

An Open Letter to City of Vancouver Mayor, Councillors and Community:

Vancouver is facing a housing crisis. Vacancy rates are low, new homes are in short supply, and affordability has become a major issue for renters and homeowners across the housing spectrum. Nowhere is the housing crisis more urgent or the need more desperate, than for marginalized people – including those in our communities living with mental illness.

Over 90 per cent of Vancouver's homeless population deals with some kind of mental illness and requires housing that offers 24-hour support to meet their unique needs. There are thousands of people currently on waitlists for supportive housing in Vancouver. Most are homeless, live in shelters, SROs (single room occupancy) hotels in the Downtown Eastside or are couch surfing. Many of these people live in the Grandview Woodland community today.

The Kettle Society has over 40 years of experience working with marginalized people, including those living with mental illness, and The Kettle has an exemplary track record of successfully providing housing to all tenant groups. Together with Boffo Properties, they are seeking to do the same at Commercial and Venables.

The Kettle Society and Boffo Properties have developed a proposal for the Commercial and Venables site that will help to meet the urgent need for supportive housing in Grandview Woodland. The project will create supportive housing units for up to 30 people living with mental illness and other barriers, and will also renew the existing drop-in centre that serves over 150 people in Grandview Woodland every day.

The Kettle Society has been unable to secure funding to rebuild the community centre and there remains a desperate need for additional supportive housing. The partnership between The Kettle Society and Boffo Properties is a viable solution that will allow The Kettle Society to continue providing essential services in Grandview Woodland. The project offers a unique partnership between market and social housing. Without the proposed 12 storeys and the market-housing component of this project, the supportive housing and renewed drop-in facility is not economically viable.

As non-profit housing and service providers, we believe that partnerships and innovative solutions like The Kettle Boffo project are desperately required to address Vancouver's housing crisis. **We are proud to support The Kettle Boffo project, and encourage the community to do the same.**

We, the undersigned:

Atira, Janice Abbott, CEO
BC Artscape, Genevieve Bucher, President
BC Non-Profit Housing Association, Kishone Roy, CEO
Coast Mental Health, Darrell Burnham, CEO
Entre Nous Femmes Housing Society, Tracy McCullough, Executive Director,
Family Services of Greater Vancouver, Calum Scott, Director of Youth Services
Lookout Emergency Aid Society, Shayne Williams, Executive Director
Lu'ma Native Housing Society, Marcel Swain, CEO
McLaren Housing Society of British Columbia, Kim Stacey, Executive Director
MPA Society, David MacIntyre, Executive Director
RainCity Housing, Greg Richmond, Acting Executive Director
Sanford Housing Society, Allyson Muir, Executive Director
The Bloom Group, Jonathan Oldman, Executive Director
The 127 Society for Housing, Joanne Graham, Executive Director
Urban Native Youth Association, Dena Klashinsky, Executive Director
Vancouver Native Housing Society, David Eddy, CEO
Watari Counselling & Support Service Society, Michelle Fortin, Executive Director
