
From: Rico Lam S22(1) Personal Information
Sent: Tuesday, June 17, 2025 11:13 AM
To: Mayor and Councillors
Cc: External-Legislative Services
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Oppose TUP00038 – Resident, 14 Begbie Street

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Dear Mayor Johnstone and Councillors,

I have lived at 14 Begbie Street for the past three years. During that time I have watched the concentration of street disorder, open drug use, and violent incidents in our block grow steadily worse. After careful consideration, **I must oppose the renewal of Temporary Use Permit TUP00038 for the Health Contact Centre at 40 Begbie Street.**

1. The existing operation has not met its own goals

City staff and Council have already acknowledged that the centre is “not working as intended.” Renewing the permit will simply prolong a model that has failed to improve safety for clients or for the neighbourhood.

2. Public-safety and livability conditions have deteriorated around Begbie & Columbia

- **Crime and disorder:** The New Westminster Police Department redeployed officers downtown on 23 May 2025 after random stranger assaults, a stabbing, and a year-to-date rise in assaults, robberies, thefts, and mischief.

- **Vehicle break-ins and property damage:** Police recently arrested a suspect linked to dozens of car break-ins in the downtown core. Street parking beside our parkade is already a target, and residents fear even more theft and vandalism if another high-intensity site opens less than 30 m from our garage entrance.

- **Unsafe pedestrian environment:** Local parents have warned that “Downtown New West is not safe for my kids.” My wife—5’3” and commuting via SkyTrain—does not feel safe walking the 90 m from our lobby to the station.

- **Persistent night-time noise:** Nearly every evening, residents are woken by shouting, overdoses, and emergency responses outside our windows, in violation of the City’s Noise Bylaw.

- **Daily vandalism and bio-hazards:** Our building façade and alcoves are repeatedly urinated on, littered with trash, and strewn with discarded syringes and pipes—even without the proposed centre. Escalation is inevitable if it proceeds. A visiting friend was chased by an agitated individual last year and now refuses to come after dark. As an adult male, I myself feel unsafe on my own block.

3. Locating another high-intensity drug-use service here will intensify the hotspot

Downtown already hosts multiple shelters and outreach programs. Renewing a supervised-consumption site barely 30 m from my residential tower—and from a newly occupied family-oriented building—will further entrench Begbie Street as a corridor of disorder, risking a slide toward the conditions seen on Vancouver’s East Hastings.

4. A better path forward

I recognize the toxic-drug crisis is lethal and requires action, but harm-reduction services must be balanced with neighbourhood safety and evidence of effectiveness. I therefore urge the Council to:

- **Deny TUP00038** and require the operator to work with Fraser Health on alternative locations that do not cluster all high-barrier services in one block.

- Invest in dispersed, housing-linked supports—particularly outside the downtown core—so clients can access help without drawing vulnerable users (and predatory dealers) to a single site.

- Expand the Downtown Livability Strategy with permanent foot patrols, robust by-law enforcement, lighting upgrades, and proactive sharps collection on Begbie and Columbia Streets.

Conclusion

Residents have shown patience and compassion, but the conditions on our sidewalk are now unsafe and unlivable. Renewing a permit that has already lapsed—and that the City itself concedes is under-performing—will worsen, not solve, the problem.

Please vote No on TUP00038.

Respectfully,

Chi Lam

Resident of 14 Begbie Street, New Westminster, BC

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