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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)  
Date: 7/2/2021 4:54:58 PM  
Subject: Update: Response to concerns re: OPS site on Pender St

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Dear Mayor and Council,

This is an update on some concerns that have been raised through some channels around the OPS on Pender, specifically assertions that the OPS is handing out spray paint cans and encouraging graffiti. Several Councillors forwarded these concerns and I thought you would all be interested in the response.

Over the past several weeks, City staff and VCH colleagues have been engaged with the Overdose Prevention Society (OPS) staff in follow-up to a meeting with Hastings Crossing BIA (HxBIA) Executive Director and membership (Print Print, Lotus Hotel, Central City Foundation). Staff have also had ongoing correspondences with the ED of the Vancouver Chinatown BIA.

On June 9, the HxBIA outlined a number of concerns, some specific to graffiti and the Overdose Prevention Site (OPS) and many more related to concerns in the general neighbourhood.

### Increase in Graffiti

The graffiti concerns that were raised about OPS specifically that VCH have addressed with OPS leadership are as follows:

- 1) Concern: OPS service providers are handing out spray paint and this is resulting in additional graffiti in the surrounding area:
  - a. Response: OPS runs an art program but is not handing out supply of paint. Graffiti levels are up across the City as per ENG reports.
- 2) Concern: Art on the wall of the ARCO is encouraging graffiti in other non-OPS location and it was unfair that businesses are required to paint over graffiti while the OPS was allowed to put art on the walls visible to the public.
  - a. Response: OPS has agreed to limit art to below a land acknowledgment slightly below mid-height on the Arco wall.
- 3) Concern: A particular piece of art included the depiction of a gun and bullets
  - a. Response: Pre-HxBIA meeting, VCH requested the removal of this piece. The artist has repainted and removed.
- 4) Concern: Print Print expressed a preference for less art on the exterior fencing panels on the Pender side of the OPS.
  - a. Response: OPS has agreed to remove some of those panels and replace with plain panels.
- 5) Concern: Central City Foundation expressed some frustration at graffiti on their building at Abbott and Main
  - o OPS has organized additional garbage removal for their site and the bin is stored inside the OPS on non-pick up days so that there is no visual of additional refuse in the alley.

### Sanitation & Public Safety

Other concerns raised were specific to VPD response, general sanitation, and increased violence in the neighbourhood. For your information, Please see a list of the following issues with VCH, VPD and City actions underway:

- 1) Public Safety: City staff have contacted VPD and requested support for the Lotus front desk staff, including following-up on issues related to VPD response time.
- 2) Sanitation in Greater Area: Photos and issues regarding garbage were shared with the City's Sanitation Team and this alley will be closely monitored for waste removal. VCH also spoke with OPS regarding their waste

removal services to ensure these are being adequately serviced.

- 3) Graffiti on the Central City Foundation Building: Social Policy and ENG Street Activities Team are following up directly to consider funding a local artist to design and paint a mural that will be less likely to be vandalized and tagged over, rather than just supply paint as part of the City's graffiti removal program.

VCH and City Staff will continue to meet with HXBIA and Chinatown BIAs on a regular basis to mitigate ongoing issues. 99 W Pender continues to offer life-saving services through overdose prevention and access to hygiene services. It is also a respite and heat response site for the City's heat response plan.

Please contact Sandra Singh, GM of Arts, Culture and Community Services (ACCS) for any further information ([Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca](mailto:Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca)).

Best,  
Paul

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaʔ (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.