3). All the requirements in this section should

be considered at an early design stage, with an exception of the following criteria, found in Article 4: CPTED Performance Standard Checklist table. The following are the updated requirements for safe homes, transition houses, second stage, and long-term rental housing:

Principle / Objectives	Design Intent	Evaluation Standard
Fencing	Fence design should maximize natural surveillance from the street to the building and from the building to the street, and minimize opportunities for intruders to hide.	<p>The exterior fence height and design should blend in with the surrounding neighbourhood so it does not stand out or appear to be a fortress. The fencing should be selected through a CPTED review.</p> <p>It is best to use a combination of mid-height fence (1.2 meters to 2 meters) with solid boards or open pickets, with adjacent planted Berbers or solid hedge materials.</p>
Mix of Uses	In mixed use buildings, increase opportunities for natural surveillance while protecting privacy.	Commercial or retail space co-located with transition houses, safe homes, second stage housing or long-term rental housing is dependant on the operator's programs and the best way to provide safety for women. Allowing the general public into the building reduces confidentiality and increases security risks for the women and children who are staying there. If co-location happens, it is preferable to have complimentary programs for similar clientele. The co-location may help to reduce stigma for women and children who may need to access the services in the future. If there are publicly accessed programs co-located in the space, there needs to be care given to increased security and confidentiality for the women and children who live there.
Ownership and Maintenance	Create a "Cared for" image.	It is not recommended to use industrial / potentially institutional materials that create an institutional image.
Site and Building Layout	Allow natural observation from the street to the occupancy, from the occupancy to the street, and between occupancies.	Position occupied offices and common rooms (but not sleeping rooms) with windows at the front of the dwelling.

Principle / Objectives	Design Intent	Evaluation Standard
Neighbourhood Integration	No matter where they are located, or proposed to be, transition house programs may be controversial. It is important to demonstrate that the proposed program will be designed to be a good neighbour.	<p>The following design features should be considered for neighbourhood integration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate interior spaces and outdoor space so that users can stay within the site; • Adequate on-site parking / storage for buggies / strollers, and bikes; • Windows and surveillance cameras that provide staff with sight lines onto the street; • Off-street areas for smoking, sitting, and pets; • Adequate separation between neighbours in terms of landscaping / fencing; • Exterior design that integrates into the neighbourhood by using residential materials and colours to avoid an institutional appearance; and, • Adequate, but non-intrusive, exterior lighting.
Consider Anti-Ligature Design	For people experiencing mental health issues and feeling suicidal, anti-ligature design reduces the risk of using the construction or refurbishments to self harm, or in extreme cases, to complete suicide.	<p>Dependant on the project and possible risk, avoid obvious features that could be used to cause harm, making design choices based on the operator’s recommendation.</p> <p>Areas of anti-ligature to consider are: load release (items that release from its fixing if abnormal load is applied), fixed items (a fixed item that is free from points where a cord could be fastened to it) and weaponry (reducing the risk of using an item as a weapon).</p>

Programs providing services for women fleeing violence require additional safety measures including appropriate staffing, clear staff sight lines, or video monitoring. In addition to BC Housing CPTED principles, the building design should consider the following, but is not limited to:

- Secured main entrance. This may consider an audible connection before allowing the guests or new residents entry into the transition house and can be electronically controlled from the reception / intake office. The residents can have fobs, cards for a card reader, or simply a numerical key pad operated access (depending on operator preference) that will allow entrance to the building, access to their rooms, and common areas.

- Provide a video surveillance system that addresses the operator's security requirements. Security system options include Digital Access Control (DAC), Intrusion Detection, and Video Surveillance (i.e. CCTV) Systems. Exterior cameras should ensure there are no blind spots on the exterior of the building. The extent of the camera locations inside the building shall depend on the operator needs and requirements, taking into consideration women and children's privacy.
- Design shall allow ease of supervision and ensure good sight lines for staff supervision that involve outdoor areas, entrance(s), circulation, gathering, or programs.
- Maximize glazing for staff offices, program support offices, and common room doors such as TV rooms, multi-purpose room, children play-area, counselling room, and laundry rooms for improved visibility.

SECTION D

Design Features

- 6** Common Area Design Features
- 7** Washrooms
- 8** Sleeping Accommodations
- 9** Ancillary & Utility Services
- 10** Outdoor Spaces
- 11** Security Features
- 12** Finishes, Materials & Building Systems

6. Common Area Design Features

The common areas in transition homes and second stage housing are not only required shared space but they are also important for community building as residents build trust and have an opportunity to interact with each other. The table below provides an overview of the most commonly referenced common areas including administration, program support services, and indoor amenity areas. These areas are described in detail in the identified sections below.

For renovation or conversion projects, it is recognized that existing conditions or user considerations may override the recommendations contained in these guidelines. If such is the case, the functional program shall be reviewed and approved by BC Housing at the schematic or preliminary design stage of the project.

Throughout this section, specific information is provided for the most common housing forms using the following icons:



TRANSITION HOUSE



SECOND STAGE HOUSING



COMBINATION: TRANSITION HOUSE & SECOND STAGE

Example Drawings

The common design features are illustrated in example drawings found in Appendix 1. These drawings are representative of typical projects that have been developed for different providers across different regions, and are meant for illustrative reference only in order to demonstrate feasibility of meeting the target space efficiency requirements targeted. Development teams can develop customized versions of support and program spaces to meet unique needs of each project provided that the overall space efficiency targets are adhered to.

Example drawings provided in Appendix 1 include the following:



Example Drawing 1: Women's Transition House & Second Stage Housing Combined with surface parking, Transition house with 14 units and 18 beds, Second Stage with 30 units.



Example Drawing 2: Women's Transition House & Second Stage Housing Combined with underground parking, Transition house with 9 unit and, 14 beds, Second Stage with 29 units.



Example Drawing 3: Women's Second Stage Housing with underground parking, 25 units.



Example Drawing 4: Women's Transition House with surface parking, 10 units with 16 beds.

Common Design Features Table

The table below provides an overview of the common area design features required for the three housing forms, with details in the paragraphs following. The design features are for transition houses with 8 to 20 beds, second stage housing with up to 25 units, and buildings that are a combination of both.

	 Transition Houses 8 - 20 beds	 Second Stage Housing Up to 25 units	 Combination Transition House, 8 - 20 beds & Second Stage Housing, up to 25 units
6.1.1 Reception area with space for 2 staff seated			 <i>Transition House</i>
6.1.2 Staff / manager office			 <i>Transition House</i>



	Transition Houses 8 - 20 beds	Second Stage Housing Up to 25 units	Combination Transition House, 8 - 20 beds & Second Stage Housing, up to 25 units
6.1.3 Counselling Room			
6.1.3 Intake office			 <i>Transition House</i>
6.1.4 Staff room			 <i>Transition House</i>
7.3 Staff washroom	 <i>3-piece washroom</i>	 <i>2-piece washroom</i>	 <i>Transition House: 3-piece washroom</i>
6.2.1 Multi-Purpose Room		 <i>With amenity kitchenette</i>	 <i>Second Stage: with amenity kitchenette</i>
6.2.3 Lounge			 <i>Transition House</i>
6.2.2 Children's play area For programs with children, if needed.		 <i>Combined with or adjacent to the multi-purpose room</i>	 <i>Second Stage: combined with or adjacent to the multi-purpose room</i>



	Transition Houses 8 - 20 beds	Second Stage Housing Up to 25 units	Combination Transition House, 8 - 20 beds & Second Stage Housing, up to 25 units
6.2.3 Space for computer station and land phone access			 <i>Transition House</i>
6.2.4 Private retreat space / quiet room	<i>Optional (program dependent, discuss with BC Housing)</i>		<i>Optional (program dependent, discuss with BC Housing)</i>
6.4 Kitchen		<i>Included in the Multi-Purpose Room</i>	 <i>Transition House</i>
6.4.4 Dining area		<i>Included in the Multi-Purpose Room</i>	 <i>Transition House</i>
6.5 Common laundry			
7. Common washroom			
9.5 Heat treatment room	<i>Optional (program dependent, discuss with BC Housing)</i>	<i>Optional (program dependent, discuss with BC Housing)</i>	<i>Optional (program dependent, discuss with BC Housing)</i>

6.1 Administration & Program Support Services

Administration and program support services should be close to the building entrance and separated from the residential area of the building in order to bring a sense of normalcy for the residents, especially in transition houses.

6.1.1. Reception Area & Entry

At the building entry, provide resident-controlled access with public access restricted.

Support and staff offices should be close to the front entrance in transition houses and second stage housing. This space can be used for intake purposes or meeting with community service providers without entering the living area or disturbing other residents.



TRANSITION HOUSE

- The entrance should have a vestibule with surveillance cameras monitored 24/7 by staff.
- Staff shall have the ability to control opening / closing both sets of entry doors from the front office.
- Provide for audible connection and visual screening between front office staff and tenant / visitors before allowing their entry in the vestibule. The design should consider rough-in wiring at the entrance for a future automatic door opener.
- The reception area should be a secure space for two staff seated, with good sight lines to the street, entrance / vestibule, circulation, gathering, program spaces, and elevators, if provided.

- Consider an entry with a driveway that has close access to a door for unloading, allowing for easier unloading of supplies for staff and groceries for mothers with children.
- In transition houses, there should be adequate entry and reception space for client intake, including those with mobility impairments.
- For smaller transition houses, a separate reception is not required as the staff office can serve as the reception and intake space. Consult with the operator.



SECOND STAGE HOUSING

For second stage housing, the entry should be sufficiently scaled to the size of the program and flow of people.

Depending on the program, if a reception area is required, it can be configured within the staff office with space for one seated staff to control visual screening between front office staff, tenants, and visitors before allowing their entry in the vestibule. Consult with BC Housing. Refer to example drawings in Appendix 1.



COMBINATION: TRANSITION HOUSE & SECOND STAGE

When transition housing is combined with second stage or long-term rental housing, consider access control, client flow, and security in the design process. The entryway should provide direct access to the second stage housing, transition house staff offices, and residential area of the transition house.

The second stage or long-term rental housing areas should be separate from the transition house. This includes the common areas, elevator access, and units. Refer to Example Drawings 1 and 2 in Appendix 1.

6.1.2 Staff / Manager Office

Administrative office areas will vary with program size. The administrative spaces should be a minimum 7.9 to 10.2m² (85 to 110 f²) and secure, and have adequate space for desks, lockers, cabinets, staff seating area, files, and office equipment. Maximize glazing in doors and windows. Telephone, cable, and data outlets should also be provided. The staff washroom should be convenient to the office location.





TRANSITION HOUSE

In a transition house with 8 to 20 beds, one staff / manager office and one 3-piece staff washroom shall be provided



SECOND STAGE HOUSING

One staff / manager office and one 2-piece washroom shall be provided for second stage housing with 8 to 25 units. Office and administration areas will have visual connection to the main entry door, elevator lobby, and resident amenity and program areas.



COMBINED: TRANSITION HOUSE & SECOND STAGE

When second stage housing is combined with a transition house, the administrative offices are typically located on the ground floor in the transition housing area and can be shared with the second stage housing residents as required.

In a building with 8 to 10 transition house beds and up to 25 second stage units, one staff / manger office and one 3-piece staff washroom will be located in the transition house and shared by both the transition house and second stage housing.

6.1.3 Support Offices

The support offices are an important part of a program's services and should be located close to each other. Design considerations include:

- **Accessibility.** This space should anticipate the increasing age and potential mobility impairment of clients, and at least one space should be sized to handle clients requiring a wheelchair. Typically, this is the intake office or counselling room.
- **Confidential conversations.** Intake, counselling, and staff offices may be used for confidential conversations. Blinds on the interior windows allow for visual privacy when required. Partition walls between offices, corridors, or adjacent spaces should be rated for sound reduction and have a sound rating of STC 55. Glazed doors should be provided to improve security, and for programs with women and children they should provide a line of sight to the children's play area. Consider how noise will travel from the offices, including to the street, outdoor space, and other parts of the building.
- **Natural light.** Support offices need to have a window and access to natural light, when possible.

- **Safety & equality.** To create space that feels safe, minimizing the feeling of power inequality between staff and tenants, consult with the operator regarding the layout of offices. Consider flexibility in furniture layout. Provide similar chairs for everyone to sit on. The design should allow staff to exit the room unimpeded via furniture configuration or a second access when possible.
- **Child-friendly spaces close to staff.** When a parent is meeting with staff, they need to keep an eye on their child. Create visually accessible spaces for a child to be while their mother is in a meeting.
- **Counselling room.** The counselling room can be used as a private retreat space or quiet room when not in use by staff. Access to the office should not be through an administrative office, instead, it should be the only staff office within the residential area in order to be more accessible to residents and so that women are more comfortable using the space when not in use by staff. This room is not a typical office - if it is filled with computers and filing cabinets it's functionality and aesthetics are compromised. It should be furnished with soft and hard chairs, a table, plants, and paintings. A domestic and homelike feeling is important.



TRANSITION HOUSE

One intake office and one counselling room for 8 to 20 bed transition house. The intake room should be close to reception and the staff / manager office, while the counselling room is within the residential area of the building and close proximity to children's play area in buildings with women and children.



SECOND STAGE HOUSING

One counselling room for second stage housing with up to 25 units. Locate support service offices on the ground floor and close to the amenity space and entry way to encourage interactions and opportunities for support between staff and residents.



COMBINED: TRANSITION HOUSE & SECOND STAGE

- Transition house area requires one intake office and one counselling room.
- Second stage housing area requires one counselling room with visual connection to resident amenity and program areas.
- When second stage housing is over 25 units, an additional counselling room can be added in addition to these support offices. Consult with BC Housing.

6.1.4 Staff Room

Without a private staff room, staff are not able to take a break away from residents, especially if they are the only staff working and unable to leave the premises. In transition houses, this can be tough on staff mentally and emotionally, especially when they are providing support for traumatic situations.

The following staff areas are required:



TRANSITION HOUSE

In transition houses, provide a small staff room with millwork, a bar fridge, small sink counter, microwave shelf, and lockers. This will create an environment where staff can take breaks and secure their belongings. The size should be approximately 8.4 to 10.2 m^2 (90 to 110 f^2) and able to accommodate a small table and 2 to 3 chairs.



SECOND STAGE HOUSING

A staff room is not required in buildings with less than 25 units. For buildings with more than 25 units, the addition of a staff room will be dependant on the program needs and the number of staff on-site at the same time. Consult with BC Housing.



COMBINED: TRANSITION HOUSE & SECOND STAGE

One staff room is required and will be shared by both the transition house and second stage housing (see details above in Transition House section). Additional staff areas may be considered if the second stage housing is over 25 units.

6.2 Indoor Amenity Areas

While communal spaces are more obvious in a single detached transition home where women share the living area, they need to be consciously planned in a housing model with self-contained units. Buildings with self-contained units should have a communal amenity space to allow women to socialize and find support from each other.

Gathering spaces should be comfortable, full of light and, when possible, have views of nature. Furniture should be comfortable, durable, and easily maintained. Maneuvering space for mobility-impaired individuals and wheelchair accessibility should be considered when determining furniture layout.

Refer to BC Housing's [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#) for the total allowable amenity or program space for second-stage housing and long-term rental housing.

6.2.1 Multi-Purpose Room

Flexibility is important in the design of multi-purpose room to ensure changing needs (both short- and longterm) are met to avoid functional inadequacy, and to minimize the costs of change. Activity areas should be designed to convert / change to different functions over time, as required, such as to meetings, training, or group activities.



TRANSITION HOUSE

The multi-purpose room can be used as a quiet area when the living space is full. Some programs will design the room to become overflow bedroom space if required.

The multi-purpose room should have space for:

- TV room with electrical and cable outlets for a wall-mounted large screen TV;
- Multi-use activity / game spaces, exercise space;
- In buildings with children, space for older children to do their homework;
- Group meetings and training space; and,
- Storage room or closet for tables, chairs, and equipment.



