



OFFICE OF CITY COUNCIL

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13 February 2024

Honourable Jennifer Whiteside
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions
Room 306 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Via: MMHA.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Minister,

We write to thank you for taking the time to meet with our municipality at the recent UBCM conference in Vancouver (Meeting ID: 704) and for your follow-up letter dated 28 December 2023. It was a pleasure to be able to discuss our interest in further development of the 1st Avenue Health and Housing Project for Complex Care Housing Needs and to provide an update on HEART & HEARTH initiatives within the city. As discussed, we are eager to see movement on the Health and Housing Project and ask that the ministry prioritizes this project. Specifically, confirming a target for second phase construction.

Having toured the site, you are aware that this innovative partnership has merit and provides a much-needed service. Thank you for committing to following up with your Ministerial colleagues on the next phases of this project. We understand the existing 10 beds are well utilized and phase two, with 51 units of supported housing above 10,000 sq ft of healthcare space, would have a significant impact. As well, phase two supports current government direction and embodies the concept of service integration to provide stable supportive housing for a chronically homeless population with complex needs. Phase two is critically needed to address the health and safety of the City's unsheltered homeless population, particularly those residing in encampments. While conversation continues on phase two, we ask that phase three not be forgotten.

As you are aware the City of Prince George is the first pilot community under the provincial HEART & HEARTH program. Guided by an MOU, we hold shared commitments to work collaboratively to implement the HEART & HEARTH initiative, to take a coordinated approach to resolution of encampments, to improve health and safety, to preserve dignity for encampment residents, to respect the needs for culturally appropriate services for Indigenous peoples, and to consider the needs of the surrounding community.

Having resources like those proposed within phase two of the 1st Ave Health and Housing Project are critical to creating an environment where the goals of our governments can be met and is an action the province can take that is well aligned with the city's Official Community Plan and community vision.

Thank you for your attention and we look forward to the next opportunity to meet.

Respectfully,

City Council of Prince George

CC: Honourable Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Housing.
MLA Shirley Bond, Prince George - Valemount.
MLA Mike Morris, Prince George - Mackenzie.
MLA Coralee Oakes, Cariboo North.
Vincent Tong, Chief Executive Officer, BC Housing.
Ciro Panessa, President and Chief Executive Officer, Northern Health.