



North Park Neighbourhood Association
PO Box 661
#185-911 Yates Street
Victoria, BC, V8V 4Y9

City of Victoria - Development Services
No.1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

March 24, 2022,

Re: Proposed Temporary Use Permit at 1056 North Park St

Dear City of Victoria planning staff,

The following letter summarizes the feedback received for the proposed Temporary Use Permit at 1056 North Park St. SOLID is applying for a 3-year Temporary Use Permit renewal to distribute cannabis for harm reduction services.

In accordance with the City's alternate CALUC process during the Provincial PHO, no in-person CALUC meeting took place, but the applicant organized and participated in a virtual meeting for this application on February 9th, 2022. The community was asked to provide feedback on the proposal based on the documents and information provided on the Development Tracker. Complete meeting minutes can be found attached to this [letter](#).

CALUC Meeting: February 9th, 2022

The NPNA Land Use Committee (LUC) and SOLID coordinated a CALUC meeting on Wednesday, February 9th, at 6:30 pm. The CALUC meeting was held virtually on Zoom, and the NPNA facilitated the conversation. The NPNA advertised the meeting on their newsletter, website and social media platforms. A total of 15 people attended the meeting, including 4 NPNA representatives and 1 SOLID representative.

Complete meeting minutes can be found attached to this [letter](#).

Questions/comments focused on the following topics:

- Concerns regarding supplying substances to people who already face substance use disorders.
- The fear that this Temporary Use Permit renewal will continue to attract more people with substance use disorders to the North Park neighbourhood.
- The SOLID building at 1056 North Park should be moved to a different location as it occupies a large portion of the North Park commercial village.
- SOLID does not provide economic gain for the neighbourhood.
- The distribution of cannabis at 1056 North Park has dramatically increased the presence of people experiencing homelessness and people who use drugs in the North Park area in the past 18 months.

- SOLID is an excellent example of community building and provides essential services to people in the area.
- Community members would love to see small businesses opened up at the storefront of SOLID's buildings.
- SOLID has contributed significantly to supporting people with substance use disorders in the community.
- Appreciate the work SOLID is doing and the on-site nurses, staff, outreach workers, harm reduction workers, and social workers that help support these people with substance use challenges.
- The distribution of cannabis for harm reduction services has effectively supported these larger social challenges.

Online Comment Form

The proposed Temporary Use Permit renewal plans were posted on the development tracker, and the public could complete a comment form via the tracker. 28 responses were received: 71.4% in support and 28.6% in opposition. Key points included:

- Concerns for a more significant number of people with substance-related challenges entering the community due to SOLID's cannabis distribution services.
- SOLID's services have increased crime and drug use in the area.
- SOLID has created a greater sense of security for residents by knowing that a user-oriented, harm-reduction service helping people is in the community.
- SOLID's services have helped keep people employed, safe, and cared for.

Proposal Position	Date	Comments
Oppose	01/29/2022	They do not belong in this community. Before SOLID moved in, North Park was a peaceful and lovely neighbourhood. Now residents are afraid to go out in the evenings with fear of running into someone camping on our property. Some of my tenants were accosted a few times by these degenerates. I do not agree with extending their use permit beyond 18 months. They need to find another place to open, but not here.
Oppose	01/29/2022	The clientele of SOLID is rude, ignorant people. My tenants, who are seniors and a lot with disabilities have been accosted by these people. They are constantly setting up camp on our grounds and cooking meth or doing drugs of some kind. When asked politely to remove themselves from private property, we get cursed at. The break-ins in North Park have also increased. I agree this is a good program, but not for this community, they need to move themselves