SECOND STAGE HOUSING

The multi-purpose room should be adjacent to or combined with the children's play area and visible from the support office and entry. Depending on operator needs and building efficiency, this is typically located on the ground floor next close to the main entry.

A kitchenette is required. This area will be used for group activities, training, celebrations, and shared meals.



COMBINED: TRANSITION HOUSE & SECOND STAGE

Both the transition house and second stage housing require their own separate multi-purpose space. See above descriptions for details.

6.2.2 Lounge



TRANSITION HOUSE AND;



COMBINED: TRANSITION HOUSE & SECOND STAGE

- Provide a centrally located lounge with seating space for at least 30% of the total bed count in transition house.
- Provide electrical and cable outlets for wall-mounted TV and telephone / data outlets for computer stations.
- Provide line of sights from this area to common laundry, children play area, and administrative area.
- Consider possible use of this spaces as a temporary shelter in extreme weather conditions.

6.2.2 Children's Play Areas

When the building program includes women with children, a play area is required. Play areas should have glazed walls, slidable flexible partitions to the amenity area, and include opportunities for personalization, such as chalk / cork boards.



TRANSITION HOUSE

The play area in a transition house should be designed to keep the following criteria in mind:

- Consider where children will learn, study, and complete schoolwork. This could be a desk in the family's private area, or tables for study located in a quiet part of the facility. The area can be used for study or arts and crafts.
- Play areas should be combined with or adjacent to the lounge. Create these spaces with sight lines or adjacencies to the amenity areas including the multi-purpose area, kitchen (if residents take part in preparing food), laundry area, and counselling room so mothers can take part in activities or socialize while watching their children.
- Creative design can make this area enjoyable for youth to spend time. Depending on the program, the multipurpose room or space in the lounge could be designed for this group as well.



SECOND STAGE HOUSING

The play area shall be provided within the multi-purpose room with a sliding partition wall so the space can be combined or separated, as necessary. When separate from the multi-purpose room, there should still be visibility between the two spaces. This will allow a parent to be in the multi-purpose space while watching their child in the play area.



COMBINED: TRANSITION HOUSE & SECOND STAGE

Both the transition house and second stage housing require their own separate children's play areas. See above descriptions for details.

6.2.3 Computer Station and Land Phone Access



TRANSITION HOUSE

Provide at least 2 computer stations with high speed internet connection for resident use. Provide a common phone access.

6.2.4 Private Retreat Space / Quiet Area



TRANSITION HOUSE

When single women and women with children are sharing the same space, consider which area can be used as a quiet or adult only space without children. This area can be a quiet retreat for single women or mothers with an opportunity for alone time. This area can be combined with the counselling room (in the evenings, when not used by staff) or the multi-purpose room when it is not in use.

6.2.5 Flexible Temporary Bed Space

Typically, overflow space to accommodate women or women with children will only be required in transition houses.



TRANSITION HOUSE

Depending on the need in the community, where possible, consider providing flexible space when program demand is high, and there is a need for an overflow area. Transforming a lounge, multi-purpose room, or a meeting room may offer opportunities for this type of temporary space. Intentional design with movable retractable walls between multipurpose room, dining, and lounge can provide an open concept for temporary bed space or large gathering and at the same time allow separation when needed. Consider having couches or other furniture that converts into beds, or bedrooms that can add an extra cot or mats on the floor. Consider building extra storage for the bedding or cots.

6.4 Food Spaces

The kitchen requirements will be determined by number of residents and type of cooking operations that will take place. It is important to confirm whether food will be prepared in the building or whether these will be prepared elsewhere and kitchen equipment in the building used primarily for reheating. Consult with BC Housing, operator, local health authority and municipalities for requirements.

6.4.1 Safe Home Meals

Most safe homes provide meals, however, the type of food program is dependent on the type of safe home. Some meals are provided for women (in a family home), in other types of safe homes women prepare their own meals, if facilities are available.



6.4.2 TRANSITION HOUSING KITCHENS

The food preparation in transition housing can widely vary depending on program and facility requirements. Three full hot meals a day are provided and food is usually available 24/7. In order to plan the food space in transition houses, start with the number of residents, the amount of kitchen space available, and identify who is preparing the food. Based on the information gathered, the appropriate type of kitchen can be designed.



Provide adequate pantry space with storage racks in kitchen area for dry goods and cold storage. Some kitchens may require a deep freezer for storage, particularly in smaller communities where they may need to stock up on items or have larger quantities of food donated. The pantry space should have easy access to an exit for loading and unloading.

The space shall have appropriate receiving / loading areas. For easy service and access to parking for loading, kitchen should ideally be located on the ground floor. For a larger facility, if it is considered a commercial kitchen class 1, there will be specific mechanical supply and exhaust requirements in accordance with NFPA 96. The specific guidelines are found in BC Housing's [**Design Guidelines & Construction Standards**](#).

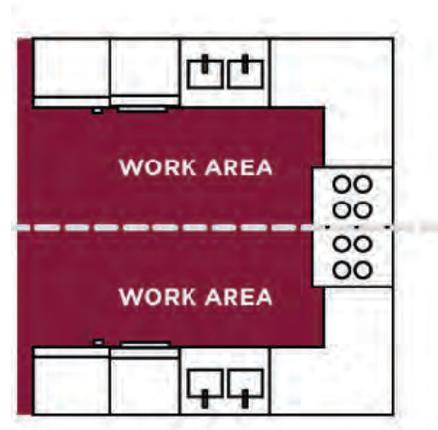
Food preparation options often include:

- Staff operated kitchen; or
- Residents preparing meals for just themselves and their family or for the group.

Most transition houses will have a combination, possibly with residents preparing their own breakfast and lunch, and staff prepare the evening meal for everyone.

Staff Operated Kitchen

To determine the correct option, size, design, and required equipment for a kitchen, relative to the planned size of the facility and operating budget, a commercial kitchen designer should be engaged early in the process. Review requirements of current codes and the authority with jurisdiction.



Women Cooking in Shared Kitchen

A kitchen can become a busy place, especially when the schedules of mothers with children require that they prepare and serve meals at the same time while using a shared kitchen. In transition houses in which women are using a shared kitchen, the following considerations are recommended, when possible:

- Depending on how many women will use the communal kitchen, design multiple work areas, sinks, and cooktops with separate ovens for simultaneous access.
- Provide at least one wheelchair accessible work station, cooktop, and wall oven with accessible controls.
- Provide ample yet efficient floor space and countertops. Consider the floor space needed for appliances and for when appliance doors are open.
- Provide commercial dishwasher(s), to quickly sanitize dishes. If a commercial dishwasher is installed in a residential setting, ensure the surrounding flooring and cupboards are made of materials that will not be damaged by the steam levels.
- Optional (program dependant), provide storage for individuals to use for dry food storage.

- Provide refrigerator(s).
- Symbols and signage to help find and keep things organized.

In buildings with families and children, consider the following:

- Incorporating a gate or half doors into the kitchen design in buildings where having children in the kitchen could be a concern, or in buildings that allow pets. Half doors can help keep children and pets out of the kitchen during meal preparation time while still providing mothers with sight lines to see their children in the next room.
- Having a small children’s play area close to or adjacent to the kitchen. This will allow mothers to watch their children while preparing the meal.



6.4.3 COMMON DINING AREA IN THE TRANSITION HOUSE

When living in abusive situations, meal times are often chaotic. In transition housing, having a peaceful atmosphere in which women are in control of their dining experience can be redemptive. Dining room seating should be sized to accommodate a minimum 75% of residents in one sitting, with larger programs possibly requiring multiple sittings.

Provisions should be made for a small countertop area, and a microwave for program users to heat up food. Storage should be available for larger items such as high chairs and booster seats. Provide a small fridge in common dining area for residents when food is prepared in kitchen operated by staff.



6.4.4 SECOND STAGE & LONG-TERM RENTAL HOUSING - KITCHENS IN SELF CONTAINED UNITS

Self-contained kitchens shall be provided in all second stage and long-term rental housing buildings within the residential units. Refer to BC Housing’s [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#) for kitchen requirements in self-contained units.

Amenity Kitchenette in Multi-purpose Room

The multi-purpose room is an important communal spaces in buildings with self-contained units in second stage and long-term housing. The amenity kitchenette in the multi-purpose room is not intended for commercial cooking purposes. The specific requirements for amenity kitchenette are found in the BC Housing [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#).



The amenity kitchenette will be provided with minimum length of 2.4 m (8'-0") of upper and base cabinet, microwave outlet and shelf, and double bowl stainless steel sink, 0.41 m³ (14.5 ft³) refrigerator, 760 mm (2'-6") residential electric range and residential range hood; and dishwasher (confirm with the operator if it is required).

6.5 Laundry Facilities

Common laundry facilities should be available to residents in transition houses, second stage housing, and long-term rental housing. For safe homes, it is dependent on the type and location.

Common Laundry Requirements

Refer to the BC Housing [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#) (Section 1) for the common laundry requirements. The ratio of laundry equipment needed is:

- **Women with children facilities:** One washer and one dryer for every 7 residents.
- **Women only facilities:** One washer and one dryer for every 10 residents.

Laundry rooms should include:

- At least one pair side-by side, front loaded, on pedestals, with controls and operating mechanisms at accessible height for wheelchair accessible residents. Provide a clear floor area of at least 750mm x 1,200mm (2'-6" x 4'-0") in front of each appliance and laundry sink.
- Commercial grade washers and dryers should be considered.
- A counter for folding clean laundry.
- A small seating area.
- An accessible height sink with open knee space underneath.
- Maximize glazing on the door for improved visibility.
- Proper ventilation to avoid moisture problems.
- A location that is close to exterior walls to minimize the length of dryer duct runs.
- Non-slip flooring with cove base, floor drains with trap primer.

- Doorways, millwork heights, location of outlets, and type of laundry equipment must be suitable for use those with mobility or visual impairments.

Staff Laundry (Optional)

Provided one pair of commercial grade washer / dryer at a minimum, on raised platforms, where it is provided by the operator.

A stainless steel laundry sink, shelves, and significant countertop space (minimum 2.4m or 7.8ft) should be provided for folding clean laundry.

Location of Common Laundry

Consider ease of access when designing laundry facilities. Provide a wheelchair accessible common laundry room that is conveniently located for residents, especially mothers with young children. Maximize glazing on laundry door and adjacent wall to provide line of sight from residents.



TRANSITION HOUSE COMMON LAUNDRY

In transition houses, common laundry should be located on the main floor along with all accessible units. The laundry should be adjacent to the amenity space within natural surveillance view of residents, and when possible, staff. This will allow residents to sit and engage with each other while waiting for their laundry to be finished.

Laundry location and adjacencies should be designed with parenting in mind, especially for mothers with young children. This allows children to be in the amenity or play area, in sight of their parent while they are managing their laundry.



SECOND STAGE HOUSING

In second stage and long-term housing, common laundry is available on ground floor. If the ground floor is not the same floor as the residential units, the laundry room should be adjacent to an amenity area, play room, and / or close to the elevator. This will make it easier for women to do laundry with children and give them a space to spend time while waiting for their laundry to finish.

Floor by floor laundry should only be considered if a program has a lot of women with children or seniors. However, the number of laundry machines should be minimized according to the ratios above.

In lieu of floor-by-floor laundry, a program that anticipates a higher number of large families and seniors could consider roughing-in for in-suite laundry depending on program need and project budget. BC Housing prior approval is required.



COMBINED: TRANSITION HOUSE & SECOND STAGE

When a transition house and second stage housing are in the same building, they need to have separate laundry areas. See above descriptions for details.

6.6 Indoor Storage

Storage needs to be thoughtfully considered and efficiently designed while maximizing the space available. When everything has a place and storage is in the correct location, it reduces stress on residents and staff alike. The storage required is dependant on the program needs.



TRANSITION HOUSE

- **Client storage.** Women fleeing their home may have many belongings with them. Depending on the program, adequate and secure storage space is a requirement especially for a transition house facility, including space for suitcases, strollers, and bikes. This storage area may be created within the building but may also be provided in an outdoor or basement storage area.

Staff Storage. Staff require an area for tenant files and other miscellaneous items. This can be built into the closets or furniture in the staff area.
- **Maintenance.** An area is needed for required maintenance equipment and supplies.
- **Equipment and furniture storage.** Provide a conveniently located area to store tables, chairs, and high chairs in the dining or multi-purpose room. Mattresses, cots, and cribs will need a storage area that is accessible to the residential area.
- **Linen storage.** Transition houses have a high turnover of residents and staff will need linen storage to prepare for new residents coming in, and to supply the cots and baby cribs as needed.
- **Pantry and kitchen storage.** See section 6.4.2 for kitchen storage needs. The pantry should have easy access to an exit for loading and unloading.
- **Donation Storage & Distribution.** Many operators provide clean, donated clothing for residents, as well as diapers and toys for children. A space for storage and distribution is best provided on the ground floor close to an exit for loading and unloading, when needed. In larger buildings, this space can be provided within a basement or may be associated with underground parking.

Fittings should include clothing hangers, and shelving for folded goods. A countertop, floor space, as well as a separate space for receiving and sorting clothing and other items is desirable.

Access to program resources. Create an area for program resources to be available just outside staff offices. This area does not need to be a dedicated room. A closet, shelving unit, or cupboard could be used. Necessities could include items such as clothing of various sizes, towels, personal hygiene supplies, and toiletries. There may be an area with resource information such as pamphlets, program information, applications forms, etc. This allows women to access what they need, when staff are not immediately available, in a way that is dignified and gives them control over their immediate needs.

Harm reduction supplies. Depending on the program, harm reduction supplies should be available in the reception or staff area, including clean needles, access to safe disposal (sharps containers), condoms, etc.



SECOND STAGE HOUSING

Second stage housing requires storage areas for staff, maintenance, client storage, harm reduction supplies, and tables and chairs (for the multi-purpose room). See above descriptions for details.

7. Washrooms

After leaving an abusive situation, it can be important for women to exercise privacy and lock a door, especially in the washroom. Ensuring there is a sufficient number of washrooms that provide women with privacy can reduce stress and increase dignity. Having ample washroom space will support families as they go through their morning and evening routines, and provide single women with a peaceful space, especially in a busy transition house.

For additional washroom design considerations for parents with children see the above section, *Designed for Parenting*.



7.1 Transition House Washrooms

7.1.1 Private Washrooms in Residential Area

In safe homes and transition houses, the best practice is to provide private washrooms for each room. The advantage of private or semi-private washrooms should be weighed against available space, operations and maintenance costs, as well as possible security problems that may arise. When residents have washrooms within their bedrooms, provide an accessible 3-piece set.

7.1.2 Individual Common Washrooms in Residential Area

When private washrooms in individual units are not possible, such as in a single detached home, prioritize adding additional washrooms during a renovation to increase the number of shared washrooms.

Provide a minimum of one individual three-piece washroom for four people to share.

Individual common washrooms are recommended to create separate spaces for different washroom functions. By separating the toilet room from the sink or the shower from the rest of the washroom, multiple people can get ready for the day at the same time. The door locks should be secure and have a safety mechanism that allows staff or emergency responders to open from the outside. Provide a minimum of one wheelchair accessible common washroom.

All common washrooms should have:

- The ceiling, wall tiles or paneling, and ventilation covers should be securely affixed to eliminate spaces for concealing or discarding syringes or other items.
- Washrooms should include resilient, non-slip sheet flooring with flash cove base and floor drains.
- Provide general washroom accessories, including paper towels, soap, toilet tissue and dispensers, clothes hooks, safety mirrors, towel grab bars, feminine product disposal bins. Be thoughtful to balance the need for durable products and still ensuring it is a homelike environment that has a residential feel. Avoid accessories that are institutional or restrict women's autonomy such as soap dispensers that are affixed to the wall or lockable toilet paper dispensers.
- Sufficient mechanical ventilation and exhaust should be provided.

7.1.3 Individual Common Washrooms in Amenity Area

Common washroom for residents in the amenity area should be a two-piece accessible washroom. It should be easily accessed by residents from both the amenity area and staff offices where residents meet with staff. Only one washroom is needed for transition houses with 8 to 20 beds.



