

**From:** ["Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca)  
**To:** ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)  
**CC:** ["City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"](#)  
["Singh, Sandra" <Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca)  
**Date:** 5/31/2021 2:16:24 PM  
**Subject:** Memo: Update regarding the Overdose Prevention Site at 1101 Seymour Street - RTS 14040  
**Attachments:** ACCS - GM - Memo (Mayor & Council) - Update re Overdose Prevention Site at 1101 Seymour Street RTS 14040 (2021-05-28).pdf  
ACCS - GM - Memo (Mayor & Council) Update re Overdose Prevention Site at 1101 Seymour Street RTS 14040 (2021-03-03).pdf

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Dear Mayor and Council,

The attached memo from Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services, provides an update regarding the Overdose Prevention Site at 1101 Seymour Street (RTS 144040). Highlights include:

- ⦿Background: The City signed a lease agreement with VCH for an Overdose Prevention Site (OPS) at 1101 Seymour Street as per Council's approval on October 20, 2020. The operator of 1101 Seymour is Raincity Housing and Support Society and the OPS opened on Tuesday, March 2, 2021;
- ⦿Considerable community concern was raised during the 1101 Seymour Council meeting in regards to safety and cleanliness in and around the area with a new OPS at this location. Council added recommendations to the staff report to address community concerns. Staff, VCH, and Raincity Housing Support Society continue to work collaboratively to address any site issues that arise at the new OPS;
- ⦿Staff are organizing a tour in June for Mayor and Council of the OPS at 1101 Seymour so that elected officials can meet with the operator and Vancouver Coastal Health directly and ask questions and clarify concerns.

Should you have any questions, please contact Sandra at [Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca](mailto:Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca) and she will ensure they are responded to through the weekly Council questions process.

Best,  
Paul

**Paul Mochrie** (he/him)  
City Manager  
City of Vancouver  
[paul.mochrie@vancouver.ca](mailto:paul.mochrie@vancouver.ca)



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməŋ̱əm̱ (Musqueam), ḵʷəḵʷəḵʷə (Squamish), and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

**MEMORANDUM**

May 28, 2021

TO: Mayor & Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager  
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager  
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Maria Pontikis, Director, Civic Engagement and Communications  
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk  
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office  
Mary Clare Zak, Managing Director, Social Policy & Projects  
Mark Pickersgill, Senior Planner, Social Policy & Projects

FROM: Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services

SUBJECT: Update re Overdose Prevention Site at 1101 Seymour Street RTS 14040

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**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this email is to provide an update regarding the Overdose Prevention Site at 1101 Seymour Street.

The City signed a lease agreement with VCH for an Overdose Prevention Site (OPS) at 1101 Seymour Street as per Council's approval on October 20, 2020. The operator of 1101 Seymour is Raincity Housing and Support Society and the OPS opened on Tuesday, March 2, 2021.

Staff worked with Vancouver Coastal Health to create a set of operational conditions, incorporated within the lease to meet the set requirements outlined in the Council report addressing: building cleanliness, hours of operation, a plan for managing queuing, and ventilation. This memo provides a further update on OPS data for 1101 Seymour within the first 3 months, steps taken to address issues, and future opportunities to mitigate community concerns.

**BACKGROUND**

In April 2016, following a significant increase in opioid-related overdose deaths from drug poisoning, a public health emergency was declared in BC. During the COVID-19 pandemic,

overdose death rates in Vancouver and BC have increased, counteracting progress in reducing deaths in 2019. There were over 400 overdose deaths in Vancouver in 2020, with an average of 6 deaths per week reported by the VPD and an average of approximately 100 calls the VFRS responds to per week. The situation has worsened. As of mid May, based on VPD and Coroner reports 161 people have died from overdose in the city this year, which is an average of 8-9 deaths per week, and 1,770 have died since the Public Health Emergency was declared in April 2016.

No one has died at an OPS– these services remain critical life-saving services in Vancouver.

In October 2020, staff brought the recommendation for decision to Council due to 1101 Seymour being a City-owned site – other OPS services open and operate without Council decision in the DTES and at St. Paul's Hospital.

In February 2021, VCH signed the lease for 1101 Seymour who sub lease to Raincity Housing Support Society. The site, named the Thomus Donaghy OPS, has operated since March 2, 2021 from 10am – 10pm, 7 days a week.

## **DISCUSSION**

Considerable community concern was raised during the 1101 Seymour Council meeting in regards to safety and cleanliness in and around the area with a new OPS at this location.