		<p>somewhere that does not interfere or ruin the quiet enjoyment of others. Myself and my tenants are completely against their permit being renewed at all.</p>
Support	01/29/2022	<p>I am a resident of North Park who has lived here for five years. I want to express my support for SOLID Outreach's TUP renewal. I haven't noticed any negative changes to the neighbourhood since they set up shop on North Park Street. In fact, I feel much greater security and comfort knowing there is a user-oriented, harm-reduction service just down the street from me. SOLID has been excellent neighbours as far as I am concerned. They are exactly the kind of service that is helping to make North Park a more humane and welcoming neighbourhood. As such, they are contributing to North Park's distinct character within Victoria. I sincerely hope their TUP will be renewed.</p> <p>**The same comment was sent to the landuse@npna.ca email as well as the development tracker**</p>
Oppose	01/30/2022	<p>While we fully support harm reduction interventions, there has been a significant increase in vandalism, violence, and harassment on our block since SOLID was granted their temporary permit at 1056 North Park Street. This has included destruction to property costing tens of thousands of dollars, distressing encounters for the many children who live on this block (many of whom are children of refugee families who have significant PTSD), an observed increase of police presence on the block, and confrontations with people using substances on the street near Solid who behave erratically and aggressively even to those simply walking by. We've also seen an increase in people breaking into cars parked on the block and trying to break into houses in our complex by trying doors and jumping back fences. This block of North Park is now part of a triangle of activity from Our Place to the temporary housing structures near Royal Athletic Park and the SOLID Outreach service. This spreads activities out over the entire North Park neighbourhood, not just this one block of North Park up for review. It would be great if SOLID could be co-located with other services for those living with substance use disorder, rather than renewing SOLID's current location in a residential neighbourhood.</p>

Support	01/30/2022	SOLID outreach is an extremely valuable member of the North Park community. They provide essential harm reduction services and help to keep folks from our neighbourhood employed, safe, and cared for. Their cannabis substitution program has helped tremendously in the lives of maybe people I have worked with, and I am looking forward to reading the research that is coming out of their project
Support	01/31/2022	<p>I am just sending in my thorough and emphatic support of SOLID's continued presence and good work that they do for our neighbourhood and city. They are an integral support network for our vulnerable (and even not so vulnerable) sector. Please let them continue at their current location, with their zoning override.</p> <p>It is imperative that these sorts of initiatives and support networks aren't hidden on the 'back roads' of our city and are there to continue to remind people of the issues the city is constantly struggling with and trying to support, while being accessible for the people that need them most.</p> <p>I love that they are there, and I am grateful that North Park accepts and supports them being here.</p>
Support	01/31/2022	Love that this organization and service exist and operate in the neighbourhood where I live. Please continue allowing SOLID to provide cannabis as a part of its harm reduction services. This is just one facet of responding effectively and inclusively to the toxic drug emergency in B.C
Support	01/31/2022	I support harm reduction services within our neighbourhoods and support SOLID and this service/site both as a nearby resident as well as university-based collaborator with SOLID Outreach on other projects.
Support	01/31/2022	No comment.
Support	01/31/2022	No comment.
Support	01/31/2022	No comment.
Support	02/01/2022	No comment.
Support	02/01/2022	Strongly support this harm reduction initiative. A great support for diverse populations and a great addition to the community.
Support	02/01/2022	No comment.
Support	02/01/2022	I am writing in support of the proposed development for the property at 1056 North Park Street, and the Solid Outreach Society's application.

		<p>Renewal of temporary use permit (3 years) for Health Services delivering comprehensive harm reduction to individuals with substance use disorder, including the provision of cannabis to members on site.</p> <p>Hard data supports that Solid Outreach Society is achieving measurable success in our neighbourhood and the wider community and the city.</p>
Support	02/01/2022	I support all efforts at harm reduction for our most vulnerable citizens and as a resident of the area, am proud to have these services being provided in my neighbourhood.
Support	02/01/2022	This is a very important service and SOLID has worked hard to integrate into the neighbourhood.
Support	02/02/2022	Harm reduction services are so important, especially while we fight the current overdose crisis the country is facing.
Support	02/02/2022	I think that it is imperative that services like these continue to operate in our community and not be ghettoed into the downtown core. When I first moved to Victoria over 25 years ago, there was a Methadone clinic right in Fernwood Rd. because that was what was needed to support members of our community. The gentrification of our city may be inevitable, and with it the increase of homelessness, but it cannot be at the cost of life-saving services. Please don't make the deadly toxic drug situation any worse than it already is.
Support	02/03/2022	I live in the North Park neighbourhood and have done for 10 years. I also work at UVic with the Faculty of Human and Social Development and am quite familiar with research on harm reduction and health equity. I believe in the work of Substance UVic and I can see how it provides essential support for people who use drugs.
Support	02/03/2022	No comment.
Support	02/03/2022	No comment.
Oppose	02/08/2022	There are quite a few facilities delivering Cannabis products in the neighbourhood already. No need for another one. It is right by pedestrian cross walk, drug addicts hanging out at the door step, makes people crossing uncomfortable
Support	02/09/2022	SOLID provides a much-needed resource to our neighbourhood and City's vulnerable folks. As a nearby neighbour, living at my current address since 2011, I have noticed no significant issues since the start of the service

