

February 16, 2021

Prince George City Council
1100 Patricia Boulevard
Prince George, BC V2L 3V9

Dear City Council Members

Re: Rezoning on Zelkwas Avenue/606 Zelkwas Avenue

This letter is to express support for the development of additional transition housing by Harmony House from the Provincial Perinatal Substance Use Project, BC Women's Hospital, and Provincial Health Services Authority. Since 2019, the provincial project has been engaged with Harmony House, Phoenix Transition Society in a funding partnership to enhance services at Harmony House and build capacity among the staff to serve pregnant and parenting women using substances.

The model of care at Harmony House aligns with the best evidence possible on how to serve women who are pregnant and parenting and in early recovery. Harmony House ascribes to a housing first approach, while wrapping around much needed practical, medical, health, treatment and social support for the women. Our provincial project has identified that there is a dearth of this highly specialized housing available in the province and in particular, in the North and this additional housing for Harmony House will help address this gap.

Women who are pregnant and parenting and affected by substance use experience tremendous stigma and discrimination which are a barrier to accessing any kind of social services and supports at a time when they are highly motivated to make changes in their lives. Harmony House addresses these issues directly in their program and support women to build their confidence and self- efficacy while providing direct life skills and emotional support. Women who have gone through the program do exceedingly well and are setup for success in the future and given the chance to be parents.

We reiterate our support for the rezoning on Zekas Avenue and urge the City Council to approve the rezoning application. The housing will fill a much needed gap in community based services for pregnant and parenting women and also provide a place and space for mothers and babies to be housed together and build on the women's strengths and skills for their promising futures.

Sincerely,

Denise Bradshaw, Director, Provincial Health Initiatives, BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre, PHSA

Pamela Joshi, Project Manager, Provincial Perinatal Substance Use Project, BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre, PHSA