Council added recommendations to the staff report to address community concerns (see Appendix A, below). Staff, VCH, and Raincity Housing Support Society continue to work collaboratively to address any site issues that arise at the new OPS.

- The operating conditions were integrated into the lease with Vancouver Coastal Health addressing: building cleanliness, hours of operation, a plan for managing queuing, and ventilation (see Appendix A);
- The operator is in contact, and collaborates with, other building tenants to address any issues;
- The operator (RainCity) monitors, to a reasonable extent and during operating hours (10am-10pm), the state of the sidewalk on the exterior of the building, and clean up discarded harm reduction materials as needed.
  - This includes 30 minute safety and access checks, which includes monitoring of any accumulated garbage on the sidewalk outside of the OPS/
  - At times, if staff are responding to a crisis such as an overdose, they will not be able to do their 30 minute check but will do so at the next available opportunity
  - The operator has shared that they support 50-70 site visits daily, and provide 1-5 overdose reversals/week
- Staff experience is that during the first year of opening new initiatives like supportive housing and overdose prevention sites operators need time to settle operations into the neighbourhood. Operators also experience heightened surveillance and scrutiny during this time which tends to decrease after the first year of operation.

- To date staff have followed up on 8 complaints, including inquiry emails from Council. Staff are establishing baseline data to monitor the difference in the number of complaints and issues over time
- A City working group including, but not limited to: Engineering Sanitation Services, Social Policy, Homelessness Services, and other site specific departments as needed for high profile sites such as OPS and washroom trailer program sites.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Staff are organizing a tour in June for Mayor and Council of the OPS at 1101 Seymour so that elected officials can meet with the operator and Vancouver Coastal Health directly and ask questions and clarify concerns.

## **FINAL REMARKS**

In conclusion, staff, VCH, and Raincity Housing Support Society will continue to respond to community concerns, while ensuring crucial life-saving supports continue.

If Council has any further questions or needs additional information, please feel free to contact Sandra Singh directly at [sandra.singh@vancouver.ca](mailto:sandra.singh@vancouver.ca).



Sandra Singh, General Manager  
Arts, Culture, and Community Services

tel: 604.871.6858

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## Appendix A:

Council directions regarding the lease conditions are below:

- E. THAT Council direct staff to attach conditions to the proposed lease for Vancouver Coastal Health Authority (VCH) for an Overdose Prevention Site at 1101 Seymour Street that addresses requirements for exterior building and site cleanliness, expectations for minimizing discarded needles and drug equipment outside the OPS, lists expected hours of operation, provides a plan for managing any queuing outside the building exterior, and provides ventilation in relation to adjacent residences, businesses and public realm;

FURTHER THAT staff report back by the end of November 2020 on measures that can be taken by the City in order to mitigate any impact on neighbouring residents and businesses, including increased sanitation services to deal with any increase in discarded needles, feces and waste in the public realm, and including specific attention to Emery Barnes Park in consultation with the Vancouver Park Board;

AND FURTHER THAT staff also consult with the VPD and Vancouver Coastal Health regarding measures that would best support smooth operation of the new OPS, including monitoring of the site in order to identify and respond to issues.

The lease conditions integrated into the lease are:

### **Section 4.04 Additional Requirements Related to Use of Premises**

- (a) Notwithstanding the Permitted Use, the Tenant shall not permit substance inhalation within the Premises. The Tenant shall refer clients requiring this type of support to a facility that offers this service.
- (b) The Tenant shall limit the hours of operations for the Premises to between 10:00am to 10:00pm daily.
- (c) The Tenant shall determine the maximum number of clients it can safely accommodate within the Premises at a given time and shall post such limitation at visible locations within and/or about the Premises.
- (d) If at any time the maximum capacity for the Premises has been reached, the Tenant shall:
- i. facilitate in/out access and egress through the front entrance of the Building;
  - ii. ensure clients that are above the maximum capacity are escorted out of the Building;  
and
  - iii. ensure safe and orderly queuing along the outside perimeter of the Building.
- (e) The Tenant shall supervise clients to ensure that clients remain within the Premises, unless a client is accessing services from another Tenant within the Building.
- (f) In addition to the requirements of Sections 5.01 and 6.01, the Tenant shall be responsible for periodic inspection of the Licensed Areas and sidewalks adjacent to the Building to ensure safe pick up and disposal of any discarded drugs and needles/drug paraphernalia.

