

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

*For consideration at the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on
July 15, 2026*

14. Policy Framework for Overdose Prevention and Harm Reduction Facilities

Submitted by: Councillor Fry

WHEREAS

1. The toxic drug crisis remains an ongoing public health emergency in British Columbia. Since 2016, there have been an estimated 3,500 overdose deaths and innumerable acquired hypoxic brain injuries in the City of Vancouver;
2. Harm reduction, treatment, prevention, and enforcement together form a balanced response to substance use. This Four Pillars approach aims to reduce deaths, support recovery, prevent injury and new addiction, and maintain community safety;
3. Staffed environments that relocate substance use away from public spaces, can improve health outcomes, reduce disorder and support proper management of safety, cleanliness, and waste. Health-focused spaces that provide supervised use and post-use stabilization, can also create pathways to treatment, recovery, and housing supports;
4. Overdose prevention services (OPS) and harm reduction services like storefront opioid agonist clinics, have the potential to mitigate and divert public consumption and disorder, but can and have become a flashpoint for neighbourhood resident and business opposition, in particular where they are perceived as a source of nuisance;
5. Recent disputes and litigation highlight the need for clear, enforceable, and transparent operational standards that can improve outcomes for both clients and surrounding communities;
6. Neighbouring residents and businesses have raised legitimate concerns regarding cleanliness, disorder, public safety, and lack of transparency related to certain OPS and harm reduction facilities;
7. On May 5, 2026, a majority of Council approved an urgent motion from Mayor Sim to: "use all tools available to the City, including but not limited to permitting, licensing, servicing, and previous legal settlements, to take all lawful steps to prevent the opening of the proposed overdose prevention site at 900 Helmcken Street";
8. Health services, including OPS, supervised consumption services, and opioid agonist treatment clinics, must be delivered in a manner consistent with Canadian Charter rights. Courts have previously limited Vancouver where bylaws conflict with provincial law (sheltering in parks, vacancy control, etc.), and the federal government (Canada v. PHS, 2011) where blocking harm reduction

services would violate the constitutional right to life, liberty, and security of the person;

9. The City of Vancouver has a moral responsibility to support the health and wellbeing of its residents, and a legal responsibility to consider health impacts within its municipal powers;
10. The City of Vancouver has legal authority under the *Vancouver Charter* to regulate land use, business licensing, and nuisance conditions;
11. The City of Vancouver meaningfully and specifically licenses and regulates cannabis and liquor serving facilities, with a well-established toolkit for land use involving otherwise provincially regulated substances, like: zoning, buffering from sensitive uses, separation requirements, licensing, operating conditions, and community-impact review; and
12. The City of Vancouver does not meaningfully and specifically license or regulate Overdose Prevention or Harm Reduction Sites.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to report back with a clear framework that regulates the provision of health-related services specific to harm reduction and overdose prevention.

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to report back with license by-law amendments to define:

- Overdose Prevention Sites (OPS) including injection and inhalation supports; and
 - Storefront Opioid Agonist Treatment Clinics (e.g., methadone/suboxone).
- B. THAT Council direct staff to report back with zoning and development permit conditions that:
 - Ensure compatibility with surrounding uses while maintaining access to services; and
 - Ensure supervised consumption and stabilization spaces provide a safe environment for substance use, recovery from intoxication, and engagement with care, while reducing impacts on surrounding communities.
 - C. THAT Council direct staff to report back with strict cleanliness and maintenance standards generally consistent with BC's OPS Minimum Service Standards and requiring, as licence conditions:
 - Continuous maintenance of a defined cleanliness perimeter;
 - Scheduled daily needle and biohazard sweeps;
 - Immediate removal of hazardous materials;
 - Provision of accessible washroom facilities for clients;

- Minimum service standards for litter, waste, and sanitation response times; and
 - Mandatory reporting of cleaning activities and audits.
- D. THAT Council direct staff to report back with public order and safety requirements, generally consistent with BC's OPS Minimum Service Standards, that require license conditions include:
- Indoor waiting and queue management to prevent sidewalk congregation;
 - A client code of conduct, with clear behavioural expectations;
 - On-site staff responsible for active exterior monitoring and de-escalation;
 - Limiting lineups or unmanaged gathering outside the facility; and
 - Prohibition of public consumption adjacent to entrances.
- E. THAT Council direct staff to report back on establishing standardized Operating & Community Impact Plans generally consistent with BC's OPS Minimum Service Standards¹ as a condition of approval, requiring all facilities to maintain a publicly available Operating Plan that includes:
- Hours of operation;
 - Staffing levels (including trained peer, and security presence);
 - Client intake and queue management procedures;
 - Incident response protocols (overdose, violence, disorder); and
 - Waste handling and biohazard disposal protocols.
- F. THAT Council direct staff to report back with a requirement for operators to enter into a Good Neighbour Agreement (GNA) with the City, including:
- A designated contact person;
 - Defined response timelines to complaints (e.g., within 24 hours);
 - Scheduled and regular community liaison meetings; and
 - A public complaint tracking and resolution system.
- G. THAT Council direct staff to integrate reporting via VanStat (or similar) for licensed sites including:
- Licensing;
 - Sanitation;
 - Police;
 - Vancouver Fire Rescue Services; and
 - Request that Vancouver Coastal Health enter into agreements coordinating data sharing to support monitoring and enforcement.

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¹ BC Ministry of Health | OPS Minimum Service Standards
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/overdose-awareness/ops_mss_final.pdf