

Dear Mayor Lisa,

Regarding proposed plans Alex Robb and the owners of Trees Dispensary have for our most immediate neighboring building at 537 Johnson St – what was Willies Bakery has been transformed into Trees Restaurant, a Marijuana Dispensary, vape lounge and edibles café.

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The Salvation Army began our work in the City of Victoria on Cormorant street in 1897, when the need for social services was growing rapidly. So rapidly in fact, that we had to relocate our emergency shelter to a larger building at the corner of Johnson and Wharf 1918, where we have been serving this community faithfully as a not for profit social service provider ever since - specifically serving men struggling with addiction and poverty. Since then we have rebuilt our building three times and renovated twice. Our most recent build, erected in 1956, is a 170 bed multipurpose facility that makes every effort to provide its residents opportunity to live in a drug & alcohol free environment. Annually, we provide our City's marginalized population 56,138 good night sleeps, 200,000 meals, and emergency assistance to more of our community than we could ever count – and our doors have not closed a day since 1956.

We at The Salvation Army **Addiction & Rehabilitation Centre** (ARC) are very proud of who we are and what we do, especially our programming for men seeking recovery from drugs & alcohol. Our team is determined to provide quality counselling, support resources and programs in a residential setting to those making the transition from homelessness, poverty and addiction, to family and community; housed, healthy and free from addictive lifestyles. Which, after 120 years of perfecting our craft in this, Our City, we are very good at. The **Addiction & Rehabilitation Centre** is one of only a few dry facilities left standing in our community, we are by far the largest, and a critical (though often forgotten) piece of the spectrum of services available to those in need of housing and rehabilitative services in our community.

We continually strive to do what we do with excellence, continually growing, developing and furthering our mission of recovery and rehabilitation for men. In 2019 alone we have added a compliment of staff and grown a variety of programs to support our men in recovery here at the ARC including in-house clinical counselling, a live-in Drug & Alcohol Recovery Program, additional addiction services and programming, and a myriad of group counselling, recovery and life-skills programs.

All this to say, we take recovery very seriously, and we have - in this very location at Johnson & Wharf - since 1918, when The Salvation Army Addictions and Rehabilitations Centre was designated a drug and alcohol free environment for the health, safety and wellbeing of clients and guests in recovery. The ARC still prohibits the use of any non-prescription drugs / alcohol including marijuana in the building or on our property because of course, the presence of drugs & alcohol, the access to drugs & alcohol, the witness of drugs & alcohol – even the smell of drugs & alcohol is a trigger to 100% of men in recovery – 100% of the time.

With all of this in mind, I am certain you can understand our concern having learned that Trees Dispensary is opening a Cannabis 'restaurant' and marijuana Vapor Lounge directly beside us. The Trees 'restaurant' and vape lounge plans to open their outdoor patio as an extension to the vape lounge – a mere 16 feet from our doors and windows. Our men in their recovery rooms will literally be living directly above the Vape patio - with the inevitable smell of marijuana / cannabis wafting throughout our building. We know that for certain, because we grew to love the smell of Willie's Maple Bacon cooking every morning! We are hoping and praying that there is something that we can do to ensure the very thing our men are running from doesn't pull up and park right beside our door.

Whether Trees is presenting themselves as a Cannabis dispensary, a cannabis infused edibles dispensary and restaurant, a vape lounge or inhalation site matters none. They are drug peddlers setting up shop in the closest possible location to men trying to escape their drug addictive lifestyles. For them – the perfect clientele. To us, their strategic move, location and proximity is reprehensibly exploitive, and we're looking to you for help.

Presently, Victoria's standing CANNABIS-RELATED BUSINESS REGULATION BYLAW (16-061) clearly maintains that even those who do carry a Cannabis-related Business License (section 4) - which they do not – (section 6C)... must not allow a person to smoke, vape, consume or otherwise ingest cannabis or products containing cannabis on the premises / (Consequential Amendment 35): No consumption of Cannabis, as defined in the Cannabis-Related Business Regulation Bylaw, shall be permitted at any business licensed under the Business License bylaw.

Trees dispensary is operating illegally. Trees restaurant will be as well.

What we are asking of Mayor and Council is to please consider the proximity of the proposed enterprise and quash and deny any permits, approvals, licenses, permitting or permissions that would allow Trees and Alex Robb to sell drugs, use drugs, eat drugs or vape drugs out of 537 Johnson Street.

I believe, as we continue to serve our communities most vulnerable population as we have for 120 years, we've earned your consideration.

Our most sincere thanks,

Jeffrey Baergen