

August 31, 2020 – International Overdose Awareness Day

Re: temporary re-zoning application for 1056 North Park Street

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

This letter is in support of the re-zoning application by SOLID Outreach Society to allow for the continued provision of cannabis products from 1056 North Park Street as part of SOLID's broader harm reduction programming.

As a community partner who has worked with SOLID for many years, it has been such a privilege to watch SOLID grow and develop as an organization, particularly over the past 5 years. SOLID has significantly increased their reach in the community to combat the ongoing deadly overdose crisis. Their innovative efforts to increase accessibility of cannabis products to people put at severe risk of overdose due to criminalization is part of a continuum of care that we need to save lives and improve quality of life for many of Victoria's residents.

My experience of spending time at the SOLID offices at 1056 North Park is that it is a positive community hub where services are run effectively and efficiently- a high volume of individuals access the cannabis program and I have witnessed no evidence of neighbourhood disturbance. On the contrary, it is clear that people accessing SOLID for cannabis support are grateful, respectful and invested in the service's success and continuity.

I urge you to offer your support to SOLID's work by granting their re-zoning request and by acknowledging the critical leadership they demonstrate each day in working for a more equitable and just community.

Sincerely,

Heather Hobbs
Project Manager
Victoria SAFER Initiative (launching September 2020)
A Project of AVI Health and Community Services

September 2, 2020

Attention: Lisa Helps and Victoria City Council

Re: Rezoning application for a “temporary use permit (3yrs) for Health Service delivering comprehensive harm reduction for individuals with substance use disorder, including provision of cannabis to members onsite” by SOLID Outreach Society.

I am writing to you in full support of the temporary use application submitted by SOLID Outreach Society to support their ongoing work in providing the Cannabis Substitution Program to people who use drugs (PWUD).

With the increasingly toxic illicit drug supply and unacceptably high number of overdose deaths in BC, it is imperative that the City of Victoria supports ongoing efforts of low barrier, harm reduction agencies like SOLID. As detailed by Island Health’s Chief Medical Health Officer, Richard Stanwick, and in a report by researchers at University of Victoria and the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research note, this grassroots initiative led by this peer organization has shown promising, positive effects as a substitution agent. In light of the opioid poisoning crisis, it’s crucial that we listen to peer organizations, like SOLID, and PWUD to inform what types of services are needed to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with substance use. Approving this zoning application will allow them to continue the incredible work they are doing, which benefits our entire community.

I urge you to prioritize the lives of our neighbours, mothers, children, and friends over any politics that would hinder the approval of this application and further potentiate overdose deaths in our community.

Sincerely,



Courtney Amoraal, RN
Nurse Manager for PHS Community Services Society
Victoria InnerCity COVID Response (VICCR) Executive and Steering Committee
Harm Reduction Activist
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