7.2 Second Stage Washrooms

7.2.1 Washrooms in Residential Units

Washrooms in self-contained units require a three-piece washroom including a sink, one-piece pre-fabricated shower unit with rod and curtain, medicine cabinet with mirror for wheelchair accessible units, solidly-backed towel bar, paper towel holder, and robe hook. Consider a combination of showers and bathtubs in different suites, as appropriate for the program. For renovation of existing buildings, the choice of showers or bathtubs should be based on specific project requirements.

7.2.2 Individual Common Washrooms in Amenity Area

If the multi-purpose room is located on the same floor as all the residential units, a common washroom is not required. When there are multiple floors of residential housing and multi-

purpose room is on the ground floor, it requires a two-piece washroom that is wheelchair accessible.



7.3 Combined: Transition House & Second Stage Common Washroom

If the second stage amenity area is located on the same floor as the transition house, it is possible for the common washroom to be shared in order to be more space efficient. However, it will need to be easily accessible from both the transition housing and second stage amenities as well as the offices where staff meet with clients. If the second stage amenity area is not located on the same floor as the transitional housing or is separated from the transition house, and if there are multiple floors of residential housing, both the transition house and second stage will require a wheelchair accessible two-piece washroom.

7.4 Washroom(s) for Staff

The staff washroom should be designed with non-slip flooring, a floor drain, toilet, sink, vanity, and common washroom accessories, such as a toilet paper holder, soap dispenser, and towel dispenser.



TRANSITION HOUSE

A three-piece staff washroom is required. Provision should be made for a separate ground floor staff washroom that is close to reception or administrative support spaces.



SECOND STAGE HOUSING

A two-piece staff washroom is required in close proximity to the staff office or counselling room.



COMBINED: TRANSITION HOUSE & SECOND STAGE

One staff washroom is required and will be shared by both the transition house and second stage housing. The bathroom should be close to the administrative or support areas of the transition house to share.

8. Sleeping Accommodations

A secure and healthy sleeping accommodation provides women and children with a sense of safety and well-being. The design of women's private space and sleeping accommodations is an opportunity to empower women, giving them dignity, autonomy and control over their own space. Private sleeping space allows women the option of interacting with others when they choose, building their skills of living on their own, and facilitates the healing process.



8.1 Transition Houses

The best practice is to have private bedrooms (preferred with a private washroom inside the bedroom) for each woman and each family. A private space increases the feeling of security, as women can lock their door and control who enters their space. In their own private space, mothers are able to maintain their own routines with their children, and keeping outside stimulation to a minimum.

Guidelines for bedrooms include:

- Locate sleeping areas in calm part of the building and out of visual range of the entrance.
- Allow access to the windows, closet, both sides and the foot of the bed.
- Each bedroom will have a window to allow natural ventilation and daylight.
- For larger families that require bigger or multiple sleeping areas, design for interconnecting units, with a lockable door between two units that can be opened to expand into one larger unit, if necessary.
- For pet friendly bedrooms, ensure there is adequate room for a pet crate and easy to clean materials (such as flooring).
- For considerations of cooling systems in bedrooms, see the 'Building Systems' section depending on climate zone and BC Housing requirements.
- Residential units / bedrooms shall be controlled by wall-mounted thermostats.



8.2 Second Stage & Long-Term Rental Housing

Both second stage housing and long-term rental housing will have self-contained units that follow the BC Housing [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#). Residential units could be studios, one-bedroom to four-bedroom units.



8.3 Minimum Floor Area for Safe Homes and Transition Houses

The following table outlines the minimum floor area for each type of bedroom, depending on the housing program type. These bedroom areas do not include bathroom square footage and allow adequate room for closets and storage of personal items.

In some situations, depending on the size and availability of rooms, children may share a room and in Transition Housing and Safe Homes, a parent may share a bedroom with children. Programs for mothers with small children may need additional bedroom space for cots or a crib.

Bedroom Type	Safe Homes & Transition Houses
1 Single Bed	10.2 m ² (110 ft ²)
2 Single Beds	13.9 m ² (150 ft ²)
3 Single Beds	17.7 m ² (190 ft ²)

9. Ancillary & Utility Services

9.1 Janitorial Rooms

A janitorial room should be provided on the ground floor with a minimum 2.8 m² (30 ft²) in area, and include slip-resistant resilient floor, floor-mounted mop sink, shelves, mop brackets, floor drain, and wall-mounted faucet with provision for a hose end. In large projects, provide this room close to elevators with sufficient mechanical ventilation as required by code.

9.2 Mechanical / Electrical Rooms

Mechanical and electrical rooms should be located as close as possible to the entry point for utilities to allow for efficient distribution, including space and access for servicing. Locate the rooms so that service technicians are not required to walk through common areas which could risk client confidentiality. Early in the design stage, consider the room location in the building, access, clearance, future replacement of equipment, structural requirements, noise transmission, and construction. Mechanical room door width must be 915 mm (3'-0") at a minimum, 1015 mm to 1067 mm (3'-4" to 3'-6") is preferred and shall have adequately primed floor drains. Refer to the BC Housing [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#) (Section 1) for details.

9.3 Receiving / Loading Dock

If a commercial kitchen is provided in the transition house facility, an easy access for transporting food supplies from the street to the kitchen should be considered based on the confidentiality of the building within the neighbourhood. The consultant, with the operator, is required at early design stage to decide if the facility is to be kept confidential and blended with neighbourhood.

9.4 Garbage & Recycling

A contained, easily accessible and covered exterior area is needed for regular garbage and recycling pick-up. It should be conveniently located for ease of access for pick-up and in



a location that does not compromise the safety and security of residents and staff. For larger buildings, it will ideally be constructed with a high impact concrete floor and walls, hose bib and a floor drain, or slopes to sanitary drain. This space should have adequate room to house a garbage skip, recycling bins. If required, mechanical ventilation could be included for odour control.

9.5 Bed Bug Management

The provision of a heat treatment room is a consideration and will be project-specific to manage bed bug infestations. Buildings may need to provide a heat treatment (or bed bug treatment) room within their facilities, or in an outside area to prevent and manage bed bug infestations for resident's belongings or furnishings. [Alternatives to heat treatment rooms can be considered, such as bed bug ovens, tents or mobile units.](#)

Heat Treatment Rooms

A heat treatment room is (or bed bug treatment) room is typically located in an area away from tenants and support or amenity areas. The room should be large enough to include a box spring and mattress, bed side table, and a three person couch and allow for adequate air circulation for heat penetration with other furniture and items included.

Tenant's belongings should be isolated (bagged) and transported to the room; from there the items should be spread across shelves, hangers, or racks with enough space between items to allow them to get hot enough to kill the bugs. Electrical items can be placed inside the heat treatment room, but at the ground level and not in direct contact with the heater to prevent overheating. Once the heat treatment has been completed, the room should not be occupied for a minimum of 30 minutes to allow for cooling. The doors of the treatment room can be opened after this to allow for rapid cooling.

See the BC Housing [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#) (Section 4) for further specifications for this type of space.

Bed Bug Ovens and Tents

Bed bug ovens and tents are a portable thermal chamber that can treat bug infested items on site and has the ability to eliminate bugs at any stage in their life. The items infested with the bed bugs are placed into the oven and then heated for treatment. This method is effective

for items that cannot be washed or put in a dryer; such as books, electronics, shoes, and more.

Mobile Units

Mobile units perform heating treatment outside of the building unit with the specifically selected items that require treatment. This allows for treatment to occur without requiring residents to vacate their units. Access to exterior electrical outlets with sufficient capacity to operate a mobile unit should be provided.

10. Outdoor Spaces

Outdoor space provides the opportunity for a range of important functions, including providing a safe and secure space for women and children to spend time outdoors. Interior courtyards, areas screened by the building or wall / fencing, should be considered.

Outdoor spaces can include:

10.1 Children Outdoor Play Space

Provide adequate and secure play space for children. Play areas should include:

- **Natural spaces.** Provide access to natural spaces where children can connect with nature, with access to trees, and live creatures. Create pathways through the yard instead of one single expanse of concrete.
- **Open spaces.** Open fenced spaces where children can run freely and release energy. Consider creating pathways through the yard instead of one single expanse of concrete.
- **Play structures and space for adventure.** Outdoor play areas that strengthen children’s power of imagination while providing an environment for play.
- **Sight lines:** Locate play spaces so they are overlooked by common facilities such as a lounge and / or multi-purpose / amenity room. Sight lines should allow staff to see women (especially at night) either directly or via security camera. Women should be able to observe the area and ensure that it is secure before [entering](#).



10.2 Outdoor Amenity Space

Consider a weather-protected area - an awning, gazebo, or similar - for outdoor seating. The area should be within staff sight lines and sight lines of the children’s play area. This area should be universally accessible from the main building and provide seating that is universally designed and promotes positive social interaction.



10.3 Smoking Areas

Provide an adequately-lit weather protected outdoor smoking space that is a comfortable distance from children’s play areas, adjacent doors, operable windows, intake louvers, and outdoor gathering spaces. A smoking area must comply with provincial legislation, or local authorities having jurisdiction. Where there is a conflict, the more stringent legislation will apply.



10.4 Community Gardens

Garden space and access to nature can be therapeutic for women and children. Create outdoor spaces that women and children can participate in, interact with, and enjoy. Where required by the operator, a common garden area can be provided for the residents to have the experience of planting and producing food, as well as for therapeutic effects. Provide raised beds to facilitate access for residents with wheelchair or restricted movement.



10.5 Secure Outdoor Storage

Many residents require secure outdoor storage space for strollers, and bicycles. Some programs will require outdoor storage space for carts. As required by the program, outdoor storage is also needed for gardening tools, lawnmowers, chairs, etc.

10.6 Fencing

A secure perimeter for the facility will be important. This will involve a balance between a fence that is secure and deters easy access but is also not oppressive for the residents and the neighbours. Consider landscaping outside of fences.

10.7 Pet Areas

Consider providing kennels with outdoor access for pets. Keep regional weather conditions in mind, and if needed, consider an insulated or heated outdoor kennel. The kennels should provide a safe place for dogs in the winter and the summer. Consider a fenced-in dog run to separate the dog area from the rest of the outdoor space.



10.8 Adequate Parking for Staff, Residents & Visitors

Municipalities usually recognize parking needs for the building will be limited, depending on the building location, size, neighbourhood area, and staffing levels. In accordance with municipal requirements, for a large building site, parking for staff and visitors will need to be provided. The area should be secure, well lit, and subject to security camera surveillance. Where applicable, ensure a snow plow can navigate the parking lot and there is a location to pile the snow.

When confidentiality is important, provide parking for women that is not visible from the street. This could be parking that is in front of the building if there is a gate that closes, or landscaping blocking the cars from view. Other options are underground parking or creating parking spaces in the back yard, accessible from the alleyway.

Safety needs to be considered, with clear sight lines from the building to the parking lot. This allows staff to ensure tenants and staff reach their car safely during times of high-alert.

10.9 Bicycle Parking

Provide exterior bicycle parking racks, at a minimum, and additional bicycle parking as required by the operator and the municipality.



11. Security Features

Safety and security are the most important design factors for transition houses, safe homes, and second stage housing residents, staff, and visitors. These factors must be matched by, and integrated with, operational policies.

11.1 Security System

Building security system design should correspond with operational capacity and staffing levels. Security measures may include access control, camera surveillance systems, security alarms, intercom system, emergency call buttons, etc. and be based on a facility risk assessment, and an operator's requirements.

When planning these systems, it is advisable to engage a security consultant at an early design stage to assess the types of technology available, and possible locations for installation in consultation with operational staff.



Some key considerations for safety and security include, but are not limited to:

- Good exterior lighting for entrances and outside spaces, including motion lights where appropriate.
- In transition houses and safe homes, a solid front door (no glazing) to protect from unwanted entry.
- Provide panic door hardware in the crash bar for fire exit doors.
- For transition houses, consider having the reception or staff area at the main entrance.
- For staff supervision, ensure good sight lines for all building spaces that involve outdoor areas, entrance(s), circulation, gathering, and amenity spaces.
- Maximum glazing in all common area doors and staff office doors to improve security.
- Elevators, stairwells, and hallways should be well lit.

- In multi-story buildings, the operator may wish to restrict floor access if different programs are served within one building.
- Resilient, non-slip floors in critical areas, such as entrances, washrooms, and kitchens.
- Secure storage and / or lockers for resident's belongings.
- At a minimum, provide cameras at main entry points into the building, including all exit and entry doors. In larger projects, all common hallways, staircase, elevator, exterior parking area, common rooms, and any exterior storage areas.
- Depending on the program, consider whether residents should be able to use remote access to front door video surveillance before exiting the building.
- Access for program users is to be designed with consolidation of maintenance and ease of operation. For example: card readers, electric strikes, or suitable locksets where required, with consideration of maintenance and ease of operation.
- In order to respond to emergencies, installation of emergency call buttons in staff rooms, reception, and support workers offices can be considered.
- Ensure that emergency alerts are accessible for people with different needs (eg. strobe light alarms for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing).

11.2 Guest Access

Based on the program's policy for guest access, develop appropriate security measures to enforce it. This could mean a locked front door, with a buzzer for anyone who wants to enter, or no entry for guests unless accompanied by a resident or staff member.

In transition houses, an intercom should be outside, close to the front entry door, for visitors to communicate with the reception office.

11.3 Privacy for Buildings & Grounds

- **Privacy setbacks.** When considering the setbacks and location of the building on the property, provide optimum privacy for residents, while making good use of the land available.
- **Window privacy and ground floor windows.** If there is no privacy from the street to the building, consider creating privacy with the windows. This can be done through

landscaping, blinds or curtains, window film, or exterior window privacy screens. Pay attention to the ground floor windows, especially when it contains women's bedrooms.

- **Limited access (curtilage security):** Consider limiting physical or visual access to the property through landscaping (bushes or trees), fencing, gates, etc.,

11.4 Safety for Staff

It is important to create a safe environment for staff, designing a safe space for them within which to work with appropriate safety measures. Considerations include:

- **Panic buttons.** Consider placing panic buttons in appropriate places for staff (or to be carried by staff) to call for help when needed.
- **Maximize glazing in windows.** In reception area for transition houses, the window glass should be tempered glass with a shatter resistant film on the inside to prevent exposure from glass dust / shards in the event of impact. Include maximize glazing in all common area doors and staff offices for improved visibility.
- **Staff room / Panic room.** If appropriate, the staff room can double as a panic room in an emergency situation. Ensure there is a method of communication from the room to local police and a secure lock from the inside.



12. Finishes, Materials & Building Systems

12.1 Materials & Finishing

Material selection and finishes should reflect client type, durability, ease of maintenance, and local availability. Material choices can create a homelike environment and reduce the opportunity for vandalism or abuse. Refer to the BC Housing [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#) (Section 1 and 4) for detailed requirements of interior and exterior finishes. A few highlights include:

- **Flooring.** Provide minimum 2.0 mm (0.080") thick homogeneous resilient sheet flooring throughout with 19 mm x 89 mm (3/4" x 3 1/2") painted solid wood in tenants suites and 19 mm x 140 mm (3/4" x 5 1/2") in common areas. Provide a slip-resistant resilient safety flooring sloped to a claimable floor drain with minimum 2.0 mm (0.080") thickness and complete with flash cove wall base in wheelchair unit bathrooms, common wet location areas such as common bathrooms, laundry, commercial kitchen areas, pantry and janitorial closet. Provide a floor drain in the mechanical room. Low maintenance, no-wax, and non-glare finishes are required.
- **Doors.** For renovation and conversion projects, the configuration of existing doors, and opener sizes, should be reviewed to ensure they meet current Building Code requirements. All exterior doors, interior common area doors, suite entry, and service room doors should have clear openings of 900 mm (3'-0") with level or roll-over thresholds for accessibility, and lever handles for ease of operation. Refer to the BC Housing [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#) (Section 1) for details.
- **Glazing.** Maximize glazing for doors in all common areas, staff offices, support services and exit stairs for improved visibility and, as permitted by the Building Code, to enhance security.
- **Windows.** Utilize awning or casement, high performance with low solar heat gain coefficient windows, and consider security when determining size, location, and style. For renovation projects, review the configuration of existing windows, opener sizes, and sill heights to ensure they meet current Building Code requirements and



increase ventilation rates. When design permits, provide windows in stairways and corridors to introduce natural lighting. Consider children's safety when choosing how the windows will open and close. Confirm the type of window coverings with the operator. In determining whether windows should open, consider ventilation needs and consult with the operator about program needs. Some security systems prevent windows from being opened.

