

## **Introduction**

- My name is ...
- I myself have safely lived 110m from a supportive housing project – and an elementary school right next to it – in Vancouver since 2014.
- I am here to speak in support of the opportunity provided to the Township of Langley to address homelessness in your community in a significant way.
- As you know there were 209 people experiencing homelessness in the Township in the homeless count in 2017. The bylaw before you would allow for the conversion of the existing hotel site to provide 49 homes and supports to those experiencing homelessness.

## **Opportunity at Hand**

- It is important for those living in Langley without a place of their own to have the opportunity to access safe, stable, and affordable housing.
- Housing First, without readiness conditions, has been proven to be the most successful way in providing long-term stability and getting people back on their feet if it is done properly.

## **Addressing Neighbourhood Concerns**

- As outlined in our letter, we do understand that there are concerns about the impacts of providing housing to the homeless on the surrounding neighbourhood.
- We have been involved in many projects of similar nature across BC and the fears we hear about when new projects arrive in neighbourhoods are usually the same:
  - Property values decrease
  - Crime & safety increases
  - *(Neighbourhood character & open space preservation; Strains on infrastructure and services)*
- We also know that, across the board, over time, initial concerns from community members developed into positive relationships if critical factors are considered, particularly:
  - Open and proactive communication with residents in the neighbourhood: regular check-ins, providing access to communicate and immediately address any concerns
  - Good neighbour agreements and professional staff and services
- With dozens of supportive housing projects delivered, there is no question that BC Housing knows what processes to put in place;
- With dozens of years of experience in operating a range of housing services Stepping Stone has the capacity to operate this new facility in a manner that is safe for those that live in it and for the local community.
- The inclusion of programming space and offices for an Intensive Case Management Team from Fraser Health onsite will help address any potential negative impacts on the neighborhood.

## **In closing**

- We are confident that a successful transition can take place and urge Council to move forward with this rezoning application.
- Every level of government has a role to play in addressing issues of housing affordability and homelessness, and we urge you to approve this Bylaw to provide homes for those in your community that need them.