

From: **"Singh, Sandra"**
To: **"Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"**
Date: 2024-04-26 2:12:42 PM
Subject: Update: Substance use in public spaces

Good afternoon Mayor and Council,

We bring to your attention the Government of BC announcement below:

[B.C. moves to ban drug use in public spaces, taking more steps to keep people safe | BC Gov News](#)

Confidentially, staff became aware of the potential for this announcement this morning and have been awaiting further detail which is provided above. A couple of key items to note:

- City staff have been providing information to the BC Attorney General's office to support their objection to an extension of the judicial stay of the enactment of the Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act arising from the injunction application by the Harm Reduction Nurses Association.
- City staff were consulted during the drafting of the Act and found it to be a balanced approach that addressed the risk of overdose death arising from use of illicit substances and the impacts that unfettered illegal substance consumption has on the public realm, neighbours, and other members of the public.
- The challenges that neighbours, local businesses, and people needing to use and access the public realm such as sidewalks have been experiencing are not manageable with existing Bylaws and powers.

Should you be asked about this decision, please consider the following responses:

- The City recognizes that substance use and the overdose crisis are a public health issue, not a criminal justice issue, and that decriminalizing personal possession reduces the stigma that prevents people from seeking life saving services, care, or support and may also reduce the seizure of small amounts of drugs that often force individuals into risky behaviours to replace illicit substances.
- Unfettered consumption of illegal substances is having a significant impact on the public realm that the whole community relies on to access their housing and needed services, do business that fuels the economy, and engage in activities that support their health and well-being.
- The use of other controlled substances is regulated by law. Accordingly, the City was supportive of the Province's Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act and is concerned by the prospect of there being no regulation for public consumption of illegal substances.

Thank you,

Sandra

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges the unceded homelands of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Sel̓ilwítulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.