



## Frequently Asked Questions

**For more information, we encourage you to visit our website:**

<https://www.closetohomeproject.com/>

### **1. Who is Closer to Home?**

Closer to Home Community Services (CTH) is a charitable organization that, for the last quarter century, has been providing services to families and their children in Calgary and Airdrie. Our people and programs are here to help families grow stronger together because we know that strong relationships and supports are critical to people's success and wellbeing. Whether helping parents and caregivers build capacity, supporting families in coming back together after they have had to be apart, or working with young people to build the skills needed to maintain positive familial relationships, we help make sure families are safe and supported. We help families and individuals build meaningful relationships and cultural and community connections. We help parents and caregivers, youth, and children develop the skills and access the supports they need to succeed. We partner with families, organizations, and governments to create lasting change at home and in the community. Our goal has always been to bring services "closer to home" by providing community outreach services in west central Calgary.

We are funded by the Government of Alberta Children's Ministry, Community and Social Services, the City of Calgary, the Calgary Homeless Foundation, and the United Way. The Calgary Foundation is a financial partner in our building project and a strong supporter of our work.

### **2. What programs does Closer to Home offer?**

Closer to Home offers:

- **Family and Community Support:** Early Intervention programs designed to *prevent* stress, crisis, and family breakdown such as a Family Resource Centre, Family Support and Parent Education programs, a Community Connections program focused on mental health, Intergenerational trauma and healing program, youth programs and home visitation services for new mothers.
- **Preservation:** In-Home Family Support programs designed to assist families to preserve the family unit and build new positive skills for the future. These include CTH's continuum of Indigenous-focused programs, the Home Again program for homeless families, and the intensive home-based Family Matters program.

- **Reunification:** In-Care Programs that help care for and bring resolution to children and their families after experiencing severe challenges, when a family's situation has grown dangerous, or beyond their ability to manage and social services is involved. This includes foster care homes, group care homes and an intensive mental health facility for youth.

### **3. Why this Community? Why does CTH need a new building?**

Closer to Home operates across the city, with our headquarters currently located in leased space in Sunalta. Until very recently, we were located above Greco's Pizza on 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW, a few blocks away from our new home where we had provided community support services for the past 25 years. While our model of providing support directly within communities will continue, we have been working for over five years on a purpose-built facility to house a publicly accessible and highly visible vibrant Community Hub to serve over 30 communities in West-Central Calgary. Our goal is to stay embedded in this geographical area so programs and services can continue to support the families living there. This building is the way for us to control and manage our operational costs while significantly enhancing our services to the community and expanding our reach.

Located in the heart of these communities is our new site located at 3404 – Bow Trail SW. The site is on the edge of the Spruce Cliff community, close to public transit (Westbrook Station) and local amenities (Nicholls Family Library, grocery stores and pharmacies), has a high degree of accessibility, and is easily visible to community members. We are looking forward to returning to the community to serve the many families that currently access our services and to the new families that we will ultimately serve with this new location. Our new home will be a place accessible to all Calgarians, providing opportunities for people of all ages, background, identities, and orientations.

### **4. What phase of design is the project at?**

We are currently at the Schematic Design phase of the project. This means that the building is no longer just an idea and has detail on the exterior and all the interior spaces clearly delineated. We are seeking feedback on the Land Use Amendment now and anticipate that we will submit our application along with a Development Permit at the end of April or early May. All feedback gathered will be provided within our application and will be discussed as we work through the process with the City of Calgary.

### **5. What is the proposed Land Use?**

We are proposing a MU-1 designation with a density of 20 units, an FAR of 2.0 and a height of 30 metres. We did submit a pre-application and met with the City's Planning Group. We have also met with the Urban Design Review Panel for feedback on the design and the public realm surrounding the building. The City of Calgary has indicated that the site could have much more density however, Closer to Home believes that it has right sized its project.

## **6. Why does CTH need to change the Land Use?**

The current land use on the property does not support residential development, and therefore, a land use change is required. Our proposed change of use aligns with the adjacent residential properties and better aligns with the goals of the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) “Community Activity Centres”.

The MDP for “Community Activity Centres” requires:

- A broad mix of uses and a concentration of jobs and population in strategic locations.
- An opportunity to accommodate significant numbers of workers and residents in centres that are served well by public transit.
- A broad range of ground-oriented and medium to high density apartment housing and a mix of housing tenure and affordability levels to accommodate a diverse range of population.

## **7. How big is our new community facility?**

The new facility encompasses approximately 55,000 square feet over six floors. The first three floors are community programming and office spaces with floors four through six focused on housing for families. The building is under 30 metres. The facility will incorporate barrier-free housing units. And our goal is to exceed the requirements of the current National Energy Code. Please see our website for more information: <https://www.closetohomeproject.com/>

## **8. What about housing? How will it be managed?**

We will offer 18, two-and-three-bedroom units for families. We will not provide “shelter or transitional housing”, only permanent housing for vulnerable families. Housing will be affordable and based on income. Families will have their own amenity space off the 4<sup>th</sup> floor to gather and support each other. A play area will also be provided for children. It is important to note that our new facility is not a Calgary Housing project, it will be owned and operated by Closer to Home.

The facility will add 18 larger units to address the pressing issue of family homelessness. The plan is a mixed acuity model of families who may require more or less supports offered through CTH programs on site. It is our intent to support a healthy and resilient community of family residents through the teaching of important parenting and life skills that will lead to stronger families and thriving children.

### **We already have a lot of affordable housing in our community, why do we need more?**

Our project will contribute to Calgary’s shortfall of affordable housing stock and helps keep families together on a site that offers very little commercial or development value otherwise. The City has made affordable housing, particularly for families, a priority. While we could have added more housing on the site, with only 18 housing units we believe that we have sized the project appropriately for the community.

### **9. Will this bring more crime to our neighbourhood?**

Closer to Home provides services in many communities across Calgary. In fact, most of the families we will serve in our new home, already live in the community or near to our site. We do not believe that an additional 18 units of family housing will bring crime to the neighbourhood. Our new facility will be a community hub where all can connect and forge meaningful relationships within the community. We work closely with the Shaganappi City Housing residents for the past 20 years and has significantly impacted many prevailing social issues with our programs and services. Our free summer camp is a good example of how we help children learn important social skills, avoid getting into trouble and how we work with their families to sustain positive changes.

### **10. What amenity opportunities will be provided for the local community?**

There will be several public offerings within CTH's new building including:

- Community gathering and access to programs, services, support, and resources.
- Indoor play space for children adjacent to the cafe.
- Meeting spaces and tech access for youth to participate in Homework Clubs, Leadership groups, babysitting courses, mentor programs and job readiness programs for older youth.
- Café with opportunities for youth employment and business development opportunities for families e.g., micro-economies for stay-at-home mothers who need extra income.
- Indigenous educational programming and cultural awareness opportunities.
- Rentable rooms and rooftop areas for weddings, individual events, community meetings, etc.
- Pop up farmer markets, art markets, and community events as appropriate.

Closer to Home's Community Hub is a purpose- designed 3,400 square foot space that will facilitate and increase connections with our community - a public space for community to access for programs and services. Our Community Hub will have significant impact on several important social outcomes: decreasing social isolation, increasing connection and natural supports, improving youth mental health, helping children meet their developmental milestones, increasing cultural connection and identity, to name a few.

We are dedicating our entire third floor (9,000 square feet) to Indigenous cultural exploration and programming. This area will house a Circle Room for cultural teachings, smudging, gatherings, feasts, sharing circles, drumming, specific programs for intergenerational trauma and healing, and youth initiatives.

Closer to Home will engage private sector businesses to support the operational costs of the building. This will eventually allow our organization to be rent-free with potential for investment in new

programs or expansion. A café and a preschool are currently planned, and discussions are occurring with a bank.

In addition, the main areas, classrooms, the circle room, and outdoor rooftop amenities will be available to community members to rent for special events. The surface parking lot area also lends itself to pop up market opportunities and events for local community to walk to and engage in. This provides another way for our organization to provide access to the community and to finance our operations.

**11. How will you deal with increase in traffic? What about parking?**

The site will be accessed from Bow Trail through a “right in” only and off Spruce Drive through a “right in” only. Exiting the site will be “right out” only onto Spruce Drive and will not be allowed to exit onto Bow Trail through our parking lot. We want to ensure no traffic is cutting through our site to get to Bow Trail. It should be noted that many of the families we serve, come to us via transit which is why this is a perfect location with the C-Train so close by. Please see our website for more information:

<https://www.closetohomeproject.com/>.

Based on the bylaw, we are proposing 50 parking stalls for the site including both surface, underground and drop-off. We have not asked for a parking relaxation.

**12. How will you protect my privacy?**

We are currently 20 metres from the north boundary of our property to the edge of the north side of our new facility. We will preserve the existing trees and are working with the City of Calgary to see if additional trees can be planted. This will assist in creating more privacy for the Townhomes.

**13. What about garbage?**

All garbage containers will be housed inside the building to respect our neighbours to the north.

**14. Will the building obscure my sunlight during the summer?**

During the summer months, there will be no obstruction of sunlight for residents.

**15. Will I be looking down on mechanical equipment?**

We have designed a roof penthouse to contain all the exterior mechanical. It has been suggested that we also consider an interesting pattern on the roof top for those residents with a birds-eye view. We are looking to implement this suggestion.

## **16. How can I provide feedback?**

Please feel free to provide your feedback on our website. We will gather all the comments in a “What we Heard” document and submit this with our application. <https://www.closetohomeproject.com/>. It is important to note that you will also have two other opportunities for input: 1) when the land use sign is placed on the property and 2) at City Council at a date in the near future.