

October 5, 2020

Mayor and Council
City of Vancouver
453 West 12th Ave
Vancouver, BC



Support for Overdose Prevention Site at 1101 Seymour Street

The Downtown Vancouver BIA is supportive of City Staff's recommendation to allow the lease at 1101 Seymour Street to be modified so that RainCity Housing and Support Society may operate an overdose prevention site.

The City of Vancouver is in the midst of an ongoing overdose crisis. Overdoses are largely the result of fentanyl, carfentanil, and other contaminants in the illegal drug supply. Between January 1 and August 31, 2020 there were 259 illicit drug toxicity deaths recorded in Vancouver. For comparison, a decade ago in 2010 there were 42 overdose deaths recorded in the same area over the course of the entire year. More people have died in Vancouver from overdoses this year than have died from COVID-19 in British Columbia to date.

The Downtown Vancouver Clean Team records the number of discarded needles they pick up from public streets on a daily basis. Our data shows an alarming increase in needles collected in recent months, indicating that drug use in public areas is on the rise. Thus far in 2020 the Clean Team has collected 4547 needles in the DV BIA's 90 block area, a 97% increase compared to the same period last year.

Overdoses are occurring in public places, as well as in isolation. To address this, overdose prevention sites provide a safe place for people to use drugs in a supervised environment, where life-saving naloxone can be administered should an overdose occur.

This overdose prevention site will be one way to help address the crisis, but more must be done. Vancouver needs more mental health and addictions support services and facilities, and drug users need access to a safer drug supply.

The Downtown Vancouver BIA is committed to working with the City of Vancouver and other partners in reducing deaths from overdose.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Gauthier".

Charles Gauthier, MCP
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