

NPO Space Needs Brief on Primary Issues and Possible Misconceptions
May 17, 2019

In order to address the NPO Space Needs problem in Richmond, it is important to understand the primary issues and commonly held misconceptions regarding this matter. Therefore, the comments below are intended to offer clarification and augment the information contained in the NPO Space Needs Report.

Affordability – Most social service agencies receive some core funding from municipal, provincial or federal governments. This funding is often augmented by other revenue sources from fundraising activities and grants. Consequently, ***social service agencies are not seeking free space but need to be able to acquire affordable space.*** The cost of commercial space in Richmond has steadily increased over the years and is now unaffordable for many non-profit organizations. Non-profit organizations need assistance to obtain affordable leased space or purchase cost effective space.

Accessibility – Social service agencies need to acquire space that is accessible to the people they serve. ***City centre is the preferred location*** by most organizations because it is well serviced by transit and close to other amenities. In addition to the geographical location, many organizations need ***physically accessible*** locations with ground floor access and wheelchair accessible facilities, such as washroom. Lastly, ***non-profit organizations face discrimination*** by landlords concerned about the clients served by social service organizations. Although, these concerns may not be realized and may be based in misunderstandings and lack of information, discrimination has increasingly become an issue for some non-profit organizations.

Permanency and Sustainability – Social service organizations require ***permanent location*** to delivery service and conduct their business. Although intermittent use of meeting space and recreational facilities are, at times, useful, they do not meet core needs of most organizations. Social service agencies need ***long-term sustainable office/commercial space.*** Temporary arrangements or space with demolition clauses cause instability for non-profit organizations and the people they serve. As many non-profit agencies are not funded for capital expenditures, leasehold improvements or relocations costs coupled with short term lease arrangements are problematic.

Richmond Community Services Advisory Committee

