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To: External-Legislative Services; Mayor and Councillors
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Health Contact Centre (Safe Injection Site)

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June 16, 2025

Mayor and Councillors
City of New Westminster

Re: Health Contact Centre (Safe Injection Site)
**Vote yes to the Temporary Use Permit for the Health Contact Centre (Safe Injection Site),
entrance on Alexander Street, New Westminster.**

The Safe Injection Site is not the final solution for people using illicit and toxic drugs. It is a place where staff may save their lives on any given day by witnessing their drug use and administering naloxone if their drugs are toxic.

The primary reason for Safe Injection Sites is to keep people alive for another day in the hope that, tomorrow, treatment may be attractive and available to them. This combination of events seldom happens concurrently.

Purpose staff understand why the residents of New Westminster do not want to see people congregate behind the Safe Injection Site on Alexander Street. The people are outside because they are smoking their drugs. The majority of individuals have, over the past several years, moved to smoking their drugs and there are no inhalation sites for them to use. They publicly use their drugs outside the Safe Injection Site under the surveillance of the Purpose cameras. They know that they are reasonably safe because staff of the Safe Injection Site are continuously scanning the cameras looking out for people outside affected by toxic drugs. Every month, on average, the lives of three people are saved inside the Safe Injection Site and five lives are saved outside the Site. We have the evidence that proves these numbers. On average, eight lives are saved each month by Safe Injection Site staff

Residents of New Westminster want a reduction in the public use of drugs and for good reasons. It is hard and heartbreaking to see people who look like extras in a zombie movie, bent over, and often not knowing who or where they are. We understand the discomfort and the worry about what it does to the neighbourhood. However, the answer is not to move them around, pushing them from place to

place. When some of us witness the devastation that results from toxic drugs, we experience discomfort, angst, repulsion, anger or perhaps, guilt or dismay because our compassion, caring, empathy, and knowledge does not change things. We know that this situation is not right and should not be. We get it.

You are the local decision makers. Some of you are promoting closing the Safe Injection Site in five months. Are you ready to publicly acknowledge that eight people may die because they do not get the naloxone that will keep them alive?

Before you make your decision on how to vote, please, come see what goes on for yourself. No one on Council has visited the Site in the last year. No one has come to meet with folks and hear their stories so that you have a genuine understanding of how and why people find themselves using substances. Is there an understanding of how toxic the drugs have become and how fast people are deteriorating using these constantly evolving drugs? These are people, who just like the rest of us, are trying to get through the day the best they can, with what they have. Keeping their hope alive that life will improve can be very difficult, but to not have hope is not an option.

Each of you was elected to represent the residents of New Westminster. That means all the residents. Your commitment is to make life better for everyone. These folks are residents who deserve your leadership in improving their chances for a better life too. It is your responsibility, as an elected official, to see them and help them while finding solutions to the social issues that confront us.

It is so much easier to demolish things than to build by finding solutions. Before you consider demolishing the Safe Injection Site, let us work as a team to develop a strategic plan for addressing the use of illicit drugs in New Westminster. The plan must be comprehensive and based on studies that analyze success stories. In addition, success is determined by the number of people who improve their circumstances and not merely by removing them from the street.

The plan would go beyond outreach workers and include prevention, treatment, enforcement and harm reduction – the original four pillars that were set out to address the situation created by the use of illicit and toxic drugs. When implemented together, guided by committed and caring people, results have been positive. A comprehensive plan, not just band aids and sound bites, is what is needed. The community must be involved in the development of the plan.

Then we take that plan to the provincial and federal governments and demand that attention be paid, and money be given to communities so that they can finally take care of all the residents of their community.

We can do this together. We can create a win-win for everyone in the community and keep our sense of humanity, community and compassion that every person deserves.

The Board of Directors and
Staff of the Purpose Society

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