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Supportive Housing Community Project
Sorella Housing for Women
Operations Management Plan

The Operations Management Plan for Sorella Housing for Women (Sorella) located at 525 Abbott Street provides an overview of Atira Women's Resource Society's (Atira) commitment to operating a supported housing program for low income single women and mothers living independently in self-contained units. It is our intent to operate Sorella in a manner that manages any and all impacts of the project on neighbouring residents and business. This operations management plan outlines the basic operating parameters for the housing and incorporates protocols to manage various issues raised by neighbouring residents and business owners as well as ensuring an adequate and timely response on the part of staff. This is the beginning of a new process and we look forward to working with the community to best respond to community needs.

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1. Overview

Atira Women's Resource Society, incorporated in 1983, is a not-for-profit organization committed to ending violence against women. The Society provides direct service programs for women, as well as public programs to increase awareness and knowledge around the scope and impact that violence against women and children has on our communities.

Historically, Atira has provided housing and services to women who are extremely marginalized. Atira offers a Stopping the Violence Counselling program; a legal advocacy program; a 16-Step addictions recovery program; Enterprising Women Making Art (an alternative employment program for women with significant barriers to employment); The Painter Sisters (an employment training program); outreach programs for senior women and for aboriginal women; a 59-space day care; and, a community garden. Atira also manages 14 housing projects:

- Ama Transition House – transition house for women 55+;
- Durrant Transition House – first stage transition house;
- Koomseh Second-Stage Transition Housing – 11 townhouse units of long-term supportive housing for women and children;
- Maxxine Wright Shelter – 12 beds for women who are pregnant and at risk;
- Maxxine Wright Second-Stage Transition Housing – 24 apartments for long-term supportive housing for women who are pregnant and/or early parenting;
- Shimai Transition House – first-stage transition house;
- The Holbrook Block – 23 single rooms for women in a supportive housing environment;
- The Rice Block – 42 single rooms for women in a supportive housing environment;
- The Marr – 28 single rooms for women over 45 years, in a supportive housing environment;

- Imouto – 19 single units of supportive housing for young women exiting the sex trade plus 12 second stage units;
- Sereena Housing for Women – 58 single rooms in a supportive housing environment;
- Key7e Housing for Women – 11 single rooms for women over 45 years, in a supportive housing environment;
- Bridge Women's Emergency Shelter – short-term stay emergency shelter with staff support and resources
- Bridge Housing for Women – 36 independent units of long-term supported housing, including eight suites for women with significant mental health diagnoses

Sorella Housing for Women will provide housing for low income single women and mothers in the form of independent dwelling units complete with washroom, kitchen, sleeping, living and storage facilities. Creating a safe and secure building and neighbourhood for residents is a priority.

Several large semi-private outdoor spaces have been provided and dispersed throughout the building, providing opportunity for a variety of functions and activities including a children's play area and urban agriculture. In addition to the various semi-private open spaces, a large amenity room is provided adjacent to the 2nd floor semi-private open space

Our ten-storey building has been developed within the regulations of the CD-1 Guidelines (Sub-Area 3: International Village) and contains 108 units, of which 96 studio and 12, two-bedroom residential units range from 317 to 782 sq. ft. with approximately 1,628 sq. ft. of amenity space. Staff resources will be provided at the ground floor front desk/entrance to ensure that only residents and their guests will have access to the building.

The second level amenity areas provide:

- a multi-purpose amenity room having a large open area that will have tables and chairs that can be moved around to allow for a broad range of activities such as meetings, in-services/ seminars, special events, dinners and a wide range of client recreational activities;
- a small kitchen
- a computer room;
- laundry room;
- a computer area with Internet access; and

The building has been designed to include the common patios/gardens and a playground area to provide an adequate level of amenity and liveability for residents.

2. Housing Objectives

Atira will provide a supportive housing community at Sorella, for women and children. Residents could include women who are marginalized by their experience of homelessness, poverty, struggles with substance use, mental illness and chronic health issues, including women working in low-paying jobs, First Nations and Métis women, immigrant women, and elder women on fixed incomes. Sorella will contribute to a healthier neighbourhood providing safe, secure, clean housing to enhance the quality of residents' lives and support them to more fully participate in the community.

