

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

For consideration at the Standing Committee meeting of City Council on May 21, 2025

3. Honouring Trey Helten: Renaming “Ashtrey Alley”

Submitted by: Councillor Orr

WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver has an east-west alleyway in the Downtown Eastside located between Hastings and Pender, connecting Cambie and Abbott Street; which was the site of Graffiti Art Wall Pilotⁱ between artist Trey Helten and Vancouver Native Housing Society. The goals of the pilotⁱⁱ stated that:
“Graffiti art walls support artistic expression, with a focus on supporting equity denied communities. They provide a sanctioned location for street artists which in-turn can foster a culture that discourages disrespectful or nuisance graffiti. As dedicated spaces, they can also serve as a place for street artists to meet, build community, and can provide opportunities for mentorship. Graffiti art walls are considered temporary”.
2. Trey Helten was a beloved harm reduction advocate in the Downtown Eastside who was known for his tireless work to help others, fight stigma against drug users, and who saved hundreds of lives;
3. Trey Helten passed away in April of 2025;
4. The City of Vancouver has been a leader in harm reduction policies in Canada, approving the “Four Pillars” approach to drug addiction starting in 2001, and opening the first safe injection site in Canada in 2003;
5. Community members in the DTES are already informally calling the alley between Hastings and Pender, connecting Cambie and Abbott Street “Ashtrey Alley” in memory of Trey Helten.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to report back on the most expeditious way to name the alley between Hastings and Pender, connecting Cambie and Abbott Street, “Ashtrey Alley” in memory of Trey Helten and his contributions to the community.

* * * * *

ⁱ City of Vancouver, n.d. “Graffiti art wall pilot”. <https://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/graffiti-art-wall-pilot.aspx>

ⁱⁱ Maria Diment, 2022: “Vancouver now has its first legal 'graffiti wall' and more could be in the works”. *Vancouver Is Awesome* <https://www.vancouverisawesome.com/local-news/first-legal-graffiti-wall-alley-tagging-vancouver-bc-5707660>