

Attachment 14

YWCA's Letter to Council

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March 26, 2025

**511 Royal Avenue
New Westminister
BC V3L 1H9**

Re: 65 First Steet, New Westminister

Dear Council Members,

The YWCA is eager to collaborate with the City of New Westminister to deliver affordable housing units that will provide lasting solutions for those most in need in the community. We believe the project proposed on 65 First Street by Kinnaird Konversion LP presents a unique opportunity for an impactful partnership.

Our organization has a long-standing commitment to community well-being and we are eager to work alongside the City to bring forward innovative, sustainable housing that aligns with a vision for inclusivity and growth.

YWCA Metro Vancouver

YWCA Metro Vancouver has been a cornerstone of community support and advocacy for over a century, dedicated to improving the lives of women, gender-diverse individuals and families across the region. Established in 1897, the organization has evolved to include advocacy on pressing social issues such as gender equality, poverty and housing insecurity. Through a wide range of programs and services, the YWCA works to foster personal, economic and collective well-being for those facing systemic barriers.

The YWCA's mandate is to advance gender equity and create opportunities for women and families to thrive. This mission is pursued through initiatives that address critical social challenges, including affordable housing, early learning and child care, employment services, mentorship programs and violence prevention. and access to safe, affordable housing. At its core, the YWCA envisions a community where all individuals have the resources and opportunities needed to achieve economic security and personal fulfillment.

Housing

Our goal is to establish housing communities that are safe, affordable, sustainable. In particular, the YWCA's seeks to provide vulnerable families the opportunity to be adequately housed, given that this is key to successful educational outcomes, stable health and economic sustainability. The YWCA is committed and has deep expertise providing affordable housing to single mothers and their children who urgently need it. YWCA Metro Vancouver has 43 years of experience owning, developing and operating non-profit housing, undertaking the respective property management and working with

non-market rental housing tenants. We currently operate 347 units across Metro Vancouver and work in partnership with all levels of government, developers, corporations and private donors to make our projects a success.

We currently operate deeply affordable housing for women via the YWCA Metro Vancouver charity and operate below market housing via the YW Housing Society of BC.

Services offered to YWCA tenants

As part of our housing services, we also provide wrap-around support services to tenants. Our housing communities are resident-focused, with a focus on safety, and maintaining an atmosphere of dignity and respect for all residents. The goal is to ensure the appropriate foundations are in place for residents to achieve personal and economic independence by identifying barriers and connecting them to the community resources and supports they need to succeed and enhance self-sufficiency.

The Community Development Coordinator (CDC) is an important part of life at all YWCA housing communities, offering residents a range of supports on an individual basis. Most of our supports are tailored for women and their children fleeing abuse and for low-income families. Services are adjusted according to the needs of the community residents. Overall, we offer the following services to tenants:

- **Building bridges for improved health:** providing information on events in the community celebrations and community centre programs
- **Parenting support:** creating connections with other mothers through resident meetings and being someone to talk to and get support from
- **Supporting skills development:** connecting to community resources to find employment or job training opportunities
- **Emotional support:** helping to build a sense of community amongst residents through social gatherings, birthday parties and other events

The CDC provides support, advocacy and outreach to residents as well as provides information and referrals on issues including counseling, childcare, personal safety, legal education, pre-employment training, education, health, food, clothing and community resources.

Our CDC also supports residents to maintain their tenancy, as some may not be familiar with what is required to maintain housing. Residents are educated about their tenant rights and responsibilities. The goal is to equip residents with knowledge and resources they will be able to access well beyond their time living in YWCA housing.

Fostering a strong community is one of the pillars for all our housing communities. The CDC organizes regular tenant meetings to build a sense of community and encourage tenants to participate in other activities that will create positive and healthy connections.

For this reason, it is important to have an amenity space for YWCA residents where a coffee pot is always ready to welcome everyone. For example, the YWCA provides regular donations, which may include clothes or pantry items. These are usually laid out in the amenity space and residents can drop by to pick items that can be of use while

they meet other residents or consult an issue with the CDC. A computer is also provided in the amenity space so that women can receive support while applying to jobs or doing schoolwork. Since single mothers also benefit from the support of other single mothers to take care of their children, the amenity space is equipped with items like books and games to support children's curiosity and playfulness without having to necessarily go to someone else's home. In addition, these YWCA programs receive holiday hampers, clothing, emergency food vouchers and transit tickets. All our housing community activities are organized throughout the year including raffles, barbecues, landscaping, sports and game days. In sum, there is a constant activity of women and children coming in and out of the amenity space.

YWCA Metro Vancouver employs a holistic, community-driven approach to delivering its programs and services. It collaborates closely with local governments, businesses, and community organizations to develop and implement sustainable solutions. Through direct service delivery, the YWCA provides essential resources such as transitional housing, job training, and family support services. Additionally, the organization actively engages in research and policy advocacy, ensuring that systemic barriers are addressed at a broader level. By combining hands-on support with strategic advocacy, the YWCA creates meaningful and lasting change for individuals and communities throughout Metro Vancouver.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erin Seeley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "S".

Erin Seeley
CEO, YWCA Metro Vancouver