## MEMORANDUM

March 3, 2021

TO: Mayor & Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, Acting City Manager  
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager  
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Maria Pontikis, Director, Civic Engagement and Communications  
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk  
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office  
Mary Clare Zak, Managing Director, Social Policy & Projects Division  
Dianna Hurford, Senior Planner, Social Policy & Projects Division

FROM: Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services

SUBJECT: Update re: Overdose Prevention Site at 1101 Seymour Street RTS# 14040

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### PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the conditions for the proposed lease to Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) for the Overdose Prevention Site at 1101 Seymour Street.

The City signed a lease agreement with VCH for an Overdose Prevention Site at 1101 Seymour Street as per Council's approval on October 20, 2020. Item E requests that Council direct staff to attach conditions to the proposed lease that addresses requirements for building cleanliness, hours of operation, a plan for managing the queuing, and ventilation. Staff worked with Vancouver Coastal Health to create a set of conditions that met the requirements as per Council's request. This memo describes the conditions of the lease and the process in which they were developed.

### BACKGROUND

In April 2016, following a significant increase in opioid-related overdose deaths from drug poisoning, a public health emergency was declared in BC. During the COVID-19 pandemic, overdose death rates in Vancouver and BC have increased, counteracting progress in reducing deaths in 2019. In recognition of the increased number of overdose deaths as well as increased street activity in the Granville area that has arisen since the start of the pandemic, VCH and the

City continue to work together to address the gap in harm reduction and overdose prevention services in the neighbourhood. VCH identified the need for another overdose prevention site in this neighbourhood that will provide people who use illicit drugs with a safe and life-saving space to use and access to other social supports.

Since summer of 2020, a mobile overdose prevention service has been operating near 1101 Seymour, and feedback from the operator and overdose surveillance indicates that was a suitable location to meet the demand for services in the downtown core. A more permanent, indoor location on the 1st floor of 1101 Seymour will better enable service delivery for people at risk in the area.

At a Council meeting on October 13, 2020, Council heard from speakers and referred questions to staff, debate and decision on the report dated September 8, 2020 to lease a space at #101-1101 Seymour to RainCity Housing and Support Society (RainCity) to operate an overdose prevention site, funded by VCH. The October 13th Council meeting was reconvened on October 20th, and VCH (the Funder) requested an amendment in the report to allow for a direct lease with the City for this site to address complex neighbourhood relations. On October 22, 2020 Council considered and approved staff recommendations for the City to directly lease the space at #101-1101 Seymour to VCH for an Overdose Prevention Site operated by RainCity Housing and Support Service Society.

During the Council meeting the need for an additional space for supervised inhalation was identified. Staff are working with VCH to create an inhalation tent connected to the washroom trailer site at the Murray Hotel.

The approved Council recommendation directed staff to:

- a) attach conditions to the proposed lease that addresses requirements for exterior building and site cleanliness, expectations for minimizing discarded needles and drug equipment outside the OPS, lists expected hours of operation, provides a plan for managing any queuing outside the building exterior, and provides ventilation in relation to adjacent residences, businesses and public realm;
- b) report back to Council by end of November 2020 on measures that that can be taken by the City in order to mitigate any impact on neighbouring residents and businesses, including increased sanitation services to deal with any increase in discarded needles, feces and waste in the public realm, and including specific attention to Emery Barnes Park in consultation with the Vancouver Park Board; and
- c) consult with VPD and VCH regarding measures that would best support smooth operation of the new OPS, including monitoring of the site in order to identify and respond to issues.

## **DISCUSSION**

Staff met with VCH to discuss and draft conditions to the lease, outlined in Appendix B. The lease was signed by VCH and the site will be operational in early March 2021. In order to satisfy the Council's request to report back on the conditions of the lease, the work to date is described below.

### Opening of Seymour OPS

- The lease has been signed and the OPS is scheduled to open in early March, 2021 with date to be determined due to COVID-19 vaccinations.
- VCH will be doing a “soft opening” where operations will be fully implemented and services will be targeted to drug users by word of mouth versus a wide-scale public promotion.

