



**The Kettle Society**

Strength through mental health

June 19, 2018

**CITY OF VANCOUVER**

453 West 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver, B.C. Canada  
V5Y 1V4

**Attention: Vancouver City Council**

**Re: KETTLE BOFFO PROJECT  
1705, 1725, 1739 VENABLES STREET AND 800 COMMERCIAL DRIVE, VANCOUVER**

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Dear Mayor and Council -

I am writing to you today to share some very disappointing news that will impact the most vulnerable residents of our community. The Kettle Society and Boffo Properties have decided not to submit a rezoning application for our project, and will not be moving forward with our proposed project at Commercial and Venables. Given the recent financial requirements placed on it by the City, the project is no longer economically feasible.

Our proposal had allowed The Kettle Society to expand its drop-in centre and mental health services, offer 30 homes of non-market housing for people living with mental illness and provide new market housing for Vancouver citizens at **no cost to taxpayers**. In total, the value of these benefits was well over \$39 million. In over seven years of discussion with The Kettle and Boffo, the City had not indicated that an additional Community Amenity Contribution (CAC) would be warranted after the public benefits from this project were delivered.

As you know, The Kettle and Boffo had formed an innovative partnership under which we proposed the construction of 30 homes of supportive housing for people in our community with mental illness and other barriers, along with a much-needed new and expanded space in Grandview Woodland for our many drop-in services and programs. The renewal of our drop-in space would have allowed a safe, inclusive and modern facility to serve our more than 5,000 clients.

The Kettle and Boffo worked hand-in-hand on this redevelopment proposal. This is the type of innovative partnership that has been approved before and that is encouraged by the City's new Housing Strategy between developer and non-profit partners. The renewal of the drop-in centre and 30 new homes were to be financed by the construction of up to 200 units of market housing and 18,000 square feet of retail space. In an effort to leverage our asset and continue to serve the community, we would have retained ownership of our property at the redeveloped site. Boffo had also planned to work with us to ensure that we could continue to provide our current community services uninterrupted during construction.

Unfortunately, after seven years of community outreach and engagement, and constructive collaboration with City planning staff on a range of options over the years, we were unable to reach an agreement with the City on a path forward in terms of the City's financial requirements.

**The reason for our decision is simple.** According to City policy, the City can require a CAC from organizations and developers when a project is rezoned and built. In addition to The Kettle Drop-In Centre and 30 homes of supportive housing, the City recently introduced an additional cash CAC requirement from Boffo of between \$6 and \$16 million to approve the project. The additional cost rendered the project financially unviable, and for this reason, we are unable to proceed. We are disheartened by this new development and saddened that this is where the City has landed.

After seven years of an incredible partnership between Boffo and The Kettle; thousands of pledges, letters and other public expressions of support for our project; Council-approved changes to the Grandview Woodland Community Plan that specifically





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made our project possible; and, the support of over 15 non-profit housing and community organizations, we are deeply disappointed that our shared vision for a more inclusive community cannot become a reality.

The Kettle Boffo partnership - one that made it possible to create both additional market and supportive housing in an inclusive community form - is an example of the kind of innovative approach our city needs to address the critical shortage of housing across the housing continuum, and is the kind of initiative your Council encouraged in your recently adopted Housing Vancouver Strategy.

Vancouver City Council committed to a housing policy that nurtures a more compassionate, diverse and inclusive community where neighbours care for and about each other. And yet, in practice, City staff were unable to make our project – one that enjoys both Council and community support – work. To the City, an additional \$6 to \$16 million was more important than the benefits of 30 new homes for at-risk community members, many of whom have been or are homeless, and a new expanded Drop-In Centre to serve our community well into the future. All at no cost to the taxpayer.

We hope the City can find a new approach to ensure innovative partnerships like this can move forward in the future.

We would like to thank our partners at Boffo Properties, as well as those at the City that have worked very hard to help us move this project through various City processes; in particular your General Manager of Planning, Urban Design & Sustainability, Gil Kelley, your General Manager of Development, Buildings & Licensing, Kaye Krishna, and many of their staff members over the years.

It is now time to move on. The Kettle will, as we have for over 40 years, continue to work tirelessly and advocate for the supports our community so desperately needs.

We could not be more disappointed with this outcome.

### THE KETTLE SOCIETY

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Cc:

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Gil Kelley, GM Planning, Urban Design & Sustainability, City of Vancouver (via email)

Bill Aujla, GM Real Estate & Facilities Management, City of Vancouver (via email)

Kaye Krishna, GM Development, Buildings & Licencing, City of Vancouver (via email)

Kevin Quinlan, Chief of Staff, City of Vancouver (via email)

Lisa Dominato, Board Chair, The Kettle Society (via email)

Daniel Boffo, Principal, Boffo Properties (via email)

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