

August 19, 2021

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Donnie Rosa - General Manager, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **Community Engaged Arts in Andy Livingstone Park – Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to inform you about the “Our Park Project” and temporary installation of the Overdose Prevention Society (OPS) “Tiny House Art Studio” in Andy Livingstone Park, which are two summer-long arts initiatives focused on building connection and resilience amongst the diverse users of the park through arts and harm reduction work.

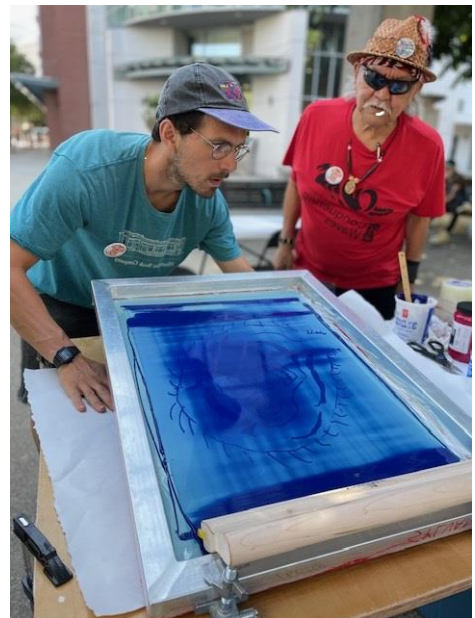
### **Background**

The neighbourhood around Andy Livingstone Park has seen incredible change over the past five years, including the addition of a new elementary school and a dense cluster of residential towers. As one of the few accessible green spaces in the Downtown Eastside, where the impacts of the current opioid crisis are keenly felt, Andy Livingstone is in high demand for many competing park uses. The Our Park Project and the OPS Tiny House Art Studio are intended to engage and be welcoming to all park users, including local residents and workers, those who are precariously housed, school families, and community-based organizations. The project work is guided by a volunteer steering committee made up of community members.

### **Our Park Project**

Artist Sylvan Hamburger and Carnegie Community Centre Elder in Residence Les Nelson invite the Andy Livingstone Park community members to draw, create prints, and fill the park with art as neighbours working together and learning each other’s stories. Elder Les and Sylvan work closely with the Western Aboriginal Harm Reduction Outreach Team, which provides harm reduction supplies, food, hydration and community connection. This ‘harm reduction through the arts’ initiative aims to reduce stigma related to substance use and to support connection and resilience in the communities that use the park. The project values:

- Making safe space for stories to be heard and for people to learn each other’s stories
- Exploring and acknowledging the long history of this land we now call a park
- Connecting to artists who live and work in the neighbourhood and enabling their work
- Working toward de-stigmatizing and building relationships in community



Sylvan Hamburger & Elder Les Nelson

The project meets every Wednesday and Sunday from 2-6pm until mid September, with a closing celebration planned for September 17. Participation and connection has been enthusiastic so far, drawing a diverse group of 30-50 community members to each session with many return participants.

### ***OPS Tiny House Art Studio***

The Overdose Prevention Society (OPS) is a community partner in the Our Park Project. Early in the summer of 2021, they approached the Park Board Arts Team to site an architect-designed and built tiny house, donated to OPS to use as an art studio, in Andy Livingstone Park in conjunction with the Our Park Project. Staff saw placing the studio in Andy Livingstone as a short-term initiative that would work well in tandem with the Our Park project. OPS has full responsibility for upkeep, insurance and access of the studio. Park Board staff are continuing our collaboration with OPS and we are researching a more permanent placement for the tiny studio. The Tiny House Arts Studio supports Downtown Eastside artists with experience in drug use with a safe place to store art supplies and work on drawing and painting projects.



OPS Tiny House Art Studio – Andy Livingstone Park

In August and September, artists who work with the OPS artists group will join Sylvan and Elder Les in the Our Park Project to draw and print with the Andy Livingstone community so park users can get to know them a bit. Staff are working with OPS on hosting a 'tiny open house' so the community can have a look inside the space and learn about what the artists will be doing.

Regards,



Donnie Rosa (*they/she*)  
General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

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Copy to: PB Leadership Team  
Arts, Culture & Engagement Team  
PB Communications