		described. I fully support SOLID's request to extend their temporary use permit.
Support	02/09/2022	Services such as S.O.L.I.D. are critical to the health, wellbeing and safety of individuals going through withdrawal and recovery in our community. Mark Willson has been collaborative and proactive in ensuring our neighbourhood remains safe for all individuals and works with us to ensure any disturbances by clients are dealt with quickly and with compassion. In my opinion, this is an invaluable service that only enriches the lives of all residents of North Park and Fernwood. I believe S.O.L.I.D. should have their temporary use permit extended for the full 3 years requested.
Oppose	02/10/2022	I am sympathetic towards this cause, however, I believe the Downtown- North Park neighbourhoods have done more than their fair share for being a location for these harm-reduction types of places and dealing with the associated fallout. Perhaps it is now time for other areas in the City of Victoria to host these types of services and supports, for example, Fairfield, Jubilee, Rockland, and James Bay.
Oppose	02/12/2022	I live in a Seniors Building opposite this facility and I have seen a terrible increase in drug activity and theft due to the numerous people using the Solid Outreach Society Health Service. The lawns, the street and the steps are filled with drug users and I feel that the tone of the North Park neighbourhood has become like the downtown East Side of Vancouver. I cannot walk outside of my building without meeting aggressive panhandlers, I am forced to drive just to buy groceries one street away at the Save On at Pandora as I cannot bear being threatened at my age of 70 years old if I try and walk there. Please please do not renew the permit for this place and really consider moving it to somewhere else. When I first rented here I was happy with the ambience of the neighbourhood, now I am restricted in my movements and definitely opposed to this project.
Oppose	02/16/2022	I own a home on North Park, have worked in the area for near 10 years and own a business nearby. I think this is overall a good project, I support anything that can help people with addiction issues but I have seen people who are not addicts be handed free marijuana (pre-rolls) which is nice and neighbourly but also highly unprofessional. It doesn't inspire confidence that things are being run well especially

		<p>when such a vulnerable part of the community is involved. Can this be moved to a professional building or somewhere like Our Place? Every day I walk home from work past Solid and cross the road specifically, unfortunately, addiction and mental health are tied closely and we constantly have unwell people on our road now, I never thought I would be concerned about my partners well being in Victoria at night but I am now, even as a bigger male I feel uneasy. My issues don't come close to people unfortunate enough to be on the street or battling addiction and mental health and I know that, but I would like the service to be more professional and in a building with more control and a better location. Forgive my ignorance on how the system works but I would like more information if possible.</p>
Oppose	02/24/2022	<p>Although we recognize the need and do support help for some of Solids/Substance abuse/safe injection site clients - I do not support the negative impact to the neighbourhood. Daily, I and my staff witness people participating with the various services offered and then, once out of the building(s) are left on their own with what appears to be no thought to their condition afterwards. There are often people stumbling around dangerously close to, if not, in the roads, mainly Cook St. Multiple times daily we have witnessed near misses with Cook St. traffic. There is the daily clientele that exits the buildings and collapses on the main sidewalk (west) of Cook St. We have not witnessed any support or assistance for these unfortunate people. They are often splayed on the sidewalk, for hours on end causing concern, to local businesses and passersby as to whether an ambulance should be called. This activity is also witnessed not only by the local businesses/pedestrians but by the young children that attend the Oasis daycare center directly opposite these sites. In addition parents of the youth that attend the Harbour Cats training facility in 1821 Cook St. have expressed concerns and are forced to accompany their children in dropping and picking up. We have also witnessed a number of aggressive confrontations/encounters by the users of the outreach facilities and local business employees and clientele. Local businesses are vandalized as a result of the negative element attracted to the area and theft is a very common occurrence. This type of support facility would be</p>