- **Hardware.** For all doors, windows and millwork, hardware should be easily operable by those with limited strength and dexterity. Commercial grade lever door handles are to be installed throughout. The design team should consult with the operator and maintenance personnel before choosing the access controls.
- **Drywall & Paint.** Walls and ceilings in common and sleeping areas should be finished with painted gypsum board. Suspended ceiling tiles should be avoided in tenant units and common washrooms. All exposed walls in a commercial kitchen and communal kitchen (if required) should have fiberglass reinforced panels (FRP).
- **Infestation Control.** To prevent insects and bed bugs from getting behind baseboards and walls, provide a continuous bead of sealant along:
 - The joint between the finished floor and the bottom of the wall sheathing; and
 - The top edge and underside of the baseboard.
- For existing buildings, diatomaceous earth can also be used as a natural pesticide behind baseboards and walls.
- **Millwork.** It is recommended that commercial kitchen, washroom, and common laundry cabinetry be located on legs so wet floors do not degrade the product. For commercial kitchen finishes requirements refer to the BC Housing [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#) (Section 4).

12.2 Building Systems

In addition to considering a building's energy requirements, mechanical and electrical system design should optimize reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and the total life-cycle costs of the building, and consider passive design strategies as outlined in the BC Housing [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#) (Section 2 - Energy and Environmental Design).

12.2.1 Mechanical Systems

- A central boiler and storage tank system for domestic hot water and electrical baseboard for heating is the preferred option for multi-unit projects due to maintenance accessibility and serviceability.



- Hot water temperature must not exceed 49°C (120°F) at points of use by residents. Hot water storage tank shall not be below 60°C (140°F) to control the propagation of Legionella bacteria. Provide hot water distribution to common kitchen areas and for janitor sinks at 60°C (140°F).
- Pressure balance valves with temperature limit stops for residential showers, and temperature limit stops only for faucets is a minimum requirement. The shower valves and faucets shall be set to maximum hot water temperature of 49°C (120°F).
- Indoor air quality is important, and must be considered when designing mechanical and ventilation systems. The minimum ventilation rates within the units are provided in the BC Housing [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#).
- Special attention shall be paid to summer overheating of residential suites. For buildings that do not incorporate full mechanical cooling for residential suites, the building modelling shall demonstrate compliance with ASHRAE Standard 55-2010 "Thermal Environmental Conditions for Human Occupancy" in accordance with the requirements of the City of Vancouver Energy Modelling Guidelines. Consult with transition house operators about the need for mechanical cooling on the various floors. In response to safety issues, the windows may not be able to open, and dependant on the security system (when armed, some security systems do not allow windows to be opened) and air conditioning should be considered.
- Provide sprinkler protection for all projects. Comply with the current BC Building Code, BC Fire Code, NFPA, and the authority having jurisdiction.
- Choice of plumbing fixtures, shower heads, water closets, light fixtures, and sprinkler heads should consider ease of maintenance, durability, supplier availability, and consistency of the application within the facility.

12.2.2 Electrical Systems

- Adjustable lighting levels will enhance efficiency. In transition houses, where multi-bed configuration is considered, light fixtures should be adjustable, and controlled by individual users.
- A fire detection, fire alarm system, and fire safety plan should be prepared, as required by the BC Building Code and local authorities having jurisdiction. Fire alarms, with flashing strobe lights for residents with hearing impairments, are also required.
- In areas susceptible to damage, all equipment and wiring devices (including light fixtures, pull stations, exit lights, etc.,) should be protected by wire guards or polycarbonate boxes. These locations include storage, janitorial, mechanical, electrical, and similar places.
- Depending on the size of the facility, new designs may consider incorporating an emergency back-up generator. Locations that experience greater power outages should also consider generators.
- Provide well designed exterior lighting.

12.2.3 Elevator Requirements

The elevator design shall meet the current standards for operation, reliability, performance, safety, accessibility and to reasonable standards of cleanliness and appearance.

In renovation projects, a stair lift should be installed as a last resort to improve accessibility. Most women cannot use the lift independently and it adds additional workload and strain on staff.

The location, type, number, size and speed of elevators shall be determined using elevator analysis calculations and simulation techniques. Refer to the BC Housing [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#) for the design criteria to confirm the elevator requirements for the project. Other elevator requirements include:

- Elevator controls and buttons are to be heavy duty for durability to withstand abuse.
- Elevators should be close to areas of active occupancies to make them visible from the building entry and the front reception office (if applicable).
- Signage to the elevator should be clearly visible.
- The elevator should be barrier free design, and fully accessible.

12.2.4 Building Envelope

- Wherever possible, use passive design strategies and a better performing building envelope in preference to use of complex and difficult to operate and maintain HVAC systems.
- Conform to the Provincial Energy Step Code requirements as outlined in the BC Housing [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#).
- Detailing of the building envelope should minimize thermal bridging.
- Detailing of the building envelope components should enhance airtightness and minimize uncontrolled air and moisture exchange between the exterior and interior. All buildings need to be tested to determine Envelope Air Leakage Rates as airtightness of the building is critical to its performance. Airtightness of suites is to be tested and reported to demonstrate compliance with a suite-level air-leakage target as tested to ASTM E 779 or equivalent standard.
- Refer to the BC Housing [Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#) (Section 1) for additional information and design guides.

12.2.5 System Requirements Within Renovation Projects

When a single detached home is renovated to create a space for Safe Home or Transition House programs, the electrical, plumbing, gas lines, fire sprinklers, and mechanical systems need to be reviewed. The systems need to work for the number of residents, staff and for the installed appliances. If the renovation involves the installation of commercial appliances in the kitchen or laundry room, there often needs to be an upgrade to electrical systems and issues of condensation need to be considered.

12.3 Building Systems Commissioning

All BC Housing funded and financed projects, including both new development and renovation / capital projects, require commissioning. The level and depth of commissioning required for the project will be determined by the size and complexity of the project itself and by the needs of the operator's project requirements.

The consultant team will be responsible for ensuring that the contract documents are in accordance with the operator's project requirements, basis of design, meet BC Housing

[Design Guidelines & Construction Standards](#), building code, by-law requirements and authorities having jurisdiction, and outlining the commissioning requirements and process for all building systems and integration of systems.

The general contractor is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all building systems and integration of the systems are operating and functioning as intended in the contract documents regardless a third-party commissioning is initiated by the operator or BC Housing. Follow [BC Housing Building Commissioning Guidelines](#) for a 3rd party independent commissioning hired by the operator or BC Housing.

APPENDIX 1:

Example Drawings

Example Drawing

The following example drawings illustrate the design guidelines as outlined above.



Example Drawing 1: Women's Transition House & Second Stage Housing Combined

- Surface parking
- Transition House with 14 units and 18 beds
- Second Stage Housing with 30 units



Example Drawing 2: Women's Transition House & Second Stage Housing Combined

- Underground parking
- Transition House with 9 unit and 14 beds
- Second Stage Housing with 29 units



Example Drawing 3: Women's Second Stage Housing

- Underground parking
- Second Stage Housing with 25 units



Example Drawing 4: Women's Transition House

- Surface parking
- Transition House with 10 units and 16 beds

Example Drawing 1: Women's Transition Housing & Second Stage Housing Combined With Surface Parking

Women's Transition & Second Stage Housing Combined					
DESCRIPTION OF SPACE	AREAS		# OF UNITS	TOTAL AREAS	
	FT2	M2		FT2	M2
A - HOUSING UNITS					
TRANSITION HOUSING UNITS (TH)					
1 BED UNIT	217	20.2	10	2,174	202.0
1 BED W/A UNIT	282	26.2	1	282	26.2
2 BED UNIT	282	26.2	2	564	52.4
3 BED UNIT	338	31.4	1	338	31.4
TOTAL			14	3,358	312.0
SECOND STAGE HOUSING UNITS (SS)					
STUDIO	327	30.4	3	982	91.2
1 BED UNIT	555	51.6	6	3,333	309.6
1 BED W/A UNIT	595	55.3	3	1,786	165.9
2 BED UNIT	707	65.7	3	2,122	197.1
2 BED CORNER UNIT (NORTH)	715	66.4	6	4,288	398.4
2 BED CORNER UNIT (SOUTH)	762	70.8	6	4,573	424.8
3 BED UNIT	971	90.2	3	2,913	270.6
TOTAL			30	19,995	1857.6
SUB-TOTAL				23,354	2169.6
B - AMENITY AREAS					
TH LOUNGE / DINING	558	51.8	1	558	51.8
TH SHARED KITCHEN (INC. PANTRY)	268	24.9	1	268	24.9
TH MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM (INC STOR.)	362	33.6	1	362	33.6
TH PLAY AREA	185	17.2	1	185	17.2
TH COMPUTER AREA	32	3.0	1	32	3.0
TH COUNSELING / QUIET ROOM	107	9.9	1	107	9.9
TH RESOURCE CABINET	15	1.4	1	15	1.4
TH LAUNDRY	187	17.4	1	187	17.4
TH WASHROOM	66	6.1	1	66	6.1
TH STORAGE ROOM	59	5.5	2	118	11.0
SS MULTIPURPOSE ROOM	257	23.9	1	257	23.9
SS COUNSELLING / QUIET ROOM	95	8.8	1	95	8.8
SS LAUNDRY	118	11.0	1	118	11.0
SS WASHROOM	66	6.1	1	66	6.1
SS TENANT STORAGE (2ND, 3RD, 4TH)	27	2.5	6	161	15.0
C - ADMINISTRATION / PROGRAM SUPPORT					
RECEPTION / GEN. OFFICE	133	12.4	1	133	12.4
INTAKE OFFICE	96	8.9	1	96	8.9
STAFF / MANAGER OFFICE	110	10.2	1	110	10.2
STAFF ROOM	143	13.3	1	143	13.3
STAFF WASHROOM	47	4.4	1	47	4.4
D - CIRCULATION					
VESTIBULE, CORRIDOR & LOBBY	1508	140.1	1	1,508	140.1
CORRIDOR (2ND, 3RD, 4TH)	651	60.5	3	1,954	181.5
STAIRS	150	13.9	2	299	27.8
STAIRS (2ND, 3RD, 4TH)	179	16.6	6	1,072	99.6
ELEVATOR	89	8.3	4	357	33.2
E - SERVICE ROOMS					
JANITOR ROOM	48	4.5	1	48	4.5
ELECTRICAL / MECHANICAL	199	18.5	1	199	18.5
ELECTRICAL (2ND, 3RD, 4TH)	16	1.5	3	48	4.5
STORAGE ROOM (2ND, 3RD, 4TH)	24	2.2	3	71	6.6
STORAGE ROOM (2ND, 3RD, 4TH)	29	2.7	3	87	8.1
DUCT SHAFTS	145	13.5	3	436	40.5

LEGEND:

CIRCULATION	
AMENITY AREAS	
ADMINISTRATION / PROGRAM SUPPORT	
SERVICE ROOMS	
1, 2 & 3 BED TRANSITION UNITS	
STUDIO SECOND STAGE UNIT	
1 BED SECOND STAGE UNIT	
2 BED SECOND STAGE UNIT	
3 BED SECOND STAGE UNIT	
WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE	W/A

TRANSITION UNITS

UNIT TYPE	NO. UNITS	BED AREA		TOTAL # BEDS
		FT ²	M ²	
1 BED UNIT	10	144	13.4	10
1 BED W/A UNIT	1	169	15.7	1
2 BED UNIT	2	203	18.9	4
3 BED UNIT	1	255	23.7	3
TOTAL	14	-	-	18

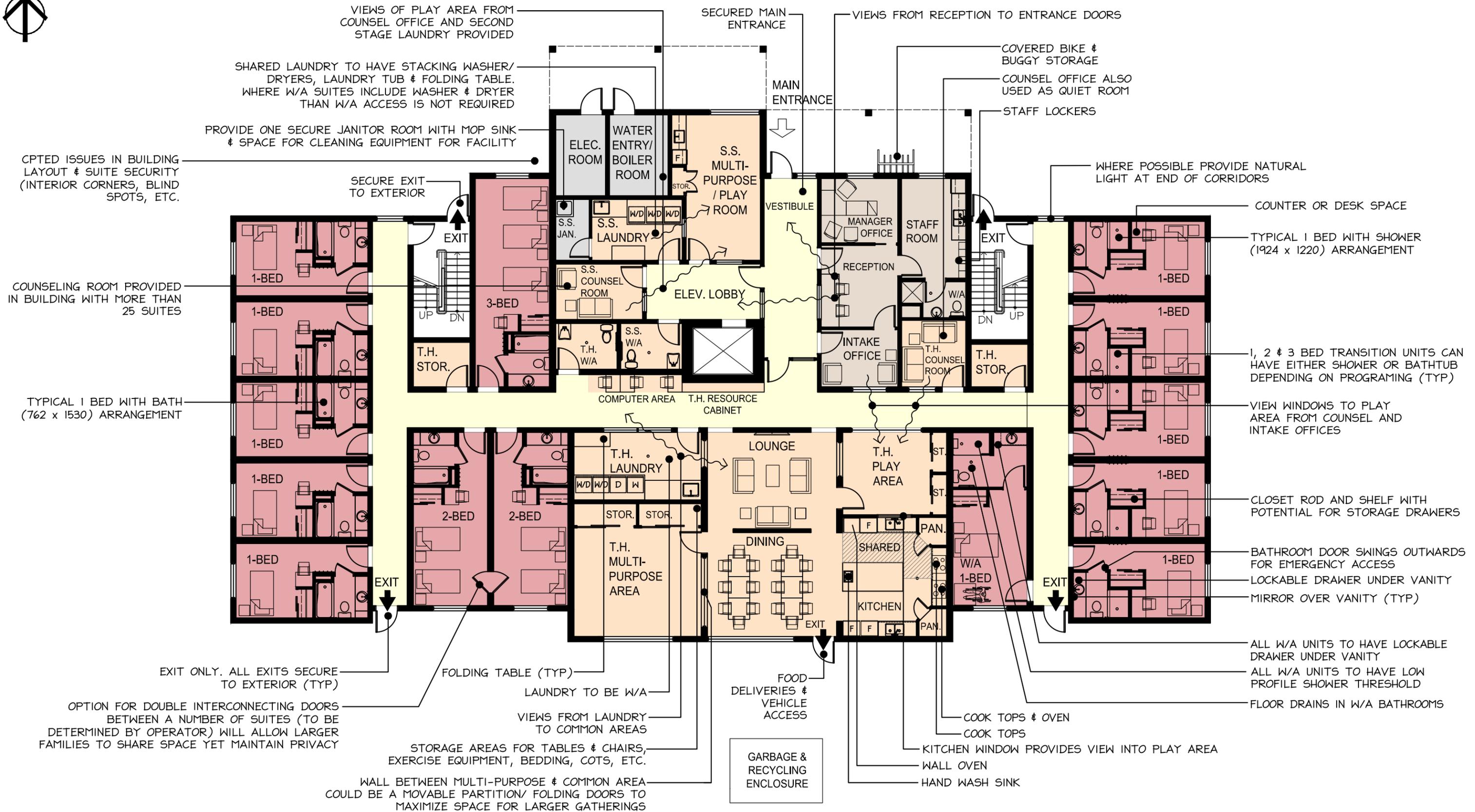
SUMMARY

FUNCTION	TOTAL AREAS	
	FT2	M2
A - TOTAL RESIDENTIAL AREA	23,354	2169.6
B - TOTAL AMENITY AREAS	2595.2	241.1
C - TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	529.6	49.2
D - TOTAL CIRCULATION	5190.4	482.2
E - TOTAL SERVICE ROOMS	890.2	82.7
F - GROSS LIVABLE AREA (A+B+C+D+E)	32,559	3,024.8
OVERALL BUILDING EFFICIENCY (A/F)		71.7%
BUILDING AREA (MEASURED)*	3,035.8	32,677
*MEASURED TO FACE OF SHEATHING		



