

AGENDA INFORMATION	
☒ Regular Meeting	Date: <u>March 2, 2026</u>
☐ Other:	Date: _____

Dept. Manager	GM/ Director	CAO
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The District of North Vancouver REPORT TO COUNCIL

February 23, 2026

AUTHOR: Jim Hanson, Councillor

SUBJECT: North Shore Purple Chair Campaign – Request for Council Endorsement

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council endorse The North Shore Purple Chair Campaign as a North Shore–wide community awareness initiative aimed at reducing stigma and raising awareness for the toxic drug crisis.

THAT Council support the display of purple chair installations in visible municipal spaces (e.g., libraries, community recreation centres, parks, and civic plazas) in coordination with the North Shore Homelessness Task Force and other community partners.

THAT Council direct relevant municipal departments (e.g. Parks, Facilities, Community Planning, and Communications) to coordinate internally and with campaign partners to support implementation where feasible targeting two to three locations within the District.

THAT Council direct the Communications Department to promote the campaign through municipal communication channels and include a link to the Purple Chair Campaign webpage hosted by the North Shore Homelessness Task Force.

THAT Council members be invited to participate in campaign events, including International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31, 2026, as schedules permit.

AND THAT staff report back after International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31, 2026, with information on impact and outcomes.

BACKGROUND:

British Columbia continues to experience a public health emergency related to the toxic drug crisis, first declared in April 2016. According to the [BC Coroners Service](#), there were 150 suspected unregulated drug deaths in October 2025¹, averaging approximately 4.8 deaths per day.

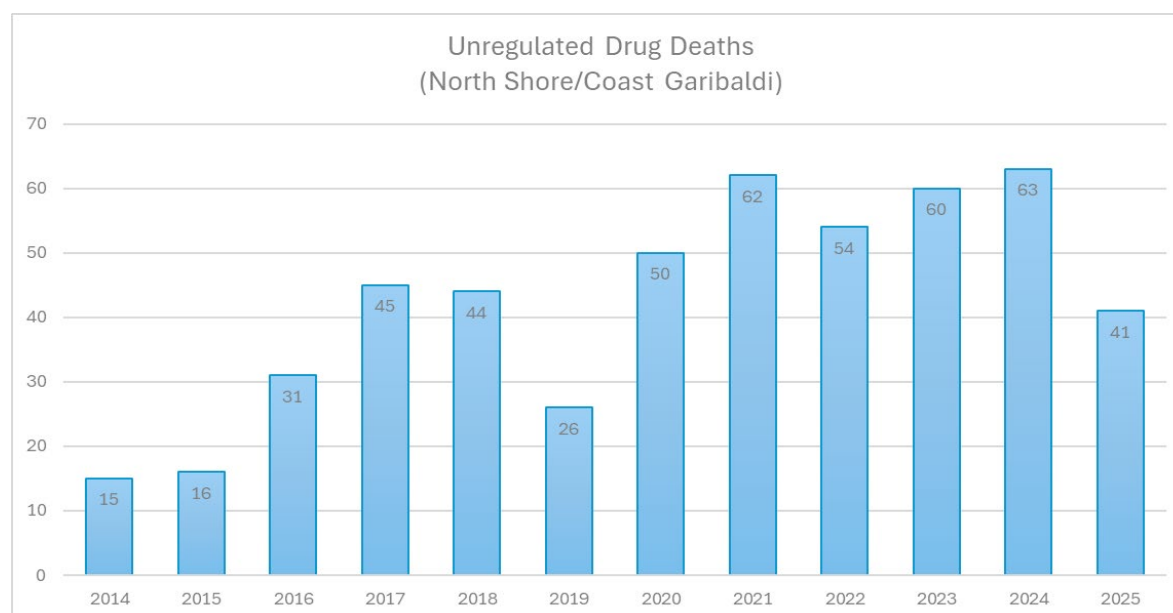
¹ BC Coroners Services Dashboard data, current to October 31 2025 (last updated November 21, 2025).

