



VIBRANT, DIVERSE, SUSTAINABLE

Jacque Dawes
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development
Government of British Columbia
PO Box 9490, STN Prov Govt
Victoria, B.C., V8W 9N7

March 10, 2016

Dear Deputy Minister Dawes:

I am writing on behalf of the University Neighbourhoods Association, the organization that represents residents in the University of British Columbia's campus neighbourhoods.

Community, Sport and Cultural Development officials recently informed the UNA's Board of Directors of the province's intent to download fire protection costs for UBC's campus neighbourhoods. The UNA appreciates the opportunity to engage with CSCD officials on an issue of such importance for our residents.

In our meeting, CSCD officials laid out a fair and principled rationale for recovering fire services costs from UBC's taxable neighbourhood properties. The UNA understands the importance of providing reasonable funding for fire protection services under a model that is fair to both campus residents and all British Columbians.

The UNA is, however, concerned about the province's proposed timing to implement the fire cost recovery. The province's proposed total fire cost recovery is more than 20% of the UNA's annual budget. In recognition of this impact, the UNA appreciates the province's proposed phasing in of costs with 50% recovered in 2016/17, and 100% going forward from 2017/18.

Nevertheless, for 2016/17 this level of unexpected budget impact would be challenging for any organization to absorb. As CSCD officials are aware, the UNA has little control over its annual revenue given the formula for calculating UBC's Services Levy, which makes up almost all of the UNA's budget. Indeed, even without the fire cost download the UNA's budget is already under significant pressure due to reduced Vancouver property tax rates and an increased rural tax rate. As a result, the UNA will likely need to explore ongoing service level cuts that affect campus residents' quality of life.

In recognition of these financial pressures, the UNA and UBC have struck a joint financial task force. The task force's mandate is to mitigate the impact on residents from the fire cost downloading and reduced Services Levy revenue by exploring a wide range of immediate to longer term measures to mitigate financial pressures, including opportunities for increasing revenues and reducing expenditures.

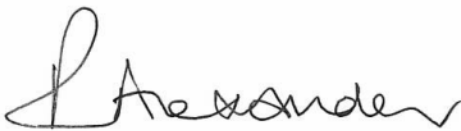
As I am sure you will appreciate, many of these solutions are complex and require time for analysis, consultation with residents, and implementation. The UNA is confident the financial impact of the fire costs downloading can be managed through the task force's work.

The challenge is that the province's proposed timeline for recovering fire service costs does not provide the UNA the time to make these decisions in a thoughtful manner.

The UNA is asking that the province defer the proposed timeline for recovering fire costs by one year: 50% of the costs would start in 2017/18 and 100% in future years. This deferral would provide the UNA the time required to work with UBC to manage the impact of the province's decision.

Once again, the UNA Board of Directors appreciates your Ministry's consultation on this issue and your consideration of this request. Given the pending 2016/17 fiscal year I look forward to your timely reply.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Alexander', written in a cursive style.

Richard Alexander
Chair, Board of Directors
University Neighbourhoods Association

CC Jan Fialkowski, Executive Director, University Neighbourhoods Association

Michael White, Associate Vice President, Campus and Community Planning, UBC