JULY 3, 2021





1ST FLOOR PLAN (788.5M²)

DWG NO: A1

SCALE: 1:150
JULY 30, 2021



Example Drawing 1:

Women's Transition House & Second Stage Housing Combined With Surface Parking



CHAMFERED WALLS CAN ASSIST IN BETTER VISIBILITY AT CORNERS TO IMPROVED SECURITY (TYP)

TENANTS LIMITED STORAGE AREA (TYP)

LINE OF ROOF BELOW

1, 2 & 3 BEDROOM SECOND STAGE UNITS CAN HAVE EITHER SHOWER OR BATHTUB DEPENDING ON PROGRAMING (TYP)

CLOSET ROD AND SHELF

LOCKABLE MEDICINE CABINET WITH MIRROR OVER VANITY IF UNDER VANITY DRAWER IS NOT PROVIDED (TYP)

W/A UNITS TO SUPPLY SIDE BY SIDE WASHER/ DRYER IN CLOSET SPACE (OPTIONAL)

ALL W/A UNITS TO HAVE LOCKABLE DRAWER UNDER VANITY

STUDIO UNIT TO HAVE SHOWER

W/A UNITS TO HAVE LOW PROFILE SHOWER THRESHOLD

DUCT SHAFT FOR KITCHEN HOOD EXHAUST

2ND FLOOR PLAN (749.1M²)

DWG NO: A2

SCALE: 1:150
JULY 30, 2021



Example Drawing 1:

Women's Transition House & Second Stage Housing Combined With Surface Parking



CHAMFERED WALLS CAN ASSIST IN BETTER VISIBILITY AT CORNERS TO IMPROVED SECURITY (TYP)

TENANTS LIMITED STORAGE AREA (TYP)

LINE OF ROOF BELOW

1, 2 & 3 BEDROOM SECOND STAGE UNITS CAN HAVE EITHER SHOWER OR BATHTUB DEPENDING ON PROGRAMING (TYP)

CLOSET ROD AND SHELF

LOCKABLE MEDICINE CABINET WITH MIRROR OVER VANITY IF UNDER VANITY DRAWER IS NOT PROVIDED (TYP)

W/A UNITS TO SUPPLY SIDE BY SIDE WASHER/ DRYER IN CLOSET SPACE (OPTIONAL)

W/A UNITS TO HAVE LOCKABLE DRAWER UNDER VANITY

STUDIO UNIT TO HAVE SHOWER

W/A UNITS TO HAVE LOW PROFILE SHOWER THRESHOLD

DUCT SHAFT FOR KITCHEN HOOD EXHAUST

3RD FLOOR PLAN (749.1M²)

DWG NO: A3

SCALE: 1:150
JULY 30, 2021



Example Drawing 1:

Women's Transition House & Second Stage Housing Combined With Surface Parking



TENANTS LIMITED STORAGE AREA (TYP)



CHAMFERED WALLS CAN ASSIST IN BETTER VISIBILITY AT CORNERS TO IMPROVED SECURITY (TYP)

1, 2 & 3 BEDROOM SECOND STAGE UNITS CAN HAVE EITHER SHOWER OR BATHTUB DEPENDING ON PROGRAMING (TYP)

CLOSET ROD AND SHELF

LOCKABLE MEDICINE CABINET WITH MIRROR OVER VANITY IF UNDER VANITY DRAWER IS NOT PROVIDED (TYP)

W/A UNITS TO SUPPLY SIDE BY SIDE WASHER/ DRYER IN CLOSET SPACE (OPTIONAL)

W/A UNITS TO HAVE LOCKABLE DRAWER UNDER VANITY

STUDIO UNIT TO HAVE SHOWER

W/A UNITS TO HAVE LOW PROFILE SHOWER THRESHOLD

DUCT SHAFT FOR KITCHEN HOOD EXHAUST

4TH FLOOR PLAN (749.1M²)

DWG NO: A4

SCALE: 1:150
JULY 30, 2021



Example Drawing 1:

Women's Transition House & Second Stage Housing Combined With Surface Parking

Example Drawing 2: Women's Transition House & Second Stage Housing Combined With Underground Parking

Women's Transition & Second Stage Housing Combined With U/G Parking

DESCRIPTION OF SPACE	AREAS		# OF UNITS	TOTAL AREAS	
	FT2	M2		FT2	M2
A - HOUSING UNITS					
TRANSITION HOUSING UNITS (TH)					
1 BED UNIT	219	20.3	4	874	81.2
1 BED W/A UNIT	271	25.2	1	271	25.2
2 BED UNIT	271	25.2	3	814	75.6
3 BED UNIT	351	32.6	1	351	32.6
TOTAL			9	2,310	214.6
SECOND STAGE HOUSING UNITS (SS)					
STUDIO	349	32.4	3	1,046	97.2
1 BED CORNER UNIT	559	51.9	6	3,352	311.4
1 BED W/A CORNER UNIT	637	59.2	1	637	59.2
2 BED UNIT (NORTH)	709	65.9	6	4,256	395.4
2 BED UNIT (SOUTH)	730	67.8	3	2,189	203.4
2 BED CORNER UNIT	769	71.4	6	4,611	428.4
2 BED W/A CORNER UNIT	778	72.3	1	778	72.3
3 BED UNIT	983	91.3	3	2,948	273.9
TOTAL			29	19,819	1841.2
SUB-TOTAL				22,129	2055.8
B - AMENITY AREAS					
TH KITCHEN (STAFF)	388	36.0	1	388	36.0
TH LOUNGE / DINING	625	58.1	1	625	58.1
TH MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM	212	19.7	1	212	19.7
TH PLAY AREA	133	12.4	1	133	12.4
TH COMPUTER AREA	74	6.9	1	74	6.9
TH COUNSELING / QUIET ROOM	99	9.2	1	99	9.2
TH RESOURCE CABINET	8	0.7	1	8	0.7
TH LAUNDRY	141	13.1	1	141	13.1
TH WASHROOM	59	5.5	1	59	5.5
TH STORAGE ROOM (CORRIDOR)	34	3.2	1	34	3.2
SS MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM	362	33.6	1	362	33.6
SS COUNSELING / QUIET ROOM	83	7.7	1	83	7.7
SS RESOURCE CABINET	13	1.2	1	13	1.2
SS LAUNDRY (2ND, 3RD & 4TH)	87	8.1	3	262	24.3
SS WASHROOM	57	5.3	1	57	5.3
SS STORAGE (PLAY AREA)	41	3.8	1	41	3.8
SS STORAGE (2ND & 3RD)	59	5.5	2	118	11.0
C - ADMINISTRATION / PROGRAM SUPPORT					
RECEPTION/GEN. OFFICE	109	10.1	1	109	10.1
INTAKE OFFICE	119	11.1	1	119	11.1
MANAGER OFFICE	83	7.7	1	83	7.7
STAFF WASHROOM	53	4.9	1	53	4.9
STAFF ROOM	174	16.2	1	174	16.2
D - CIRCULATION					
CORRIDOR & LOBBY	1121	104.1	1	1,121	104.1
CORRIDOR (BASEMENT)	442	41.1	1	442	41.1
CORRIDOR (2ND, 3RD & 4TH)	607	56.4	3	1,821	169.2
STAIRS	351	32.6	1	351	32.6
STAIRS (BASEMENT)	187	17.4	1	187	17.4
STAIRS (2ND, 3RD & 4TH)	323	30.0	3	969	90.0
ELEVATOR	89	8.3	5	447	41.5
E - SERVICE ROOMS					
TH JANITOR ROOM	34	3.2	1	34	3.2
SS JANITOR ROOM	23	2.1	1	23	2.1
ELECTRICAL (2ND, 3RD & 4TH)	24	2.2	3	71	6.6
COMM. CLOSET (2ND, 3RD & 4TH)	16	1.5	3	48	4.5
ELEVATOR CONTROL ROOM (4TH)	59	5.5	1	59	5.5
DUCT SHAFTS	100	9.3	3	300	27.9

LEGEND:

CIRCULATION	
AMENITY AREAS	
ADMINISTRATION / PROGRAM SUPPORT	
SERVICE ROOMS	
1, 2 & 3 BED TRANSITION UNITS	
STUDIO SECOND STAGE UNIT	
1 BED SECOND STAGE UNIT	
2 BED SECOND STAGE UNIT	
3 BED SECOND STAGE UNIT	
WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE	W/A

TRANSITION UNITS

UNIT TYPE	NO. UNITS	BED AREA		TOTAL # BEDS
		FT ²	M ²	
1 BED UNIT	4	145	13.5	4
1 BED W/A UNIT	1	159	14.8	1
2 BED UNIT	3	194	18.0	6
3 BED UNIT	1	268	24.9	3
TOTAL	9	-	-	14

E - SERVICE ROOMS

TH JANITOR ROOM	34	3.2	1	34	3.2
SS JANITOR ROOM	23	2.1	1	23	2.1
ELECTRICAL (2ND, 3RD & 4TH)	24	2.2	3	71	6.6
COMM. CLOSET (2ND, 3RD & 4TH)	16	1.5	3	48	4.5
ELEVATOR CONTROL ROOM (4TH)	59	5.5	1	59	5.5
DUCT SHAFTS	100	9.3	3	300	27.9

SUMMARY

DESCRIPTION OF SPACE	TOTAL AREAS	
	FT2	M2
A - TOTAL RESIDENTIAL AREA	22,129	2,055.8
B - TOTAL AMENITY AREAS	2,709	251.7
C - TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	538	50.0
D - TOTAL CIRCULATION	5,338	495.9
E - TOTAL SERVICE ROOMS	536	49.8
F - GROSS LIVABLE AREA (A+B+C+D+E)	31,250	2,903.2
OVERALL BUILDING EFFICIENCY (A/F)		70.8%
BUILDING AREA*	3,612.3	38,883
*MEASURED TO FACE OF SHEATHING		

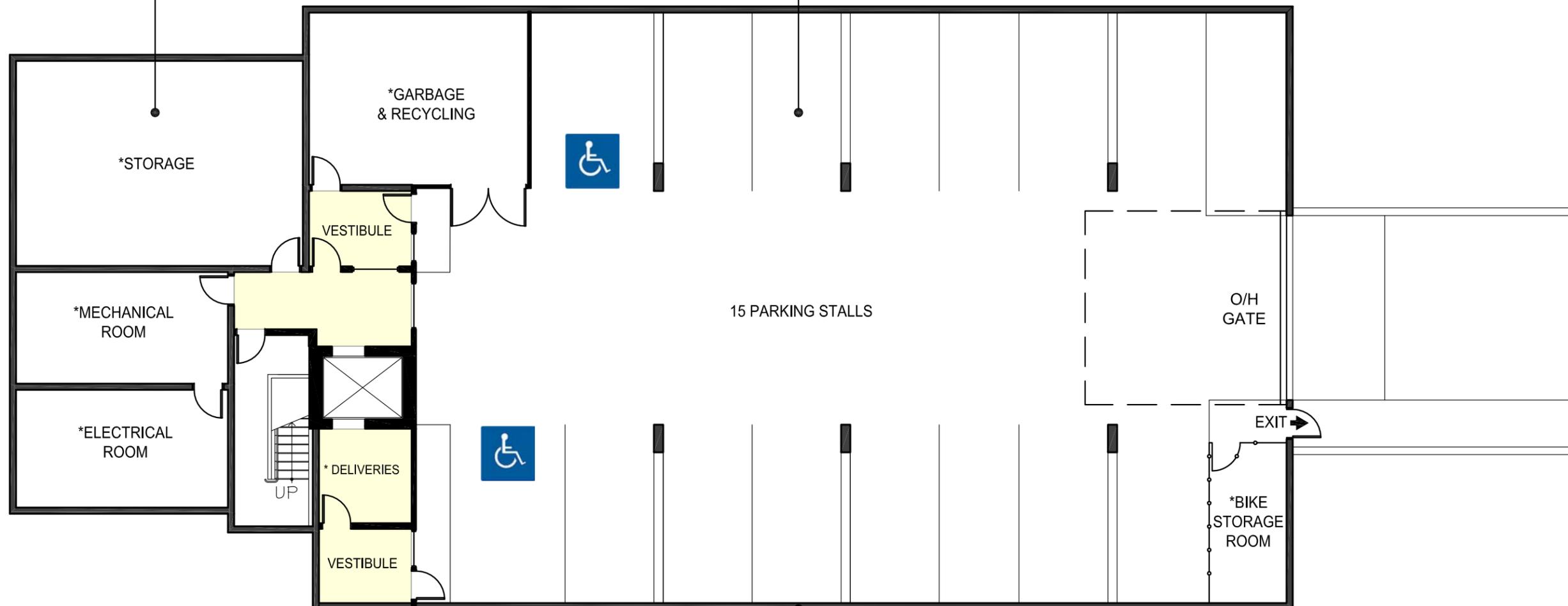
JULY 30, 2021





U/G TENANT STORAGE REQUIREMENTS DEPENDANT ON PROGRAM NEEDS

NUMBER & SIZE OF PARKING STALLS SUBJECT TO REQUIREMENTS OF AUTHORITY HAVING JURISDICTION



UNDERGROUND PARKING IS SITE SPECIFIC, THUS CONFIGURATION OF SERVICE AREAS AND REQUIREMENTS WILL VARY

*AREAS NOT INCLUDED IN EFFICIENCY CALCULATION

BASEMENT PARKING (775.7M²)

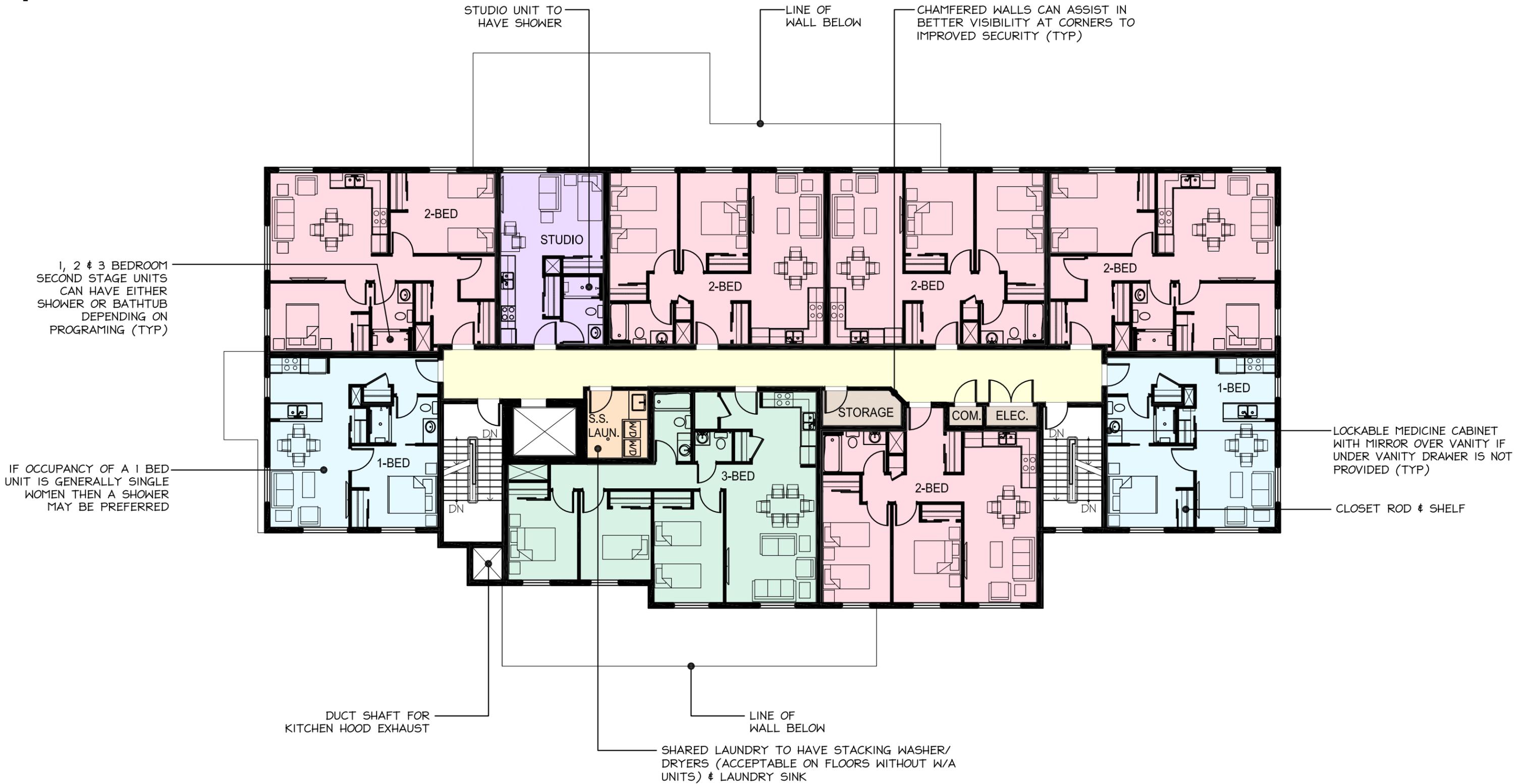
DWG NO: A1

SCALE: 1:150
JULY 30, 2021



Example Drawing 2:

Women's Transition House & Second Stage Housing Combined With Underground Parking



2ND FLOOR PLAN (691.0M²)

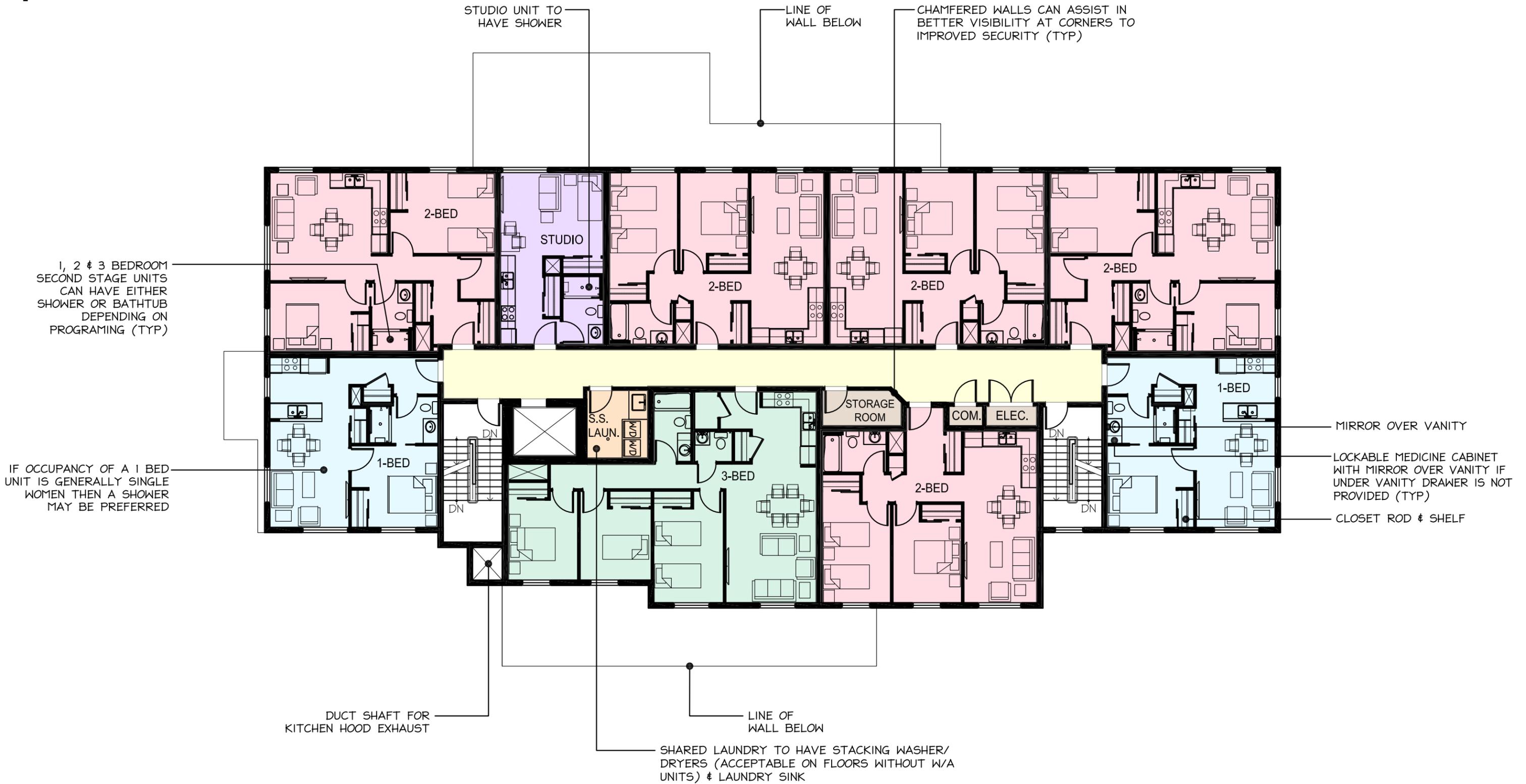
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SCALE: 1:150
JULY 30, 2021



Example Drawing 2:

Women's Transition House & Second Stage Housing Combined With Underground Parking



3RD FLOOR PLAN (691.0M²)

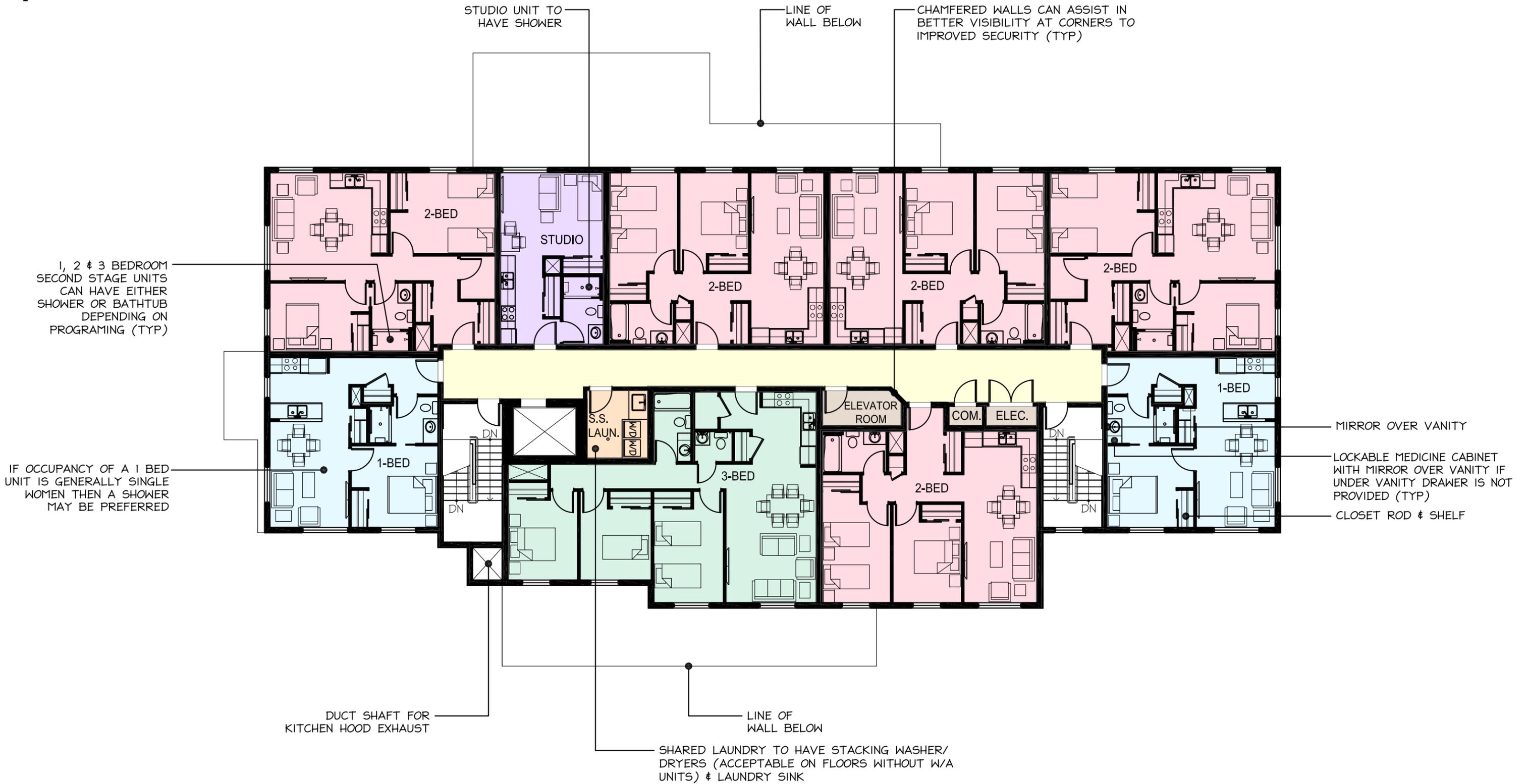
DWG NO: A4

SCALE: 1:150
JULY 30, 2021



Example Drawing 2:

Women's Transition House & Second Stage Housing Combined With Underground Parking



4TH FLOOR PLAN (691.0M²)

DWG NO: A5

SCALE: 1:150
JULY 30, 2021



Example Drawing 2:

Women's Transition House & Second Stage Housing Combined With Underground Parking

Example Drawing 3: Women's Second Stage Housing With Underground Parking

Women's Second Stage Housing with U/G Parking					
DESCRIPTION OF SPACE	AREAS		# OF UNITS	TOTAL AREAS	
	FT2	M2		FT2	M2
A - HOUSING UNITS					
SECOND STAGE HOUSING UNITS (SS)					
STUDIO	354	32.9	2	708	65.8
1 BED UNIT	527	49.0	1	527	49.0
1 BED CORNER UNIT	565	52.5	5	2,826	262.5
1 BED W/A CORNER UNIT	617	57.3	1	617	57.3
2 BED UNIT	713	66.2	8	5,701	529.6
2 BED CORNER UNIT (NORTH)	718	66.7	2	1,436	133.4
2 BED CORNER UNIT (SOUTH)	714	66.3	2	1,427	132.6
2 BED W/A CORNER UNIT	820	76.2	1	820	76.2
3 BED UNIT (TYP.)	934	86.8	3	2,803	260.4
TOTAL			25	16,865	1,566.8
B - AMENITY AREAS					
SS MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM	470	43.7	1	470	43.7
SS COUNSELING / QUIET ROOM	103	9.6	1	103	9.6
SS LAUNDRY (1ST, 2ND & 3RD)	119	11.1	3	358	33.3
SS W/A WASHROOM	53	4.9	1	53	4.9
SS STORAGE (CORRIDOR)	61	5.7	1	61	5.7
SS STORAGE (MULTI-PURPOSE RM.)	53	4.9	1	53	4.9
C - ADMINISTRATION / PROGRAM SUPPORT					
STAFF OFFICE	87	8.1	1	87	8.1
STAFF WASHROOM	47	4.4	1	47	4.4
D - CIRCULATION					
CORRIDOR & LOBBY	821	76.3	1	821	76.3
CORRIDOR (BASEMENT)	231	21.5	1	231	21.5
CORRIDOR (2ND & 3RD)	593	55.1	2	1,186	110.2
STAIRS	462	42.9	1	462	42.9
STAIRS (BASEMENT)	170	15.8	1	170	15.8
STAIRS (2ND & 3RD)	362	33.6	2	723	67.2
ELEVATOR	85	7.9	4	340	31.6
E - SERVICE ROOMS					
JANITOR ROOM	20	1.9	1	20	1.9
ELECTRICAL CLOSETS	14	1.3	2	28	2.6
DUCT SHAFTS	25	2.3	2	50	4.6

SUMMARY		
DESCRIPTION OF SPACE	TOTAL AREAS	
	FT2	M2
A - TOTAL RESIDENTIAL AREA	16,865	1,566.8
B - TOTAL AMENITY AREAS	1,099	102.1
C - TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	135	12.5
D - TOTAL CIRCULATION	3,934	365.5
E - TOTAL SERVICE ROOMS	98	9.1
F - GROSS LIVABLE AREA (A+B+C+D+E)	22,131	2,056.0
OVERALL BUILDING EFFICIENCY (A/F)		76.2%
BUILDING AREA (MEASURED)*	29,121	2,705.4
*MEASURED TO FACE OF SHEATHING		

LEGEND:

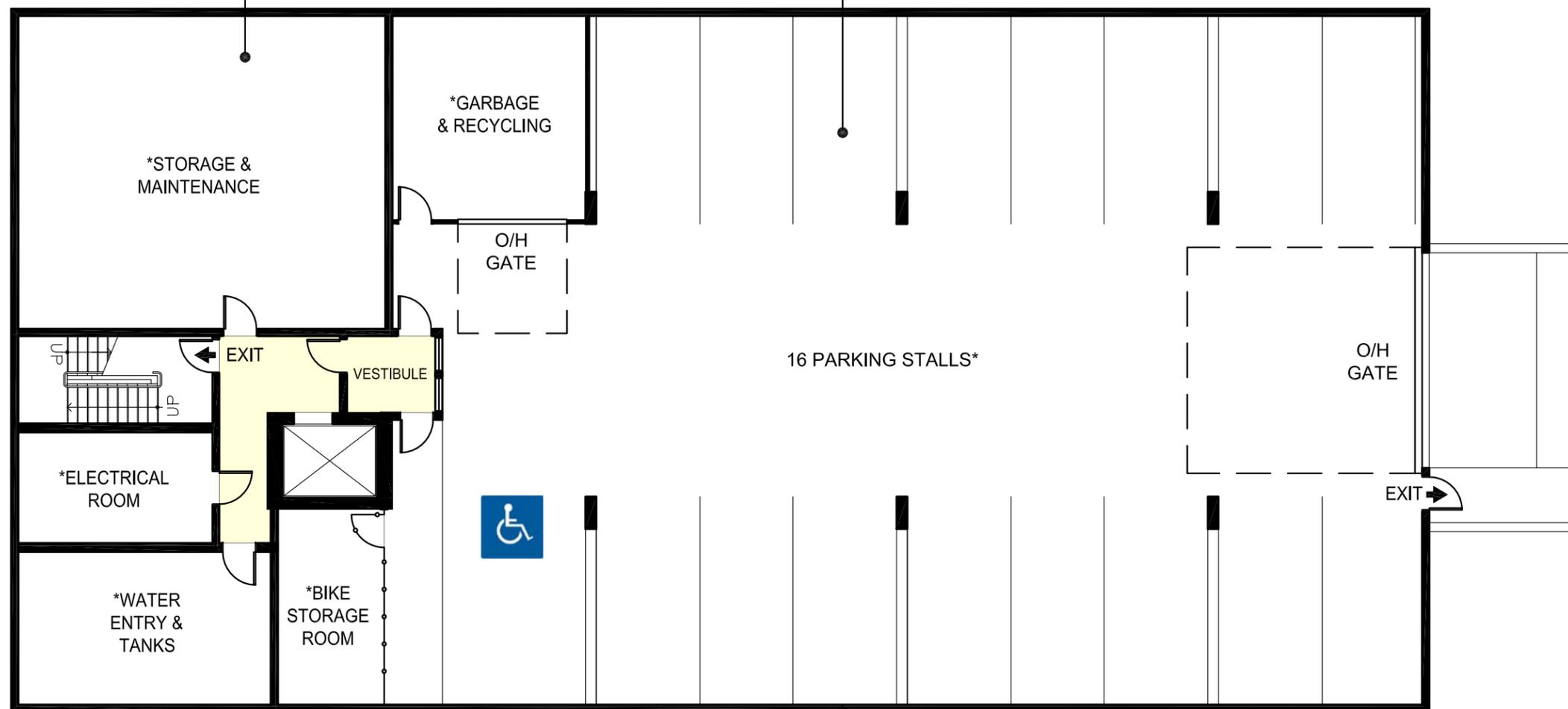
CIRCULATION	
AMENITY AREAS	
ADMINISTRATION / PROGRAM SUPPORT	
SERVICE ROOMS	
1, 2 & 3 BED TRANSITION UNITS	
STUDIO SECOND STAGE UNIT	
1 BED SECOND STAGE UNIT	
2 BED SECOND STAGE UNIT	
3 BED SECOND STAGE UNIT	
WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE	W/A