Key provincial trends in 2025 include:

- 70% of deaths occurred among individuals aged 30–59, 77% were male.
- Suspected drug toxicity deaths among youth under 19 increased to 21 deaths between January and October 2025, compared to 17 during the same period in 2024, though still below the levels recorded from 2021 to 2023.

Regionally, the highest number of unregulated drug deaths in 2025 occurred within Fraser Health (448 deaths) and Vancouver Coastal Health (408 deaths), together accounting for 56% of all such deaths in the province. **Table 1** summarizes unregulated drug deaths in the North Shore/Coast Garibaldi Health Service Delivery Area from 2014 to October 2025.

Table 1: Unregulated Drug Deaths – North Shore/Coast Garibaldi



Circumstances surrounding deaths in 2025 show that:

- 77% occurred indoors, including 48% in private residences and 30% in other indoor settings such as supportive housing, shelters, SROs, and hotels.
- 21% occurred outdoors, including vehicles, sidewalks, streets, and parks.
- Smoking was the most common mode of consumption (65%), followed by nasal insufflation (11%), injection (10%), and oral use (5%).

Toxicology testing in 2025 identified that most commonly detected substances are:

- Fentanyl (69%)
- Fluorofentanyl (53%)
- Cocaine (53%)
- Methamphetamine (52%)

In October 2025, over 90% of tested deaths involved a stimulant, compared to approximately 80% in October 2024.

North Shore data indicates:

- Many individuals are dying alone at home.
- A medical chart review covering 1.5 years found 85% of individuals were housed, often living with family members.
- Nearly 40% were not known to the health system to use substances.
- Over 60% had no prior history of overdose.

Advocacy is a core focus of the North Shore Standing Committee on Substance Use. Over the past five years, the Committee has worked with community partners and Vancouver Coastal Health to better understand local impacts and identify opportunities for action.

On [January 8, 2024](#), regular Council meeting the following motion was approved:

THAT District Communications staff in collaboration with Community Planning staff as liaison to the North Shore Standing Committee on Substance Use (“the committee”) prepare a report on options for the opioid crisis education and awareness in coordination with the committee and Vancouver Coastal Health.

Through this work, staff and the Committee identified the Purple Chair Campaign as an established initiative well aligned with local advocacy goals.

ANALYSIS:

The Purple Chair Campaign is a grassroots awareness initiative that uses purple chairs placed in visible public locations to symbolize lives lost to toxic drug overdose. Originating with families seeking ways to honour loved ones, the campaign humanizes the crisis, encourages dialogue, and promotes harm reduction and stigma reduction.

Led locally by North Shore Homelessness Task Force and North Shore Standing Committee on Substance Use, the campaign includes chair installations supported by signage and QR codes linking to resources, alongside coordinated communications through media, social platforms, and partner networks.

The campaign aims to:

- Honour community members lost to the toxic drug crisis;
- Increase awareness of the impacts of drug overdose on the North Shore,
- Promote harm reduction practices,
- Reduce stigma through education and storytelling, and
- Build a network of informed allies who can share supports, resources and strengthen solidarity across the North Shore.

The campaign is anticipated to run from August 2025 to August 2026, with potential to extend beyond 2026. The campaign proposal (**Attachment 1**) is a working document that provides additional detail. Performance will be measured through media analytics, partner feedback, and community engagement, with a summary report shared publicly.

The Campaign launched with a community painting event on August 21, 2025, at Ray Perrault Park. The event engaged 40 participants from 17 agencies and resulted in 20 painted purple chairs. The campaign is expected to include up to 31 chairs across the North Shore by August 31, 2026, representing the number of unregulated drug deaths recorded on the North Shore in 2024.

Financial Impacts:

The North Shore Standing Committee on Substance Use approved a budget of \$2,500 for the Purple Chair Campaign through 2026. Municipal councils may be asked to provide financial or in-kind support at the time of the report back, as appropriate.

Public Input:

The campaign has received the engagement and support of community organizations across the North Shore and aims to further engage individuals, organizations, and schools to paint and display purple chairs, host events, and share stories online.

