

<https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/gec-langara-student-housing-tower-approved-6428-6438-cambie-street-vancouver>

\$150-million, 650-bed student housing tower approved for Langara-49th Avenue SkyTrain station



Kenneth Chan | Jan 18 2026, 2:15 pm



Concept for GEC Langara at 6428-6438 Cambie St. and 480-488 West 48th Ave., Vancouver. (Urban Solutions Architecture/GECC)

Supported by the provincial government’s transit-oriented development policies, Vancouver City Council has unanimously and swiftly approved a project to build a 25-storey tower with 100 per cent student housing uses immediately north of SkyTrain’s Langara-49th Avenue Station.

This is the development of the lot at 6428-6438 Cambie St. and 480-488 West 48th Ave. (formerly 478-496 West 48th Avenue), situated at the southeast corner of the intersection of Cambie Street and West 48th Avenue.

Previously the site of a few single-family detached houses, the lot has been vacant ever since it was used for the Canada Line’s construction staging and storage needs in the 2000s.

Global Education Communities Corporation (GECC), a local company that is one of Metro Vancouver’s largest operators of purpose-built student housing, first acquired the site in late 2023, following the provincial government’s Transit-Oriented Area designation for this Canada Line station.

Prior to GECC’s acquisition of the property from Tatton Development Group (formerly South Street Development Group), there was a 2019-approved concept to build a 10-storey building with 59 secured purpose-built rental homes.



Site for GEC Langara at 6428-6438 Cambie St. and 480-488 West 48th Ave., Vancouver. (Urban Solutions Architecture/GECC)

Existing condition:



Site for GEC Langara at 6428-6438 Cambie St. and 480-488 West 48th Ave., Vancouver. (Google Maps)

Future condition:



Concept for GEC Langara at 6428-6438 Cambie St. and 480-488 West 48th Ave., Vancouver. (Urban Solutions Architecture/GECC)

The newly approved rezoning for a 253-ft-tall tower — named GEC Langara — incorporates 182 secured purpose-built rental homes, with 143 market rental units and 39 below-market rental units.

The unit size mix is 48 studio units, 19 one-bedroom units, 19 two-bedroom units, 89 three-bedroom units, and four seven-bedroom units, which represents a high proportion of larger units to enable dormitory-style, multi-bed configurations. As purpose-built student housing — similar to GECC’s other properties and the student residences found at post-secondary campuses — all of these rental units at GEC Langara will be fully furnished, and shared amenities and services will specifically cater to the unique needs of students, including a partial 26th floor with indoor and outdoor amenity spaces.

GECC anticipates that the fully furnished student housing units will accommodate approximately 650 beds.

The project is strategically located footsteps from SkyTrain and major bus routes serving the University of British Columbia, and is two blocks west of Langara College. These rental homes will be offered not only to students, but also to faculty, staff, and the company’s other post-secondary educational partners.



Concept for GEC Langara at 6428-6438 Cambie St. and 480-488 West 48th Ave., Vancouver. (Urban Solutions Architecture/GECC)

Additionally, there will be a 2,200 sq. ft. retail/restaurant unit on the ground level, which will activate the tower’s small plaza facing the station. The total building floor area will reach 156,200 sq. ft., establishing a floor area ratio density of a floor area that is 10.3 times larger than the size of the 15,400 sq. ft. lot. Two underground levels of vehicle parking will be provided.

In a statement following the project’s approval last week during a public hearing, Toby Chu, the chairman, president, and CEO of GECC, shared that GEC Langara has a project budget of about \$150 million, and the company will pursue Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s (CMHC) low-cost loan programs to help cover construction financing. The project will also benefit from GST exemptions and reduced development cost levies.

It is estimated that GEC Langara could generate \$13 million in annual rental income upon completion.

“We are very pleased with the government’s support for the transit-oriented density,” said Chu in a statement.

“The enhanced economies of scale will improve GECC’s operational efficiencies and spread out operating costs across our portfolio. Crucially, the improved proforma allows GECC to allocate 20 per cent of the units to below-market rental housing, providing much-needed affordable options for the community.”



GEC King Edward student housing. (GEC)

GECC is also currently in the process of building GEC Oakridge, another major student housing property nearby — located six blocks to the north at 441-475 West 42nd Ave., near the northeast corner of the intersection of Cambie Street and West 42nd Avenue and immediately east of SkyTrains Oakridge-41st Avenue Station and the new Oakridge Park mall, which will open this year.

The 18-storey GEC Oakridge student housing tower is expected to be completed in early 2027. It will include approximately 120 secured purpose-built rental homes, fully furnished to accommodate about 450 students. As of last week, construction had progressed to the 12th floor, with the concrete floorplate pour underway.

GEC Oakridge carries a project cost of \$123 million, which is supported by low-cost construction financing by CMHC. The company anticipates to see \$8 million in annual rental income from this project during the first academic year.

Urban Solutions Architecture is the design firm behind both the GEC Langara and GEC Oakridge towers.



Construction progress on GEC Oakridge student housing tower (centre), with Polygon Homes' Claridge House (left) and Marcon's rental housing towers (right) on West 42nd Ave., next to Oakridge Park, as of Jan. 4, 2026. (Kenneth Chan)



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The largest project within the immediate vicinity of Langara-49th Avenue Station will be the redevelopment of Langara YMCA, which is one block east of the public transit hub. There will be two towers of 37 storeys and 33 storeys containing 665 homes — a mix of strata market ownership condominiums, secured purpose-built rentals, and social housing — and a new replacement downsized YMCA community facility, without a replacement swimming pool.

The project is a partnership between the Musqueam Indian Band, Townline Homes, and YMCA of Greater Vancouver. The rezoning application was approved in February 2025, and the development permit application was submitted in April 2025 and approved in July 2025.