



Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of May 1, 2025

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** April 24, 2025
From: Councillor Dave Thompson and Councillor Krista Loughton
Subject: 900 Block of Pandora Avenue Cleanliness – Dumpster Pilot Project

Background

As the City works to improve the livability and appearance of the 900 block of Pandora Avenue, a persistent problem has been the accumulation of garbage on sidewalks, boulevards and the street. City of Victoria Public Works staff, the City - DVBA Clean Team, area service providers and residents attempt to pick up waste, but it accumulates quickly. The accumulation of waste can make some feel that throwing one more item on the ground isn't going to make any difference, so the problem compounds. Providing more regular garbage cans is problematic because they cannot contain the larger items, and they are sometimes upended, making the situation worse.

Our Place Society (OPS) staff have proposed a pilot project: having a locked dumpster located on the slip road of the 900 block (or nearby), with the lock being opened only briefly and while OPS staff (or others delegated authority) load waste – including large items – into the dumpster, and then immediately locked again. Having a lock will help ensure that waste is not removed from the dumpster and that nobody attempts to enter the dumpster.

A pilot project could enable City staff to assess this action for longer-term potential, considering safety, effectiveness, cost, frequency of waste pick-up, etc. Such a pilot, and potential longer-term project, could reduce the amount of time that Public Works, Bylaw Staff and VicPD need to be on the 900 block of Pandora Avenue for cleanups and removal of abandoned materials.

Stipends for street community members to do waste collection and clean up would help improve effectiveness while building sustained support for a cleaner 900 block of Pandora. OPS staff indicates that a \$15/hour stipend for folks to take on garbage collection would be ideal. These individuals would sign up daily, and there would be two people each day doing two-hour shifts; therefore, it would cost \$60 a day, or \$5,400 for a 3-month pilot.

Work that is paid for by a stipend is an effective system for the unhoused community, as people often have no other options for work. This also creates purpose and a sense of pride for people experiencing homelessness.

“Having the street community involved in the clean-up on the 900 block has many benefits. When the street community is actively participating in the clean-up of the space, it changes the dynamic. Other members of the street community on Pandora are more likely to support

the cleanliness of the space when they see their peers doing the clean-up. When the cleanliness of the block is maintained within the community living on Pandora, there is less need for outside resources to attend to clean-up.”

-Jordan Cooper, Our Place Society, Director of Services

This project would support Council’s Strategic Plan, under Community Well-being and Safety:

- Beautify, support and enhance Victoria's downtown and urban villages.
- Support innovative, well-being solutions to reduce harm for housed and unhoused people living in neighbourhoods where there are shelters.
- Work with partner agencies and governments to create life opportunities for unhoused people.

Recommendation

That Council directs staff to:

1. Work with Our Place Society to place a locking dumpster on the slip road of the 900 block of Pandora for a 3 month pilot period to determine whether that will help keep the block cleaner and save resources currently used for garbage collection, funded by contingency;
2. Include stipends for the street community to do waste collection and clean up for a 3-month period for a total of \$5,400 using contingency funds;
3. Report back to Council when the pilot is complete, and if it is deemed successful, work with the Province to continue the program through HEART and HEARTH.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Thompson



Councillor Loughton