3. Programs

Referrals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • referrals to Sorella will be coordinated by Atira staff, who will accept self referrals, referrals from outreach and other community agencies including B.C, Housing, CLBC and VCHA, and decisions will be based on Atira's mission and mandate and Sorella's specific housing objectives.
Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • treatment for mental health and addictions will be handled on an outpatient basis at external agencies, not on site, and will be voluntary; • Atira will offer 16-step and Rediscover parenting support groups to residents who wish to participate.
Medications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • medication regimes are primarily the responsibility of the resident; • a medication support system will be available to residents who require assistance to achieve independence in this area.
Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff will refer to and liaise with employment, Ministry of Human Resources, physical health, mental health, and addictions programs • Atira will provide educational resources for residents re: employment opportunities, mental illness, BC benefits, addictions, con current disorders, medical conditions • Atira will maintain contact with other community agencies and women's support services.
Life skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff will provide group or individual support, life skills education and training on such issues as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ household management and meal preparation ⇒ vocational assistance and referrals ⇒ conflict resolution skills ⇒ budget management ⇒ personal rights /empowerment/self-advocacy ⇒ mentoring and peer support programming to complement existing staffing and support services
Meal Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will not be provided, as residents will have their own in-unit kitchen facilities.

4. Community Liaison

Contact Information

The Executive Director of Operations, Atira Women's Resource Society, as the designated community liaison, is responsible for addressing any issues related to the ongoing operation of this facility. Her contact information is as follows:

Name: Niki Antonopoulou, Executive Director, Operations
Phone: 604.331.1407, ext. 1130 during normal business hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)
604.817.6992 cell phone for after hours calls
Email: niki_antonopoulou@atira.bc.ca
Mail: Niki Antonopoulou, Executive Director, Operations
Atira Women's Resource Society
101 East Cordova Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6A 1K7
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The secondary designated liaison is:

Name: Erin Pawliw, Housing Manager
Phone: 604.317.2342
Email: erin_pawliw@atira.bc.ca

A 24-hour phone number is available to community members who wish to contact staff at the facility to report a problem. This number will be included when the building opens.

Community Advisory Committee

As a part of Atira's commitment to responding to issues from residents and businesses in the vicinity of Sorella, a Community Advisory Committee will be established to ensure there is open communication and that community issues are dealt with.

The Sorella Community Advisory Committee (Sorella CAC) is a group of concerned public citizens formed to work with Atira. It is an advisory group, not a decision-making body, which fulfills its purposes by being solution-focused and responsive to community issues. Members will operate in agreement with Terms of Reference that they have helped establish.

The Sorella CAC will meet as determined by the Advisory Committee. This schedule may change from time-to-time, based on the advice of the committee.

The purposes of this group are to:

1. provide support to Atira in its commitment to meeting its goals with Sorella;
2. address the impact Sorella Housing for Women has on the community and provide input to address issues;
3. review Atira's response to complaints; and

4. act as a liaison between Atira and the neighbourhood.

Membership on the Sorella CAC will be comprised of the following, plus an alternate:

1. Atira (2)
 - Atira senior management representative (1)
 - Program Manager, Sorella Housing for Women (1)
2. City of Vancouver (2)
 - Housing Centre (1)
 - Vancouver Police Department (1)
3. Community Representation (8-11)
 - Businesses (3)
 - West of Abbott Street (1)
 - East of Abbott Street (1)
 - North of East Pender Street (1)
 - Residents (5-8)

5. Management Protocols

Atira is committed to the following management protocols to reduce the potential for harm or nuisance to individuals and property from the operation of the housing project and, where necessary, to take appropriate actions to address issues within its control.

