



February 6, 2025

**Honourable Ravi Khalon**

Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs

Province of British Columbia

Dear Minister Khalon,

**Re: Renewed Request to Bring HEART & HEARTH to Penticton**

We are writing to seek your support in addressing the homelessness crisis in Penticton through participation in the Heart & Hearth program, building on our ongoing discussions. The City of Penticton and the snpink'tn Indian Band continue to face significant challenges in responding to the unacceptable levels of homelessness locally, particularly with the encampment at Fairview Road and Highway 97.

The encampment is located on provincial land that was originally part of the snpink'tn Indian Band reserve lands. This land was appropriated in the 1950s by the Federal Crown for flood control and infrastructure projects and subsequently transferred to the Province. While it was intended to be returned to reserve status, this has not occurred. As such, the Province has responsibility for this land, and we believe it is imperative that the Province take leadership in addressing the situation.

We respectfully request the Province's commitment to bringing the Heart & Hearth program to Penticton. This initiative aligns with the Province's efforts to address homelessness and will ensure a coordinated, dignified response for those at the encampment, creating pathways to stability and long-term housing.

Our communities are ready to work closely with the Province to implement this program swiftly. We are excited to share that several pieces of land in Penticton are currently included in the BC Builds program, demonstrating our commitment to housing solutions. Additionally, we are actively working to identify further suitable lands to support the Heart & Hearth initiative and will have options for Council consideration in February. Whether it involves expediting permitting, aligning local services with provincial resources, or further planning, we stand ready as enthusiastic collaborators in this effort.

Community readiness is also a priority for us in this effort. Ensuring that the broader community is informed and supportive of the Heart & Hearth program is key to its success. Non-profit organizations in Penticton have also expressed their readiness to collaborate and provide the necessary on-the-ground support to implement this program effectively. Their deep connection to the community and expertise in delivering services will be invaluable as we move forward.

To provide additional context, we have attached the joint statement issued by the City and the snpink'tn Indian Band regarding the encampment. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss next steps and finalize the Province's commitment to this vital initiative.

Thank you for your leadership and partnership in addressing homelessness across British Columbia.

Yours sincerely,

**Julius Bloomfield**

Mayor

City of Penticton

**Greg Gabriel**

Chief

snpink'tn Indian Band