

From: [Wong, Elaine](#)
To: [LegislativeServices](#)
Subject: Fwd: UniverCity needs a Community Centre - urgent action needed!
Date: Wednesday, June 14, 2023 9:15:02 PM

From: Shamim Pirani [REDACTED]
Date: June 14, 2023 at 12:58:34 PM PDT
To: Mayor <Mayor@burnaby.ca>
Cc: univercitycommunity@gmail.com
Subject: UniverCity needs a Community Centre - urgent action needed!

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. **The City will never ask for personal or account information or account password through email.** If you feel this email is malicious or a scam, please forward it to phishing@burnaby.ca

Dear Mr. Mayor,

It is with urgency that I write about this matter.

The development of Lot 24 is our last, best chance for a community centre in UniverCity.

As a planned community, many of the needs of those who live in UniverCity were anticipated and have been provided for. However, **one key amenity has never materialized: a community centre** - that is, a space accessible to community members, the city, non-profits, and other services providers.

UniverCity residents have long discussed their frustration with the lack of a community centre, and UniverCity Community Association (UCA) has seen firsthand how difficult it is for non-profits and others to provide services on Burnaby Mountain due to lack of space. We note that **the nearest existing community centre, community school, or library is more than 30 minutes away from our 7000 (soon to be 8500) residents by public transit.**

Because we are nearing the end of our community's development and all surrounding land is owned by SFU, we are approaching the last opportunity to include a community centre in UniverCity. The specific types of activities and services that are challenging or impossible to deliver at an adequate level for a population of 8,500 include:

- Family & early childhood development programming
- Children's recreational programming

Note:

The City of Burnaby has recently received, including your own, several letters discussing the need for services in the Univercity area. Many of the issues identified by the Community Association (UCA) involve many departments of the City of Burnaby. As a result Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) and the City of Burnaby Planning department have formed a multidisciplinary team who are working through these various requests to develop short and long term solutions. PRC has had one meeting with the Community Association and future meetings are already planned with both the Community Association (UCA) and SFU. Please keep a look out for future updates on these plans through the communications from the UCA.

- Before and after school care
- Adult & senior fitness
- Recreational & social programming
- Teen programming
- Community meetings, gatherings & events (an indoor space is critical in the winter, and increasingly in the summer due to climate change)
- Pro-D day camps
- Spring break & summer children's camps
- Community fridge/pantry & other Primary Care Network services
- Children's birthday parties & other celebrations
- English language conversation groups
- Social support for newcomers to Canada

There is also no public space in our community that will be able to house emerging community service needs such as a cooling space, or new delivery methods for primary care services.

Currently, we help community members, nonprofits and other service providers to work with SFU, the elementary school, and stratas to use any space they have available. However, as our community grows and demand increases, find that **none of these existing spaces come close to meeting the needs of our community.**

SFU, as an institution with its own priorities, is very limited in the rooms it can rent to the public during instructional hours. Many of its bookable spaces are far from our community's focal point, and SFU may choose to decline rentals or not respond to requests at all.

Similarly, the elementary school - which is not a community school - is almost at full enrollment and has no space available for the community. The school's rentable spaces can only be used for a limited purpose during very limited time frames. This coupled with building access limitations doesn't make the school a viable option for residents.

Some stratas have amenity rooms, however these are usually reserved for the use of the building's residents, are in access-controlled buildings, and are not suitable for much more than the occasional small meeting. T

The UCA has had preliminary discussions with SFU about the need for

community space in UniverCity in order to find areas of potential alignment. Through these discussions, **we've identified probably the last viable opportunity for many years - to create a community centre. UniverCity: Lot 24 Mosaic development on University High Street.** This development is still in rezoning, and contains a street-accessible ground floor space which could be purchased or leased by the City. This space is currently designated for retail units for which our community has little need; it could instead provide far greater benefit as a community hub.

We implore you, our Mayor, to provide us this facility.

Shamim Pirani

A concerned citizen living on Burnaby Mountain