Staffing

- Regular operating staff numbers will include two staff on duty at all times (24/7), allowing for an immediate response to any issues as they arise. Night shift staffing levels will be reviewed at the end of the first year to determine if adjustments are warranted.
- Interim adjustment may be made if this level of staffing does not seem to be sufficient to address the needs of the project.
- Staff responsibilities: will include receiving referrals; managing all tenancy issues, including incoming and outgoing tenants; liaising with mental health and addiction services, as well as other relevant community services; working with tenants to achieve their goals; coordinating and delivering recreational opportunities; and medication support duties as requested.
- Staff experience and educational level requirements will be as follows:
 - ⇒ experience with a population similar to our residents;
 - ⇒ All staff have undergone a reference and background check including a criminal record check;
 - ⇒ All staff members are trained in Atira's established risk management procedures.
 - ⇒ All staff members are oriented to protocols within The Operations Management Plan, including responsiveness to community concerns.

Resident's Agreement

Residents will be required to sign an agreement that will include “good neighbour” expectations and that will clearly outline grounds for eviction from Sorella.

Safety and Security

As part of its commitment to operating this project, Atira has established the following set of protocols to ensure the safety and security of residents, staff, and the community. In case of immediate danger inside or outside of the facility, 9-1-1 will be called.

Exterior Perimeter Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the 24-hour staffing will allow the monitoring of all activity in and around the building, responding as necessary. • Atira will monitor activities at the rear of the facility through the use of security cameras at all exits.
Interior Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all exits are alarmed and monitored by security camera • there is a monitored magnetic entrance card system for residents (tenant doors, offices, elevator, lounge, storage) • a sign in system is required for all visitors • staff will be alerted to “unwanted” persons – i.e. people who have a known history of unacceptable behaviour • residents responsibility for their guests behaviour is included in the residence agreement • Atira has a response plan with protocols for staff to follow in respect to potential safety related events that could occur – staff are trained in these procedures • the Community Advisory Committee will be informed of Atira’s response plan
Police Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atira will maintain regular communication and consultation with the Vancouver Police Department through the local Community Policing Office • The 911 and Mental Health Emergency Services systems will be used in all situations involving violence or potentially volatile situations
Criminal Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atira will take appropriate action to intercede in cases of vandalism or other criminal activity, up to and including reporting the incident to police.

6. Community Responsiveness

Atira will ensure that careful consideration is given to any concerns or issues expressed by members of the community about the facility, and will take appropriate actions to address problems within its control.

The goal of being responsive to the community is to ensure, as much as possible, that the community has positive and helpful experiences with the facility. The secondary goal is to ensure that continuous quality improvement issues are made evident, so that they can be addressed.

Safety, Security and Nuisances

Any situation that affects the safety and security of residents, staff, or a member of the community will be dealt with immediately, following the protocols set out in the “Safety and Security” section of this document. The procedures below will be followed to address community concerns:

1. When a complaint comes in, the appropriate staff will acknowledge the question or concern with a rapid response.
2. In cases where staff cannot respond to the question or concern to the satisfaction of the individual, the issue will be brought to Sorella’s Program Manager to address.
3. In most cases, Sorella’s Program manager should be able to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the individual. Where the issue is not resolved satisfactorily, the individual has the option of launching a complaint, following the issue resolution process outlined below.
4. All complaints or incidents will be logged and this information will be shared with the Community Advisory Committee.

Issue Resolution Process

In addition to the preceding protocols to address issues regarding safety & security and nuisances, occasionally, there may be other types of concerns that arise from members of the community. While the intent is to address these concerns through dialogue, if the individual feels the situation warrants an official complaint, Atira’s issue resolution mechanism will ensure that an objective and thorough response is provided.

1. An individual wishing to make a formal complaint should do so in writing to the Sorella Program Manager within 30 days of the situation that resulted in the complaint. The Program Manager will log all concerns that reach this level and will be reported to the Sorella CAC at the next advisory committee meeting.
2. The Sorella Program Manager, or her designate, and where appropriate in consultation with Atira’s Executive Director, Operations, will confer with the individual as to how the complaint is to be addressed, and the individual will be informed as to the action to be taken regarding the complaint, within 15 days of the written statement.
3. If the individual is not sufficiently satisfied as to the outcome of this procedure, they may write to the CEO of Atira and should do so within 15 days of being notified of the outcome of the initial dispute procedure.
4. The CEO will inform the individual, in writing, of the response to the complaint, within 15 days of the receipt of the letter. If the individual is not satisfied, the complaint may then be brought to the attention of the Atira Board of Directors.