

From: Minister, SDPR SDPR:EX <SDPR.Minister@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 2:48 PM
To: Maggie Yuen <mmyuen@vsb.bc.ca>
Cc: OfficeofthePremier, Office PREM:EX <Premier@gov.bc.ca>; Minister, MAH MAH:EX <MAH.Minister@gov.bc.ca>
Subject: 204600 Fraser SDPR Response

Ref: 204600

Janet Fraser, Chair
Vancouver Board of Education
School District No. 39

c/o Maggie Yuen, Assistant to Secretary Treasurer
Secretary Treasurer's Office
mmyuen@vsb.bc.ca

Dear Ms. Fraser:

Thank you for your letter of May 14, 2020, regarding your April 27th motion to commend the Province for our actions to house those experiencing homelessness in Oppenheimer Park, and ask that government work toward finding rooms for the all people experiencing homelessness in the Vancouver area. I'm pleased to respond and apologize for the delay in doing so.

First, I want to thank you for your kind words of commendation and let you know that our government appreciates your advocacy on behalf of people experiencing homelessness in Vancouver. We understand that this is a challenging time for everyone, especially for people facing homelessness. The COVID-19 pandemic, along with the ongoing overdose crisis, is creating significant health concerns for our province's most vulnerable.

I also want to assure you that our government is doing everything we can to support the health and safety of vulnerable people during this time. The dual health crises, combined with a lack of housing options, makes these actions even more important right now.

Staff from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction's Office of Homelessness Coordination are working closely with staff from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and with BC Housing on actions to address homelessness throughout British Columbia. We're exploring permanent ongoing housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness, including those who have been temporarily housed in self-isolation sites.

You may have heard that the Province has already begun purchasing hotels in Victoria to transition people from temporary self-isolation sites. These longer-term plans will build on the 23,000 homes already underway or complete through our 10-year housing plan and will include strategies to provide the right combination of housing and supports to mitigate the chances of a return to homelessness. That work will continue in the weeks and months ahead, but the priority now is on the immediate health and safety of people experiencing homelessness in these public health emergencies.

Thank you again for taking the time to write and for your support as we face these unprecedented circumstances together.

Sincerely,

Shane Simpson
Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

cc: Honourable John Horgan, Premier
Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing