



May 13, 2021

Ms. Christa Brown  
Surrey City Planner

***Re: Harmony Apartment Project***

Dear Christa Brown,

On behalf of Inclusion BC and Inclusion Canada, we are writing in support of Harmony, UNITI's inclusive and affordable housing apartment project in South Surrey British Columbia.

Inclusion BC is a non-profit federation working with partners to build community and to enhance the lives of children, youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and their families by building awareness, inspiring action, and advancing rights. We are supported by a membership of 60 organizations, individuals, and families working together to build inclusive communities across our province.

Inclusion Canada is a national federation of 13 provincial-territorial member organizations and over 300 local associations. The national organizations include the Inclusion Canada Foundation, the Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society (IRIS), and Inclusive Education Canada (IEC). As part of an international federation, Inclusion Canada is a member of Inclusion International.

Our organizations were alarmed to hear the misrepresentative description of the Harmony project during the Surrey Council Meeting held on April 26, 2021. Harmony is at the forefront of creating affordable and inclusive housing for South Surrey residents and has the potential to be the heartbeat of the community. A community where diversity, including people with intellectual disabilities, is not just reflected but is celebrated through the composition of those who reside within the building itself.

Modeled on Chorus Apartments, the highly successful affordable inclusive, and first purpose-built rental apartment in Surrey in over three decades, Harmony will also offer affordable and inclusive homes for South Surrey community members. Chorus was completed in 2016 and was selected [as one of the top three models for inclusive housing in Canada](#) by Inclusion Canada.

Harmony will be housing that "reflects the diversity of the community" as it will be home for a wide range of people: seniors, front-line health workers, families, people with disabilities, and students. Like Chorus, Harmony will be a beautiful building, well-maintained with a sense of community and an asset for the people of South Surrey.



To compare this vision to a homeless shelter, in our opinion, was a disservice to the vital role both housing options play in our communities. We ask you to think of Harmony as being similar to other condos and apartments in South Surrey, with the additional component of offering affordable rent matching the housing income of those who will call Harmony home. The future residents of Harmony are your fellow local South Surrey community members.

As a member of Inclusion BC, UNITI has demonstrated its expertise in community development, community living supports and has been instrumental in developing the provincial definition of inclusive housing that guides the community living sector. Housing has been an advocacy priority for our organizations for many years as the demand for affordable, inclusive housing far exceeds the current supply. Families and individuals, particularly those who live with intellectual disabilities, suffer from a lack of appropriate housing in South Surrey and they face many barriers to accessing affordable housing. UNITI recognizes the need for affordable housing not just for the individuals they support, but for the whole community of South Surrey, and they are well-positioned to serve that need.

We encourage you to reconsider the proposal for Harmony as it brings us all closer to meeting the housing needs of people with disabilities and the greater South Surrey community.

Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me by email at [kverschoor@inclusionbc.org](mailto:kverschoor@inclusionbc.org) or by phone at 604-777-9100 ext.516.

Sincerley,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K Verschoor".

Karla Verschoor  
Executive Director  
Inclusion BC

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Krista Carr".

Krista Carr  
Executive Vice-President  
Inclusion Canada