

Memorandum

To: New Westminster City Council **Date:** July 7, 2025
From: Councillor Nadine Nakagawa **File:**
Re: **Participation at the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction
Municipal Leaders Table – April 13 to 16, 2025**

This memorandum is provided in accordance with provisions of the Council Travel and Expense Policy regarding participation at conferences, events, and meetings that require overnight accommodations outside British Columbia.

I had the opportunity to attend the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction's (CCSA) three-day Municipal Leaders Table in Lethbridge, Alberta in April 2025 (Attachment 1). The event was for Mayors and other involved groups, such as healthcare providers, to come together to discuss solutions and potential solutions to address the substance use issues in our communities.

Summary of Event

The opening plenary discussed the problems with alcohol misuse and the lack of standard drink sizing. Alcohol is a substance that is often left out of discussions on substance use and addiction, despite it being the most common used psychoactive substance in Canada and a leading risk factor for health issues (Government of Canada, 2020). It is especially concerning due to youth's high risk of alcohol-related harms and the burden it puts on our healthcare system.

The rest of the conference focused on developing a playbook for small municipalities (under 150,000 residents) to use for addressing substance misuse problems in their municipalities. The playbook will be released publicly in the fall of 2025.

Summary of Expenses

Event Registration	No charge
Accommodation	\$469.92
Travel (airfare)	\$338.07
Travel (taxi)	\$140.40
Per Diem	\$280.00
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Total	\$1,228.39

See Attachment 2 for a detailed breakdown of expenditures.

Summary of Participation & Learnings

Some of the key takeaways from the event was a creative model piloted in Timmins, Ontario that allowed paramedics to connect patients with opioid agonist therapy. This program seems like a level up from our Second Responder program, but is possible because Ontario has a different model than BC for providing social services in which their municipalities have more connection with and direction over paramedic services. Both the Mayor of Timmins and the head of the paramedics were in attendance and by their reports, the program has been an incredible success.

Another key takeaway was the development of the Village in Duncan. The Mayor of Duncan and the Director of Mental Health Services for Cowichan Tribes attended and talked about the successes of their housing-first model. Notably, the housing is oriented to create a kind of public space between the units that echoes the Cowichan Tribes' historic and culturally appropriate models of housing.

I also had the opportunity to reconnect with some local organizations that are thought leaders and innovators including the Community Action Initiative and Dr. Peters AIDS Centre.

One of the opportunities of this event was to talk to Mayors, Councillors, and service providers whose municipalities are significantly different than New Westminster in terms of population, geography, and social services and to hear how they're addressing issues in their communities.

For colleagues interested in this topic, CCSA holds an annual conference called Issues of Substance, which will take place in Halifax from November 17-19th. Registration is currently open.

References

Government of Canada. (2020, Dec 21). *Alcohol use among Canadians*. <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/alcohol/ctads/#shr-pg0>

Councillor Nadine Nakagawa

Attachment #1 – CCSA Leaders' Table Conference Program

Attachment #2 – Travel Expense Form Submissions (Travel & Per Diems)