U/G TENANT STORAGE
REQUIREMENTS DEPENDANT
ON PROGRAM NEEDS

NUMBER & SIZE OF PARKING STALLS
SUBJECT TO REQUIREMENTS OF
AUTHORITY HAVING JURISDICTION



UNDERGROUND PARKING IS SITE
SPECIFIC, THUS CONFIGURATION OF
SERVICE AREAS AND REQUIREMENTS
WILL VARY

*AREAS NOT INCLUDED IN EFFICIENCY CALCULATION

BASEMENT PLAN (682.4M²)

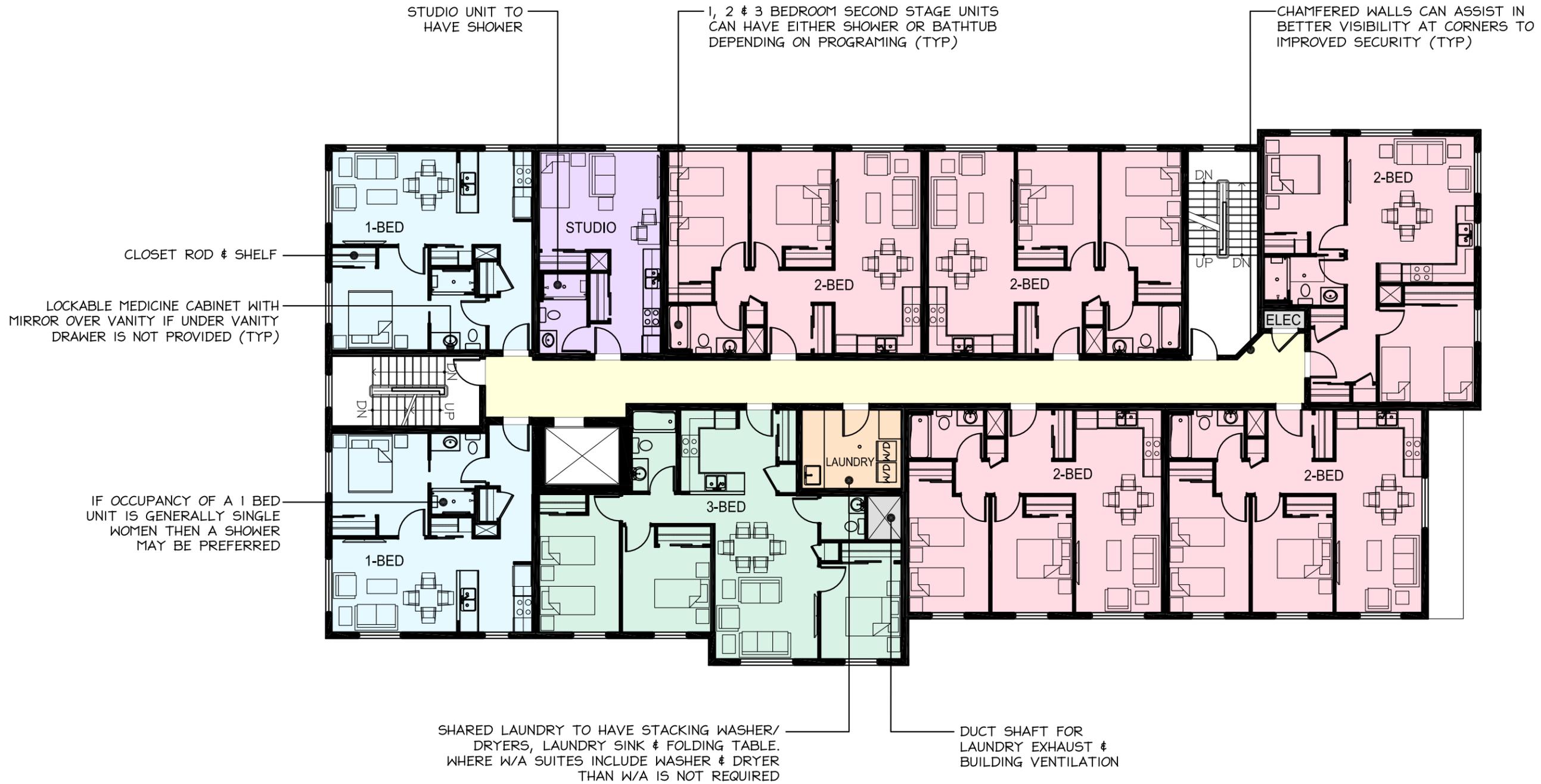
DWG NO: A1

SCALE: 1:150
JULY 30, 2021



Example Drawing 3:

Women's Second Stage Housing With Underground Parking



NOTE:
 1) FLOOR BY FLOOR LAUNDRY SHOULD ONLY BE CONSIDERED IF A PROGRAM HAS LOTS OF WOMEN WITH CHILDREN OR SENIORS, HOWEVER, THE NUMBER OF LAUNDRY MACHINES SHOULD BE MINIMIZED ACCORDING TO THE RATIOS PROVIDED IN THE GUIDELINES.
 2) IN LIEU OF FLOOR-BY-FLOOR LAUNDRY, A PROGRAM THAT ANTICIPATES A HIGHER NUMBER OF SENIORS COULD CONSIDER ROUGHING-IN FOR IN-SUITE LAUNDRY DEPENDING ON PROGRAM NEED AND PROJECT BUDGET. BC HOUSING PRIOR APPROVAL IS REQUIRED.

2ND FLOOR PLAN (671.3M²)

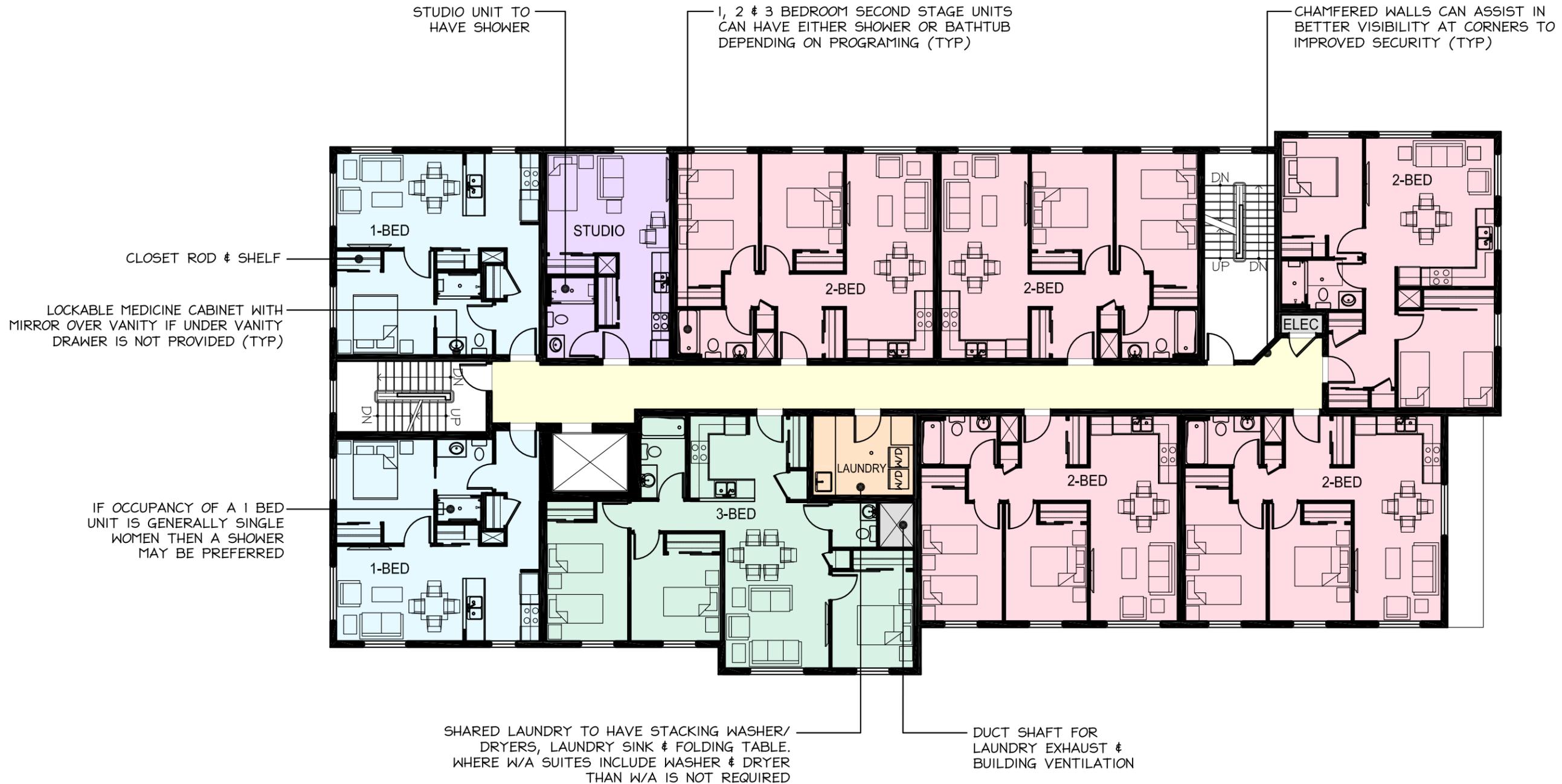
DWG NO: A3

SCALE: 1:150
 JULY 30, 2021



Example Drawing 3:

Women's Second Stage Housing With Underground Parking



NOTE:
 1) FLOOR BY FLOOR LAUNDRY SHOULD ONLY BE CONSIDERED IF A PROGRAM HAS LOTS OF WOMEN WITH CHILDREN OR SENIORS, HOWEVER, THE NUMBER OF LAUNDRY MACHINES SHOULD BE MINIMIZED ACCORDING TO THE RATIOS PROVIDED IN THE GUIDELINES.
 2) IN LIEU OF FLOOR-BY-FLOOR LAUNDRY, A PROGRAM THAT ANTICIPATES A HIGHER NUMBER OF SENIORS COULD CONSIDER ROUGHING-IN FOR IN-SUITE LAUNDRY DEPENDING ON PROGRAM NEED AND PROJECT BUDGET. BC HOUSING PRIOR APPROVAL IS REQUIRED.

3RD FLOOR PLAN (671.3M²)

DWG NO: A4

SCALE: 1:150
 JULY 30, 2021



Example Drawing 3:

Women's Second Stage Housing With Underground Parking

Example Drawing 4: Women's Transition House With Surface Parking

Women's Transition House					
DESCRIPTION OF SPACE	AREAS		# OF UNITS	TOTAL	
	FT2	M2		FT2	M2
A - HOUSING UNITS					
TRANSITION HOUSING UNITS (TH)					
1 BED UNIT	193	17.9	5	963	89.5
1 BED UNIT W/A	274	25.5	1	274	25.5
2 BED UNIT	238	22.1	4	952	88.4
3 BED UNIT	287	26.7	1	287	26.7
TOTAL			11	2,477	230.1
B - AMENITY AREAS					
TH SHARED KITCHEN	234	21.7	1	234	21.7
TH PANTRY	38	3.5	1	38	3.5
TH LOUNGE / DINING	433	40.2	1	433	40.2
TH MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM	172	16.0	1	172	16.0
TH CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA	69	6.4	1	69	6.4
TH COMPUTERS	22	2.0	1	22	2.0
TH COUNSEL / QUIET ROOM	98	9.1	1	98	9.1
TH RESOURCE / HYGIENE PRODUCTS	3	0.3	1	3	0.3
TH LAUNDRY	179	16.6	1	179	16.6
TH W/A WASHROOM	53	4.9	1	53	4.9
TH STORAGE (MULTI-PURPOSE RM.)	57	5.3	1	57	5.3
TH STORAGE (LAUNDRY)	16	1.5	1	16	1.5
TH STORAGE (STROLLER CLOSET)	18	1.7	1	18	1.7
TH STORAGE (CORRIDOR)	19	1.8	1	19	1.8
C - ADMINISTRATION / PROGRAM SUPPORT					
RECEPTION	128	11.9	1	128	11.9
INTAKE OFFICE	84	7.8	1	84	7.8
MANAGER OFFICE	97	9.0	1	97	9.0
STAFF ROOM	119	11.1	1	119	11.1
STAFF WASHROOM	43	4.0	1	43	4.0
D - CIRCULATION					
CORRIDOR & LOBBY	618	57.4	1	618	57.4
CORRIDOR (2ND)	418	38.8	1	418	38.8
STAIRS	245	22.8	1	245	22.8
STAIRS (2ND)	270	25.1	1	270	25.1
ELEVATOR	94	8.7	2	187	17.4
E - SERVICE ROOMS					
JANITOR ROOM	23	2.1	1	23	2.1
WATER INTAKE ROOM	93	8.6	1	93	8.6
ELECTRICAL CLOSET	18	1.7	1	18	1.7
ELECTRICAL & COMMUNICATION (2ND)	33	3.1	1	33	3.1
SUMMARY					
DESCRIPTION OF SPACE	TOTAL AREAS				
	FT2	M2			
A - TOTAL RESIDENTIAL AREA	2,477	230.1			
B - TOTAL AMENITY AREAS	1,410	131.0			
C - TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	471	43.8			
D - TOTAL CIRCULATION	1,738	161.5			
E - TOTAL SERVICE ROOMS	167	15.5			
F - GROSS LIVABLE AREA (A+B+C+D+E)	6,264	581.9			
OVERALL BUILDING EFFICIENCY (A/F)		39.5%			
BUILDING AREA*	6,300	585.3			
*MEASURED TO FACE OF SHEATHING					

LEGEND:

CIRCULATION	
AMENITY AREAS	
ADMINISTRATION / PROGRAM SUPPORT	
SERVICE ROOMS	
1 BED TRANSITION UNIT	
2 BED TRANSITION UNIT	
3 BED TRANSITION UNIT	
WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE	W/A

