

October 12, 2021

Re: Consumption and Treatment Services

Mayor McGarry and members of Council,

On behalf of the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council (WRCPC), I am pleased to report that the WRCPC strongly supports efforts to establish Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) within the City of Cambridge. The WRCPC is a 35-member collaborative and national model for crime prevention through social development. The first in Canada to anticipate and identify the bootleg fentanyl as a threat to public health and safety, the WRCPC continues to advise on opportunities, and function as a collaborative catalyst for life-saving initiatives at local, provincial, and national levels.

Consumption and treatment services are a critical pathway for meeting our neighbours where they are at, both literally and figuratively. The evidence from the plethora of studies indicates supervised consumption services achieve their intended purpose of preventing, reducing, and/or treating acute and chronic medical conditions, preventing fatal overdoses onsite, and establishing authentic opportunities for engagement with community, health, and social service systems. The WRCPC is not aware of any evidence that CTS increases crime, rather CTS reduces issues of disorder, contributing to an overall positive impact for communities. We note that the evidence of this positive impact has grown in the decade since the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously affirmed the evidence in favour of consumption services in a 9-0 decision. The addition of wrap-around services as a feature strengthens the value of local consumption and treatment services for both individuals and communities.

Consumption and treatment services are a guaranteed life-saving opportunity in an era where fatality data continues an alarming trend in the wrong direction, reflecting the absence of an urgent and proportional response, with little end in sight. More than 100 un-prevented drug poisoning deaths have occurred in Waterloo region thus far in 2021. For context, the first SARS public health emergency in 2003 took the lives of 44 people total across Canada. In 2020 in Waterloo region, 20

individuals regrettably lost their lives in motor vehicle collisions, a death toll that would certainly be higher if not for the significant and sustained investments in preventing and reducing the risks to an inherently dangerous activity.

The WRCPC encourages sustained and concentrated investment in a suite of evidence-informed approaches in prevention, harm reduction, and treatment as part of a robust, comprehensive strategy to improve public health and safety for all members of the community. Consumption and treatment services are a key intervention in that suite of opportunities.

The WRCPC recognizes that the poisoning crisis continues to provoke health debates in ways that other important but less common health issues do not, in communities and councils from coast to coast to coast. The WRCPC very much acknowledges the challenges before members of Council, and trusts that the final decision is one that is reflective of the robust evidence base, and the high value experienced in municipalities that have established consumption and treatment services.

The WRCPC extends its gratitude to Councillors for consideration of consumption and treatment services in Cambridge. The lives at stake matter and their deaths are preventable through the interventions that you are considering. If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Eibach', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Richard Eibach, Chair

Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council