



Date: June 13, 2025

Re: The 18 month Temporary Use Permit for Purpose Society to continue to run a safe consumption site at 40 Begbie Street, New Westminster (access from Alexander Street)

On Behalf of The New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society,

The New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society would like to express its strong support for City Council's approval of the aforementioned 18 month Temporary Use Permit for Purpose Society to continue to provide life-saving safe consumption site services at 40 Begbie Street, New Westminster (access from Alexander Street).

The Lower Mainland Purpose Society is a dedicated and innovative non-profit service provider that has for many years been at the forefront of providing shelter, harm reduction, and other essential services to the unhoused population in New Westminster and other jurisdictions. They have a commitment to responding to and working to mitigate community concerns that arise regarding their many low-barrier housing, shelter, and other services, including the safe consumption site that they have been operating at this location.

This safe consumption site provides an essential space for community members who use substances to use those substances safely and with support, in an enclosed space away from local businesses and public spaces. Last year alone, the Purpose safe consumption site provided overdose response to 257 individuals experiencing a drug-toxicity event, saving countless lives in the process. Individuals whose lives are saved by safe consumption sites can go on to access substance use treatment and other services that they would never be able to access should their lives be cut short due to an unpredictable toxic drug supply.

The closure of this safe consumption site would mean more public drug use and drug use within the vicinity of local businesses in New Westminster's downtown core, more use of emergency and hospital services, a higher burden on law enforcement, more lives tragically cut short due to the toxic drug supply, and consequently, fewer opportunities for substance using community members to access substance use treatment.

Safe consumption services are a pragmatic and effective response to a crisis, one that saves lives and ultimately saves public spending dollars in the healthcare and criminal justice systems. It is also a moral imperative that we all share to address the needs of our community, for providing life-saving support to those who need it, and for improving the safety and well-being of all community members and businesses.

It is for all of these reasons that the Homelessness Coalition Society not only supports the Temporary Use permit being put before City Council, but would consider the rejection of this permit to be a moral failure, and failure of leadership.

Sincerely,

Jack York

Board Chair,

New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society