		best served within/closer to the support facilities provided by the municipalities/Provincial Government.
Support	02/24/2022	My name is Bernice Kamano, I am an Indigenous Outreach worker for PHS. My job is to work with the Indigenous community to support them and help navigate the systems to make a difference in their lives. People that I support, use and access the services that Solid provides. With Solid being in the neighbourhood, it allows them to access health-based education and support services that reduce the harms associated with drug use. This is an important community resource that will help their members stay alive during the most difficult time of their lives and gives them an opportunity and a fighting chance to change and to have a proper support system. By reducing the stigmatization of individuals experiencing drug use it gives them access to non-judgmental support and health services they need to survive. I live across the street from solid for the last 4 years and have seen first-hand nothing but a positive outcome with them being there. Solid is a peer-run organization that supports their community, offers them services and invites them to get involved with many different programs. Solid is an excellent example of how a peer-driven community is successful. I fully support Solid and appreciate that they are in our Neighbourhood. Supporting Solid gives the North Park nationhood the much-needed diversity the build strong and healthy neighbourhood communities. Thank you to City Hall for supporting diversity in our neighbourhood.

The NPNA does not have an issue with the application proceeding at this time. SOLID is one of three addiction services, along with SAFER and SUBSTANCE (both of which, we understand, are permitted under the current zoning for the site), operating in the same building. As such SOLID's operation on its own is not expected to significantly impact the concerns raised by the community one way or another.

While we recognize the importance of services such as SOLID, SAFER and SUBSTANCE, to the city as a whole, the NPNA would like to take this opportunity to make general comments about their location in North Park and the North Park Village:

- Three potential and valuable commercial storefront spaces are being used for drug and substance abuse services in a prime Village location. The NPNA feels that these spaces would serve the community better if they were commercial spaces that contributed to the ambiance of the Village and the livability of the North Park community.



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- Nearby the site are a liquor store (which is in the process of expanding) and a cannabis store (which recently received a Provincial license to sell cannabis and is expected to be opening soon). While these businesses and services may not be problematic on their own, the combination and concentration of these uses in one small area of the Village does not contribute to a vibrant, diverse, and welcoming village.

The NPNA feels it is essential that SOLID, City staff, and Council understand the context of the application within North Park and the vision and broader goals of the community. We know from the [2020 Community Values Survey](#) that residents of the neighbourhood value an inclusive neighbourhood, family-friendly features, and art, culture, and entertainment. The draft North Park Local Area Plan (expected to be considered by Council later this year) states that Large Urban Villages are encouraged to reflect practical and inclusive commercial uses, public art, and place-making features to contribute to a more vibrant and inclusive space. In Victoria's Official Community Plan, the goal for Urban Villages is to revitalize commercial use areas through human-scale design, increasing vibrancy and strengthening commercial viability. The concentration of businesses and services dealing with the sale and distribution of drugs, as well as services to help those with substance use disorder, occurs in this area of the Village, and is not currently balanced with investment and amenities that contribute to the fulfillment of these community values and City objectives. That said, we are always seeking a collaborative approach with businesses, services, the City, and the North Park community to resolve issues and seek common ground to bring these community objectives to life.

Sincerely,

Harold Stanley
NPNA Land Use Chair

cc: Mark Willson, SOLID Outreach
NPNA Board
Eleni Gibson, NPNA Land Use Planning Advisor