



January 17, 2019

TO: City of Burnaby  
Executive of Council

Dear members,

This letter is a request to the City of Burnaby for \$25,000 to provide financial support to Burnaby Neighbourhood House to address the increasing demands from the community and our rising operating costs to address these demands. We would like to appear as a delegation before the executive committee to discuss our request and address any questions.

Highlights from the BNH presentation to council May 2018:

- The Neighbourhood House is a busy place and is a place where residents of all ages and diverse backgrounds can connect, engage and belong. The community has embraced the opportunities that our spaces provide and our services have expanded to serve more people in extended hours, programs and opportunities – Last year we recorded over 200 thousand contacts with individuals by staff or volunteers.
- Our growth is really attributed to the involvement of local residents, community partnerships, the support of the city and Burnaby businesses and diverse funders.
- We strive to be responsive to community needs and to make our neighbourhoods great places to live.
- Our work is intentional, and collaborative; with a focus on community engagement and volunteerism – 700+ volunteers who logged close to 23,000 volunteer hours last year.
- We strive to ensure that all Burnaby residents have access to programs and supports and many of our programs address multi-barrier individuals and families.

Our work is directly aligned with the goals of the City's social sustainability strategy that was created in 2011. In particular

- Supporting our vulnerable residents
- Celebrating our diversity
- Increasing community engagement
- Addressing food security
- Reducing isolation

BNH's priorities and strategic focus for the next few years include:

- Addressing isolation of seniors and other local residents
- Growing our childcare operation where opportunities arise
- Finding a permanent and affordable home for our North House
- Focusing on sustainability of programs and funding opportunities
- Systems and succession planning

**Continued challenges and needs of the Burnaby Neighbourhood House include:**

*Our Mission is to make neighbourhoods better places to live.*

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- Increased density creating higher service demands. Both Neighbourhood House storefronts are bustling with low-cost and free programs and we see the increased need for making connections and creating a sense of belonging. Our community hubs are places where residents can drop in, have a coffee and learn about local information and resources.
- Increased operating costs and funding challenges – Our operating costs keep rising and although we have secured some government funding over the years, this only makes up 25% of our total operating budget. Both the South House and the North House are well utilized hubs of activities and our community has come to depend on the many free programs and supports. We have also been able to help smaller not for profit groups and committees with free space use, such as the Ethiopian Community Association and smaller resident groups.
- We need a permanent space for North House large enough to meet growing demands. The North Burnaby Community has embraced the new North House, residents are engaged and it is a busy place supporting the most vulnerable in our neighbourhoods. Although we found a new space and relocated in 2017 our fate is at the whim of the landlord. We have one year left in our current lease with an option to renew for another 5 years but we expect our rent will increase. We are bursting at the seams. Finding a permanent home is a priority for us but we will need the city's help to do this.

Given that the two Neighbourhood Houses are public community places with low barrier programs, they offer a proven model of community engagement and nimbly respond to local needs. Will the City offer to sustain the infrastructure of the Burnaby Neighbourhood Houses? The City is growing and so are the local social needs of our neighbourhoods.

#### **Our request to the city:**

Our request is for an annual grant of \$25000 to the Burnaby Neighbourhood House to use to support rent and infrastructure. As BNH is not primarily funded by government (only 25% of the operating budget) we are reliant on grants, donations, and fundraising, and the fees generated from licensed daycare and preschool programs. A core grant to our organization similar to what other municipalities have available to their Neighbourhood Houses would provide ongoing capacity and stability to our organization. Our rent at the North House is currently \$40,000 annually and we expect it to increase at the end of this year. You will see from statistical data that the North House is fulfilling a very important need for vulnerable North Burnaby residents.

#### **and/or**

Our 2019 lease with the city subsidy has increased to \$53416 annually (this is the amount BNH pays for the South House) – Could you provide a 75% grant? This would reduce our rent to \$26,708 which would help in sustaining our overall operations. It would especially help us cover the increasing costs of facility custodial (which has dramatically increased at our South House due to the large numbers of community members dropping in and participating in a wide range of programs – we estimate 1000 per week) and the managing of the South House. We look forward to meeting with you in person to provide you with further details to support our request and to answer any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,



Antonia Beck  
Executive Director



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