

Metro Vancouver looks to build child care facilities in housing projects even without provincial funding ^[1]

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EXCERPT

Families with young children appear to have a new champion.

The Metro Vancouver regional government is looking to build more child care facilities in its new housing projects.

The federation may go ahead even without funding from the B.C. provincial government.

The move was recommended in a staff report included in the agenda Wednesday (January 13) of the regional government's housing committee.

"This will help the projects move forward with or without provincial funding, and allow future operators to apply for funding to 'outfit' the space as needed," Laura Cowan wrote.

Cowan works as a program manager with regional planning and housing services.

The district has identified opportunities to build new child care spaces in five upcoming housing projects by the region.

Three of these are new developments.

One is at 119B Avenue in Pitt Meadows, where there is potential for 150 child care slots to be integrated with public housing.

Another new housing project is planned at 7388 Southwynde Avenue in Burnaby. The development can host 37 child care spaces.

In North Vancouver, Metro Vancouver plans to build new housing at 123 East 23rd Street, where 61-81 child care seats can be included.

In addition to these three new housing projects, the district also plans to redevelop two existing sites.

One is the Eastburn Square complex in Burnaby, where a potential in-home daycare unit with eight spaces has been identified.

The second is the next phase of the Heather Place project in Vancouver. An in-home daycare unit with eight childcare spaces is contemplated as part of the project.

According to Cowan, Metro Vancouver has applied for funding under the B.C. government's New Child Care Spaces Fund.

If granted, the money will finance the construction of these facilities.

Cowan reported that funding decisions are expected in February 2021.

Cowan also related that based on financial analysis of the said five new residential projects, staff recommend proceeding with child care facilities "as it would with any other amenity space".

"This would mean building the space and providing interior finishes and equipment, but not capital purchases related to operations of the childcare space (e.g., transportation, unfixed furniture and play equipment)," Cowan wrote.

Last year, Metro Vancouver staff member Amina Yasin wrote a report noting that the region has an average of 18.6 child care spaces per 100 children aged 12 and under.

According to Yasin, this falls "far below the national average of 27.2 spaces (2016) and is only slightly ahead of the BC average of 18.4 spaces (2016)".

In addition, the number of children (under the age of 12) in Metro Vancouver is "projected to grow by approximately 7.6% by 2024".

This further highlights the "need for additional child care spaces in the region".

Yasin also reported that families in the region at least \$1,400 per child a month for care.

At present, Metro Vancouver has two child care facilities at its housing complexes.

One is at the Meridian Village, and operated by the Port Coquitlam Daycare Society.

The daycare is located in a standalone building, with about 80 child care spaces.

The second is located at the Odlinwood townhouse complex in Richmond. It's an in-home facility operated by Patty's Family Childcare with seven spaces for children.

Region: British Columbia ^[3]

Tags: space ^[4]

funding ^[5]

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