### Site Monitoring

VCH shared their commitments and perspectives regarding these conditions. According to the VCH team:

- The operator (RainCity) will monitor, to a reasonable extent and during operating hours, the state of the sidewalk on the exterior of the building, and clean up discarded harm reduction materials as needed.
- Although minimal queuing is anticipated, decals may be placed to support physical distancing in the queue, and staff and peers will be assigned to deal with crowd control. VCH will be reviewing the operator’s COVID-19 safety plan closely, as is the norm with all VCH Overdose Prevention Site contracts.
- It is not anticipated that the new Overdose Prevention Site will result in increased discarded needles in the public realm, including Emery Barnes Park. However, VCH contracts a range of needle sweep programs the neighbourhood.
- Perceptions of police surveillance can act as a barrier to accessing health services. Therefore, VCH is recommending that there be no exceptional police monitoring of the new site. Instead, VCH and the operator will work with the VPD’s neighbourhood liaison to proactively resolve any emerging issues, and phone the police in the case of emergencies.

In addition, staff will monitor existing data routinely collected on requests for needle pickup and cleaning re: feces for any changes or increases and will respond as needed.

### Consultation with Tenants

In December 2020, a community engagement session for the Granville area hosted by BC Housing and involving COV, VCH and the DVBI, discussed the Seymour OPS as part of their agenda. The majority of participants were pleased with improvements to the area because of increased needle pick up by Spikes on Bikes (run by PHS) and Street Youth Job Action (run by Directions). Only one member disagreed with this assessment.

In addition, staff hosted a meeting specifically about the Seymour OPS with VCH, RainCity and the tenants of 1108 Seymour on December 9, 2020. The purpose of the meeting was to provide tenants with the opportunity to hear more about the OPS and to ask questions or share any concerns. The meeting was attended by representatives from AIDS Vancouver, SWAN Vancouver, and Aunt Leah’s Place, VCH, RainCity and the City. The tenants raised issues related to security, privacy, and hours of operation, and VCH, RainCity and City staff discussed current and potential solutions to mitigate risks. All tenants each expressed their support of the OPS and recognized the necessity and importance of the work to the wider community and to

their respective program participants. As an outcome of the meeting, the tenants agreed to coordinate regular meetings amongst themselves to exchange information as well as build relationships through events such as a community potluck.

### Additional Consultation

Staff have been and are currently engaged in conversations with the following City departments regarding various aspects of the OPS at Seymour and future considerations:

- VPD – for considerations related to monitoring, security and safety around the OPS. Staff have followed up with Superintendent Howard Tran and Sgt. Chris Burnham. Some of their concerns include:
  - Boundaries of the area to be cleaned by the site , including sidewalks, lane, Emery Barnes; and
  - Frequency of cleaning as per above.VPD has also confirmed they will be in the area to assist with issues and will encourage people to use at the OPS.
  
- Parks – for considerations related to Emery Barnes Park. Staff from Parks have expressed the following concerns:
  - Concern about potential increase in garbage, camps and human waste requiring an increased workload for Operations in Emery Barnes Parks; and
  - Will provide Enforcement Officers with an option to help engage people at risk or at odds with Park users.
  
- Engineering – for considerations related to sanitation:
  - May be potential increase in need for cleaning, and the frequency and breadth of cleaning provided by the OPS; and
  - Engineering will track 311 requests for needle pickup up, street cleanup, and will liaise with DVBIA during bi-weekly calls.

### **TIMELINE**

The Indoor OPS officially opened on March 1, 2021.

Staff will continue to engage City departments and to work with VCH to integrate any feedback into relevant aspects of the OPS moving forward.

### **NEXT STEPS**

- Request Parks to monitor debris/garbage and issues in Emery Barnes park to inform whether additional service is needed.
- Request to Housing to monitor any complaints or issues from tenants of 1101 Seymour (City-owned site) related to the OPS and work with VCH and Housing to respond appropriately if needed.

- Staff to monitor City data on requests for needle pick up and cleaning re: feces, as well as monitoring of DV BIA data, and will respond if any increase is noted.
- Inhalation tent/outdoor OPS to open end of March 2021, operated by Atira at Murray Hotel washroom trailer site.

## FINAL REMARKS

In conclusion, the City has completed the lease agreement, VCH tenants in 1101 have been consulted, mechanisms have been set up to support future risk mitigation, and the indoor OPS site is now open. City staff will continue to work with VCH and City departments to monitor the site and surrounding area and to address any emerging concerns.

If Council has any further questions or needs additional information, please feel free to contact Sandra Singh directly at [sandra.singh@vancouver.ca](mailto:sandra.singh@vancouver.ca).



Sandra Singh, General Manager  
Arts, Culture, and Community Services

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