

June 27, 2024

Government of British Columbia
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Victoria, B.C. V8W 9E1

Sent by email: premier@gov.bc.ca
educ.minister@gov.bc.ca
bowinn.ma.MLA@gov.bc.ca

Re: Redevelopment of ICBC property in North Vancouver

Dear Premier Eby, Minister Singh, and Minister Ma:

On Monday, June 17, the provincial government announced major plans for the redevelopment of the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) building in the Lower Lonsdale neighbourhood of North Vancouver. The promise of hundreds of new housing units and on-site child care is positive news for North Vancouver and we are grateful for your forward-looking approach to this important property in our community, particularly when we are facing a housing crisis in British Columbia. In reviewing the announcement, however, it is our view that there is pivotal infrastructure missing from the plans.

Without a doubt, child care is an important and desperately needed resource in North Vancouver. However, as young children grow into school age children, parents expect to enrol their child in their neighbourhood school. As the Board of Education for North Vancouver School District (NVSD), we noted no mention of any plans for a new school at this site. On behalf of the Board, I would like to provide you with insights that demonstrate our existing need for a new school in Lower Lonsdale, which will become even more critical if left unaddressed with the arrival of hundreds of more residents at the ICBC property site.

The Lower Lonsdale neighbourhood, which was previously largely industrial and commercial land, has seen gentle densification, yet there remains no public school. The closest elementary schools, Queen Mary and Ridgeway, are already operating at capacity and neither site allows for expansion. Queen Mary Elementary has 456 students with only 34 spaces available between Kindergarten to Grade 3. Ridgeway Elementary today has a student population of 677 with only 27 spaces across all grades.

In April, the City of North Vancouver was included among the municipalities identified by the provincial government in “high-growth, high need regions”. The City of North Vancouver had already set its sights on being a vibrant, prosperous, connected, and resilient city for all people, including children and families who need schools in their walkable area. Construction of a new elementary school in Lower Lonsdale is a need first identified in 2015, and continues to be included in the NVSD Five-Year Capital Plan submission, as outlined on page 13 of the [Board meeting](#)



[package](#) for the NVSD Public Board Meeting on June 18, 2024. With increased housing expectations put upon the City and redevelopment of the ICBC property, both will increase the urgent need for an elementary school in Lower Lonsdale.

The natural and immigration fueled population growth in the City of North Vancouver, particularly in Lower Lonsdale, is palpable in our school district today. This year, NVSD has experienced an unprecedented number of new student enrolments after the September 30 reporting date. New students continue to arrive weekly consistent with the arrival of new families throughout the year.

The ICBC property redevelopment offers a unique opportunity to build new housing that is supported by child care, education and transportation infrastructure. Thoughtfully incorporating public education will address the imbalance of resources and build a critically needed elementary school for the Lower Lonsdale neighbourhood.

Your government's thoughtful approach to supporting youth and your on-going support for public schooling is evident and appreciated in North Vancouver. We applaud the future-oriented and community-minded approach you have taken with the ICBC property redevelopment. We would encourage the government to continue with this forward-thinking approach and to strongly consider the inclusion of a much-needed school as part of the ICBC redevelopment project. The inclusion of a school would not only support the vibrant and growing population of North Vancouver, it would also serve as a provincial model of progress and urban living.

We kindly thank you for your attention to the public education in North Vancouver and your commitment to quality education in the province. We know that your support in addressing this matter would have a profound impact on the students in our district.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Munro".

Linda Munro, Board Chair
Board of Education
North Vancouver School District

cc: Board of Education
Mayor Linda Buchanan, City of North Vancouver
MLA Susie Chant, North Vancouver-Seymour