

April 9, 2019

City of Richmond
6911 No. 3 Road
Richmond V6Y 2C1

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

Re: Non-Profit Organizations (NPO) Space Needs Survey and Report

This is a letter on behalf of the Richmond Poverty Response Committee (PRC) regarding the above noted report commissioned by the Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee (RCSAC).

For your interest, members of the Richmond PRC include the Richmond Food Bank Society, Richmond Women's Resource Centre, Richmond Food Security Society, Richmond Family Place, Chimo Community Services, Richmond Centre for Disability, Richmond Health Services, Family Services of Greater Vancouver, Turning Point Recovery Society, ISS of BC and representatives of various Faith Groups, among others.

Please see below, a number of recommendations from the Richmond PRC to Richmond City Council on Actions the City should pursue on this vitally important issue:

- Provide some tax relief or less onerous lease rates for NPOs;
- Apply best practices of other Metro cities that provide city-owned spaces at below-market rent;
- Action the **Council Referral** dated September 22, 2015 re: city owned inventory;
- Implement the findings of the City's Social Infrastructure "**Building our Social Future 2013-2022**" **Report Action 29.2** re: policy, administration and rezoning of community amenities;
- Action the **Council Referral** dated June 19, 2018 re: non-profit spaces replacement/ accommodation policy for properties undergoing development;
- Establish policy to compel developers seeking rezoning to provide NPO space or a community amenity contribution to be used to construct NPO space; and
- Explore opportunities to secure more NPO space in such developments as:
 - the redevelopment of Lansdowne Mall,
 - the expansion of the Caring Place at its current location,
 - the repurposing of the Minoru Aquatic Center, and
 - the redevelopment of Steveston Community Centre.

Please refer to the Richmond PRC's research and reasoning as follows.

Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) are essential to the health of any community and the programs they offer contribute to the quality of life for all residents. Unfortunately, many NPOs are facing challenges

in finding and maintaining secure, appropriate and affordable space for their programs, services and offices in Richmond and Metro Vancouver, often due to developmental pressures in the community.

For instance, some areas in Richmond where NPOs are located, have been pre-zoned or will be rezoned, likely for condos or other redevelopment. As a result, many NPOs face increasing difficulty in paying the taxes or leases on their existing space or the higher lease rates of a brand-new space.

Other cities in Metro Vancouver are addressing NPOs space needs issues by providing city owned space at reduced or nominal rates. Some examples are listed below:

- Burnaby – lease to NPOs, eg. ‘full lease support,’ which equates to 50% of full lease rate for those non-profit community service agencies whose programs or services are directed to recipients (where at least 75% of which are Burnaby residents);
- Vancouver – city owned NPO space, eg. space secured through larger developments such as North East False Creek under the Public Benefits Strategy;
- North Vancouver District – rents out city owned facilities to cover operating costs to NPOs, also has extensive policy around long-term community facility leases;
- Surrey – grant program, free use of space at City Hall by NPOs;
- Richmond – The Caring place, community hub, owned by the City of Richmond and leased to twelve different NPOs;
- New Westminster – Aunt Leah’s Place Youth Resource Hub, owned by Central City Foundation and leased to Aunt Leah’s Foundation subsidized > 50% below market. Space is used of Community/Social Services, Healthcare and Employment/Training.

The City of Richmond has reviewed NPO space needs issues in a variety of reports such as:

- Council Referral dated September 22, 2015 – “That staff examine the availability of space for use by non-profit community organization within the City’s inventory of buildings, and report back. City owned spaces that NPOs could potentially occupy community facilities.”
- City of Richmond Social Infrastructure “Building our Social Future 2013-2022” Report Action 29 states – “Prepare an enhanced policy framework for securing community amenities (e.g. space for city services, space for lease to community) through the rezoning process for new developments.” Action 29.1 states – “Developing an administrative structure (e.g. Senior Staff review team) and criteria for assessing community amenity options for recommendations to Council on specific rezoning applications. Short term (0-3 years).”
- Action 29 also states: “Establishment of a Community Amenity Reserve Policy and Fund, similar to those for affordable housing and child care, to secure cash contributions from developers for future amenity development in lieu of the provision of build amenity space. Long term (7-10 year).”
- Council Referral dated June 19, 2018 – “That staff explore the introduction of a Replacement/ Accommodation Policy for commercial, recreational, non-profit and industrial businesses for properties undergoing the development and report back. “
- Phase II Richmond Non-profit Social Purpose Space Needs Review Report (completed 2018).

We would encourage Richmond City Council to commit to providing and securing City owned spaces for NPOs. We understand these actions would likely require new policies to be enacted. But City Council has already received staff reports that show what needs to be done.

As an example, developers seeking rezoning could provide NPO space as part of their redevelopment. Or they could contribute to a community amenity fund that would be used to construct NPO space. Similar policies already exist with regard to developers providing child care facilities or affordable housing units. They can be easily adapted to apply to developers so they would be compelled to build NPO spaces that would be owned by the City and leased to NPOs at below market rates.

Finally, we would like to point out that there are current opportunities in Richmond which could be explored in order to secure more NPO space. These redevelopments would include:

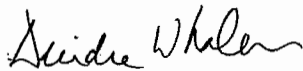
- the redevelopment of Lansdowne Mall,
- the expansion of the Caring Place at its current location,
- the repurposing of the Minoru Aquatic Center, and
- the redevelopment of Steveston Community Centre.

We hope that the Richmond City Council and Staff move forward with new policy and resources to assist NPOs in securing City owned space in Richmond. Also, please give us assurance that new policy will be in place very soon so we can start to see positive change in the City!

As the Richmond PRC would like to present a delegation on this issue, would you kindly inform the undersigned when the NPOS space Needs Survey and Report is coming back to Council?

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. We look forward to your response to our recommendations.

Sincerely,



De Whalen
Chair, Richmond PRC

cc. PRC Executive Committee
Kathryn McCreary