

**DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION**

Suite 1380 –1100 Melville St
Vancouver, BC V6E 4A6
info@dtvan.ca



November 28, 2023

Dear Mayor Sim and Vancouver City Councillors:

I'm writing on behalf of the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (Downtown Van) to express our support for the City of Vancouver's efforts to streamline the permitting and review process for the development of new childcare spaces, as outlined in the Phase One implementation update of *Making Spaces – Vancouver's Child Care Strategy* by City staff.

As the representative of approximately 8000 businesses employing over 90,000 workers in the downtown central business district, many of whom are parents, we see reliable and affordable access to childcare as essential for the success of our member businesses, and in turn, the overall regional economy.

In a previous letter, we highlighted how access to suitable childcare directly impacts the return-to-work decisions of downtown business employees. A shortage of early childhood education staff and general difficulty in securing suitable childcare in local communities continue to pose significant challenges for many workers, preventing them from committing to office-based work following parental leave.

We acknowledge the advancements mentioned in City staff's update to Council, particularly the emphasis on innovative approaches, such as modular and prefabricated childcare spaces. With that in mind, we believe this strategy overlooks the potential contributions that the downtown business community could make towards significantly expanding the availability of childcare spaces in Canada's most densely populated downtown district.

These potential contributions range from establishing a closer working relationship with key decision-makers in the commercial real estate industry, advising City staff of prospective privately owned sites that could meet the simplified regulatory spaces, and exploring solutions for temporary or permanent conversions of office-to-childcare in suitable locations. By actively involving these members of the business community in the consultation process, the City may obtain insights valuable for shaping new policy for childcare spaces. This will be especially effective once the Ministry of Education and Child Care's new ChildCareBC Design Guidelines are complete.

Downtown Van stands ready to facilitate discussions among our members to explore the various ways our community can support Vancouver's capacity to provide quality care for its families and children. We appreciate the City's commitment to improving childcare access and commend your efforts to streamline processes.

We firmly believe that closer collaboration between the business community and City of Vancouver will spur even greater success in creating a supportive environment for families and ensuring a prosperous future for our city and its residents. Should you require any further information or wish to discuss this topic further, please do not hesitate to contact me or my team.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Talbot".

Jane Talbot
President + CEO
jane@dtvan.ca