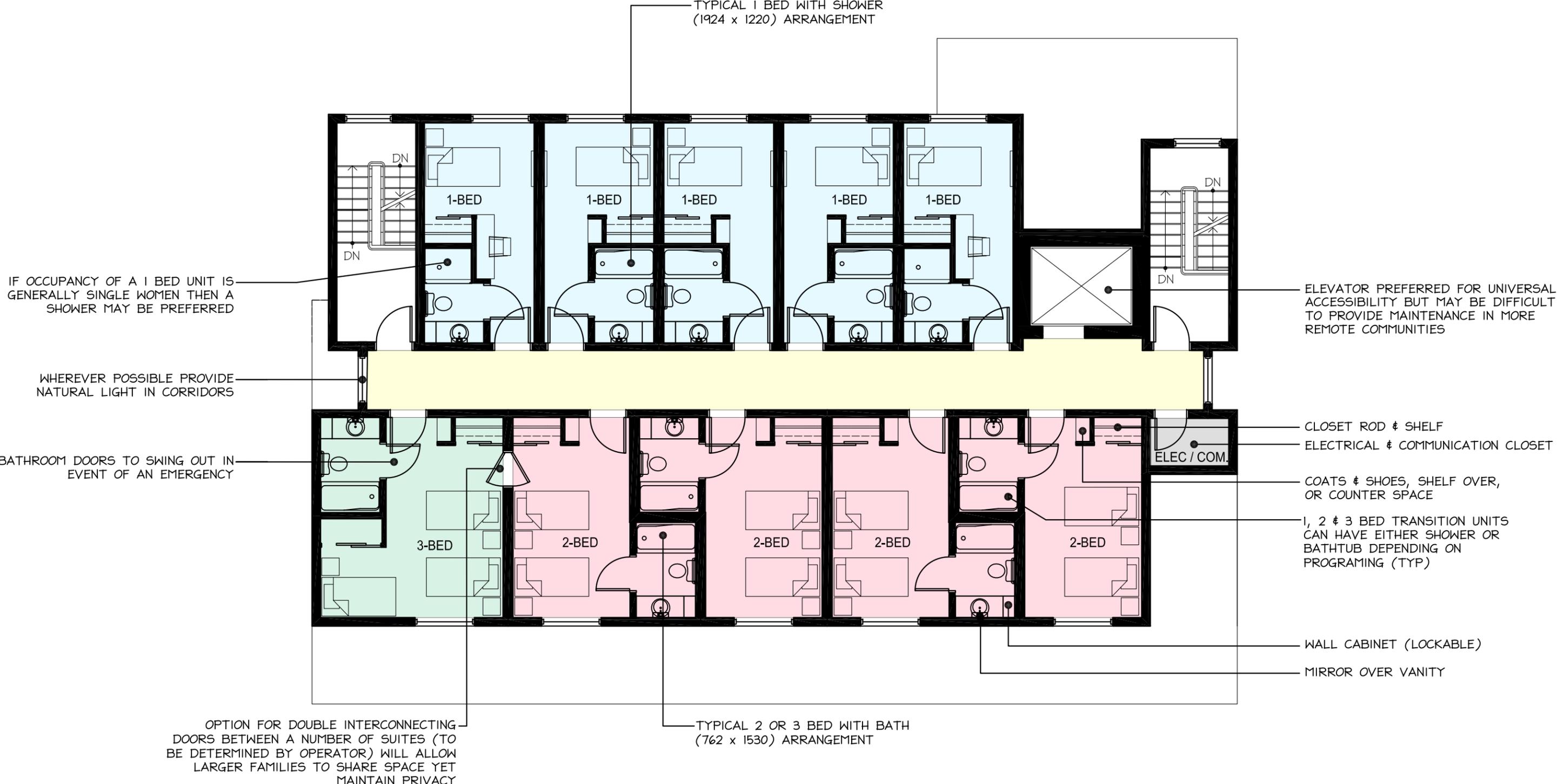
TRANSITION UNITS

UNIT TYPE	NO. UNITS	BED	AREA	TOTAL # BEDS
		FT ²	M ²	
1 BED H/C UNIT	1	159	14.8	1
1 BED UNIT	5	125	11.6	5
2 BED UNIT	4	166	15.4	8
3 BED UNIT	1	212	19.7	3
TOTAL	11	-	-	17



JULY 30, 2021





2ND FLOOR PLAN (ARE 281.5M²)

DWG NO: A2

SCALE: 1:100
JULY 30, 2021



Example Drawing 4:
Women's Transition Stage House With Surface Parking

APPENDIX 2:

National & International Design Guidelines
& Programming Comparison Table

Transition House Design Requirements	IBC Housing Design Guidelines: For Women's Safe Homes Transition Houses, Second Stage Housing and Long-Term Respite Housing	"Shelter for Women and Girls at Risk of or Survivors of Violence" by UN Women & Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses, 2012	"Family Violence Prevention Program National Guidelines 2018 to 2019" by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)	"Mashiba Standards Manual for Women's Shelters" by Family Violence Intervention Program & Manitoba's Women's Shelters	"Background Report for Shelter 2.0: Learning from the Literature on Domestic Violence Shelter Policies and Practices" by RBCA Calgary et al.	"More than a Bed: A National Profile of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses" by Women's Shelters Canada	"Combating violence against women: minimum standards for support services" by the Council of Europe	"Building Dignity: Design Strategies for Domestic Violence Shelters" by Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV) and Mahlum	"Rules, Restrictions and Resident Empowerment in Domestic Violence Shelter Design: An Exploration and Response, by Katrina Ruitberg, Florida State University	"A Safe Place to Start Over: The Role of Design in Domestic Violence Shelters" by Sarah M. Keeler, Kansas State University
Location convenient for women with children	Dependant on program needs							Required, close to bedrooms		
Women with children - One pair of washer and dryer for every 7 residents	Required									
Single women - One pair of washer and dryer for every 10 residents	Required									
Commercial grade	Dependant on program needs									
Counter for folding	Required									
Small seating area	Required									
Accessible sink	Required									
Children's area	Dependant on program needs									
Maximum glazing for visibility	Required								Required	
CHILD CARE CENTRE										
Child care or out of school care		Required		Required						
SUPPORT SERVICES & STAFF AREAS										
Intake area (accessible)	Required			Required		Required				
Meeting room	Required			Required		Required			Required	
Support office/s	Required			Required		Required		Required and should be acoustically and visually separate for privacy	Required	
At least one office to wheelchair accessible	Dependant on program needs									
Offices close to amenity and child-friendly spaces	Dependant on program needs							Required		
Staff washroom	Required									
Accessible staff washroom	Dependant on program needs									
Staff room with milkwork, bar fridge, sink, microwave, lockers	Required									
Access to program resources	Dependant on program needs							Required and should be accessible to residents		
Harm reduction supplies	Dependant on program needs									
Secured cabinets in staff area	Dependant on program needs	Dependant on program needs	Required							
Medication storage for residents				Required						
Staff laundry	Dependant on program needs									
RECEPTION OFFICE										
Secure area	Required									
Sight lines to street, entry vestibule, gathering and program spaces, elevators	Required							Required	Required	
ADMINISTRATION OFFICES										
Admin offices	Minimum of 10.5m (113 sf)	Required								Required
Desks, lockers, cabinets, files, cabinets	Dependant on program needs									Required
Staff seating area	Dependant on program needs									
Visual connection to main entry door, elevator lobby, resident amenity and program areas	Dependant on program needs							Required	Required	
ANCILLARY & UTILITY SERVICES										
Janitorial room	Minimum 2.8 sq m (30 sq ft)									
Electrical and mechanical room	Required									
Receiving and loading dock	Dependant on program needs, close to kitchen for unloading									
Garbage/recycling space	Required									
Bed bug treatment	Dependant on program needs									
STORAGE AREAS										
Tenants belongings	Required	Required		Yes				Required		Required
Storage for communal areas								Required	Required	
Linens	Required	Required						Required and should be accessible to residents		
Personal hygiene supplies	Required	Required						Required and should be accessible to residents		
Donations	Required							Required and should be accessible to residents		Required
Staff storage coats, cribs, equipment, files, animal crates, etc	Dependant on program needs	Required								
Maintenance items	Required									
Storage for tables, chairs equipment	Dependant on program needs	Dependant on program needs						Required		
OUTDOOR AREAS										
Children's play area	Required	Required						Required	Required	
Amenity space (eg. Patio, covered seating, access to nature)	Required	Required							Required	
Designated smoking area	Required									Required
Community gardens	Dependant on program needs									
Storage for maintenance/landscaping items	Required	Dependant on program needs								
Secure outdoor storage for strollers, bicycles, carts	Dependant on program needs	Dependant on program needs								
Pet area with outdoor kennels and dog run	Dependant on program needs									
TRANSPORTATION										

Transition House Design Requirements	"BC Housing Design Guidelines: For Women's Safe Homes, Transition Houses, Second Stage Housing and Long-Term Rental Housing"	"Shelter for Women and Girls at Risk of or Survivors of Violence" by UN Women & Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses, 2012	"Family Violence Prevention Program National Guidelines 2018 to 2019" by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)	"Maatshuip Standards Manual for Women's Shelters" by Family Violence Intervention Program & Manitoba's Women's Shelters	"Background Report for Shelter 2.0: Learning from the Literature on Domestic Violence Shelter Policies and Practices" by RBC CA Calgary et al	"More than a Bed: A National Profile of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses" by Women's Shelters Canada	"Combating violence against women: minimum standards for support services" by the Council of Europe	"Building Dignity: Design Strategies for Domestic Violence Shelters" by Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV) and Mahlum	"Rules, Restrictions and Resident Empowerment in Domestic Violence Shelter Design: An Exploration and Response, by Katrina Ruitledge, Florida State University	"A Safe Place to Start Over: The Role of Design in Domestic Violence Shelters" by Sarah M. Keeler, Kansas State University
Transportation for staff								49		
Transportation for residents			Required	Required		Required				
PARKING										
Bike racks	Required									
Underground parking	Dependant on program needs									
Surface Parking	Dependant on program needs									
Garage for parking		Dependant on program needs						Dependant on program needs		
Safe, well lit paths to parking areas									Required	

Comparison Table for Transition House PROGRAMS REQUIREMENTS

Transition House Programming Requirements	Canadian Context			Global Context		
	"Background Report for Shelter 2.0: Learning from the Literature on Domestic Violence Shelter Policies and Practices" by YWCA Calgary et al	"More than a Bed: A National Profile of VAW Shelters and Transition Houses" by Women's Shelters Canada	"Family Violence Prevention Program National Guidelines: 2018 to 2019" by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)	"Shelter for Women and Girls at Risk of or Survivors of Violence" by UN Women & Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses, 2012	"A Safe Place to Start Over: The Role of Design in Domestic Violence Shelters" by Sarah M. Kesler, Kansas State University	"Combating violence against women: minimum standards for support services" by the Council of Europe
Counselling	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required	Required, 1 service/population of 50,000 women
Group	Required		Required	Required	Required	Required
Individual	Required		Required	Required	Required	Required
Culturally sensitive services	Required	Dependant on program needs	Required			
Awareness			Required			
Self-development			Required			
Children's programs			Required		Required	
Crisis intervention			Required		Required	
24/7 crisis telephone line (if one exists, a peak-time line)			Required			Required
Individual case planning, referral and advocacy	Required		Required	Required	Required	
Data collection and tracking			Required			
Verification of post-shelter arrangements and referral before departure			Secondary			
Community education and awareness-raising			Secondary			Required
Development of networks with partners			Secondary			Required
Collaboration at the community level			Secondary			Required
24/7 on-site staffing	Required	Required				
Three meals a day		Required			Required	
Personal hygiene supplies		Required				
Emergency clothing		Required			Required	
Initial safety assessment & safety planning	Required	Required		Required	Required	
Support, advocacy & referrals		Required			Required	Required
Medical/health assessment and services	Required, in-house or by referral				Required	Required
Departure planning		Required			Required	Required
Legal advice	Required				Required	Required
Outreach services, community liaison	Required	Required				Required
Language interpretation	Required					
Advocacy	Required				Required	Required, 1 service/population of 50,000 women
Post shelter follow-up	Dependant on program needs					Required
Housing first	Required					
Navigating immigration, legal system, social services, child protection services, health care, etc.		Required				Required
Child specific programming	Required	Required				Required
Parenting classes		Required				
Prevention and awareness	Required	Required				
Programs for perpetrators	Required	Required				Required
Transportation for residents		Required				
Accessible services for socially excluded women						Required
Access to financial support and housing					Required	Required
Self defense, training and education						Required
Support for mental health and substance use						Required, although not necessarily with services for those not experiencing these issues

APPENDIX 3:

Information Sources

BC Housing Documents

- BC Housing Design Guidelines and Construction Standards 2018
- BC Housing Modular Design Guidelines
- Building Knowledge: Research Summaries, Understanding Safe Homes in BC
- Review of Women's Transition Housing and Supports Program
- Shelter Design Guidelines
- Understanding Women's Safe Home Programs in BC
- Understanding Women's Second Stage Housing Programs in BC
- Women's Transition Housing: Women's Transition Housing and Supports Program Framework

Other sources of information

- A Rural and Northern Community Response to Intimate Partner Violence by the University of Alberta
- Accessible Housing by Design by CMHC
- Away from Violence: Guidelines for Setting up and Running a Women's Refuge by WAVE and Austrian Women's Shelter Network
- BC Healthy Communities (website), <http://bchealthycommunities.ca>
- Bridging the Divide: Building Safe Shelters for Women and Families in BC by Shawn Bayes and Alison Brewin for Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver
- Building Dignity: Design Strategies for Domestic Violence Shelter (website) by WSCADV and Mahlum, <https://buildingdignity.wscadv.org>
- C.A.R.E Handbook (about housing and pets) by the BC Society of Transition Houses
- Child-Oriented Architecture from the Perspective of Environmental Psychology by Aral Anbari and Hossein Soltanzadeh

- Creating a Halal-Friendly Kitchen by Foodservice Express
- CTV: St. Paul's Hospital Opens Aboriginal Sacred Space by Rachel Bergen 2013
- Culturally Driven Violence Against Women by Aruna Papp from the Frontier Centre for Public Policy
- Effective Practices in Sheltering Women Leaving Violence in Intimate Relationships by Leslie M. Tutty for YWCA Canada
- Enough and Yet Not Enough: Manual on Domestic Violence Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities by WSCACV
- Finding Safe Spaces: Historical Trauma, Housing Status and HIV Vulnerability Among Young Aboriginal People Who Use Illicit Drugs by Kate Jongbloed
- Housing that Works: Planning & Design Solutions from Women Who Have Experienced Homelessness on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside by Lani Brunn
- Intimate Partner Violence Against Immigrant and Refugee Women by Violence Against Women Learning Network
- Mapping VAW Shelters and Transition Houses from Women's Shelters Canada
- Model Protocol on Service Animals in Domestic Violence Shelters by WSCADV
- Pet Safety and Women: Options for Women with Pets Leaving Abusive Situations by OAITH
- Possessions in the Homeless Shelter Experience: The Built Environment's Potential Role in Self-restoration by Jill Pable
- Promising Practices Across Canada for Housing Women who are Older and Fleeing Abuse by Atira
- Promising Responses to Women's Housing Needs by Women's Shelters Canada
- Reducing Barriers to Support for Women Fleeing Violence by BC Society of Transition Houses

- Review of Trends, Policies, Practices and Implications of Scattered Site Housing by Steve Barnes for the Wellesley Institute
- Rural Disparity in Domestic Violence Prevalence and Access to Resources by Corinne Pee-Asa, et al
- Safety from Domestic Violence Literature Review by Alberta Council of Women's Shelters
- Shelter Access Toolkit: Increasing Shelter Access to LGBTQ Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence by New York State LGBTQ Intimate Partner Violence Network
- Shelter for Women and Girls at Risk of or Survivors of Violence by United Nations Women and Canadian Network of Women's Shelters & Transition Houses
- Shelter Voices 2018 by Women's Shelters Canada
- Smudging Document by Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance
- Suggestions for Designing and Building Muslim Houses by Dr. Spahic Omer from IslamiCity
- The CENTRAL Hub Model: Strategies and Innovations Used by Rural Women's Shelters in Canada to Strengthen Service Delivery and Support Women by Tara Mantler, et al, for Brandon University and Rural Development Institute
- The Ontario Rural Woman Abuse Study: Final Report by Lorri Biesenthal and Lynne Dee Sproule, et al, for the Department of Justice Canada
- Transitioning Our Shelters: A Guide to Making Homeless Shelters Safe for Transgender People by Lisa Mottet and John M. Ohle for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute and National Coalition for the Homeless
- Trauma-Informed Building Design by Nadia Rachel (website), <https://therapeuticdesign.wordpress.com/2016/05/24/trauma-informed-building-design/>
- Trauma-Informed Design: Healing and Recovery in Second-Stage Housing by Naomi Duddridge
- Violence Against Women and Their Children in BC: 33 Years of Recommendations by Linda Light for The Ending Violence Association of BC



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