Committee Input:

The campaign is co-led by the [North Shore Homelessness Task Force](#) and North Shore Standing Committee on Substance Abuse, in accordance with their [Terms of Reference](#). These bodies include diverse representation from community organizations, school districts, First Nations, Vancouver Coastal Health, police, and the North Shore municipalities. Their input helped shape the campaign's direction and priorities. Roles and responsibilities for groups are outlined in Section 8 of the campaign proposal.

Social Policy Implications:

The Purple Chair Campaign supports Council and District objectives related to community well-being, including the objective to “foster a safe, socially inclusive, and supportive community that enhances the health and well-being of all residents.”

The campaign is collaborative in nature, involving community organizations, partners, and municipalities across the North Shore. By fostering compassion, encouraging dialogue, and increasing public understanding of the toxic drug crisis, the campaign seeks to reduce stigma, strengthen community connection, and support efforts that may ultimately help prevent overdose deaths and save lives.

Conclusion:

The Purple Chair Campaign aligns with the goals and advocacy priorities of the North Shore Standing Committee on Substance Use and is consistent with District policies. Council endorsement of the campaign will support a North Shore-wide initiative to honour lives lost to the toxic drug crisis and raise awareness in the community.

Options:

- 1.) THAT Council endorse The North Shore Purple Chair Campaign as a North Shore-wide community awareness initiative aimed at reducing stigma and raising awareness for the toxic drug crisis.

THAT Council support the display of purple chair installations in visible municipal spaces (e.g., libraries, community recreation centres, parks, and civic plazas) in coordination with the North Shore Homelessness Task Force and other community partners.

THAT Council direct relevant municipal departments (e.g. Parks, Facilities, Community Planning, and Communications) to coordinate internally and with campaign partners to support implementation where feasible targeting two to three locations within the District.

THAT Council direct the Communications Department to promote the campaign through municipal communication channels and include a link to the Purple Chair Campaign webpage hosted by the North Shore Homelessness Task Force.

THAT Council members be invited to participate in campaign events, including International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31, 2026, as schedules permit.

AND THAT staff report back after International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31, 2026, with information on impact and outcomes.

2.) THAT the motion is not supported.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jim Hanson', written in a cursive style.

Jim Hanson, Councillor

Attachment 1: Purple Chair Proposal

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Purple Chair Campaign Proposal

1. Background

The Purple Chair Campaign is a North Shore-wide awareness initiative that honors community members lost to the toxic drug crisis. Each purple chair represents someone who is no longer with us, someone loved, missed, and remembered.

Purple chairs are painted and placed across the North Shore, each symbolizing a life lost and serving as a visible call to action. The color purple is used internationally to represent grief and overdose awareness, while the empty chair symbolizes absence; a reminder of someone who should still be here.

The campaign aims to:

- Honor community members lost to the toxic drug crisis.
- Increase awareness of the impacts of the overdose crisis on the North Shore.
- Promote harm reduction practices.
- Reduce stigma through education and storytelling.
- Build informed allies who can access supports, share resources, and strengthen solidarity by learning from other Purple Chair Campaign communities.

On the North Shore, the initiative was launched on August 21, 2025, with a community Painting Launch Event at Ray Perrault Park. The launch brought together approximately 40 participants representing 17 agencies, who collectively painted 20 chairs. The event created a welcoming, drop-in atmosphere where community members could connect, reflect, and contribute to the growing visual display of purple chairs across the North Shore.

The campaign received funding from the North Shore Standing Committee on Substance Use (NSSCSU), which contributed \$2,500 toward campaign costs. To date, \$997.89 has been used to cover expenses related to supplies, painting materials, and event logistics for the launch at Ray Perrault Park. Additionally, the campaign has since received strong community engagement, with purple chairs now displayed by several organizations, including Foundry North Shore, North Shore Women's Centre, North Shore Neighborhood House, Hollyburn Community Services Society, Boal Chapel and Memorial Gardens, and others.

The North Shore Purple Chair Campaign continues to grow, with a goal of displaying 31 purple chairs by August 31, 2026, representing each life lost to the toxic drug crisis last year.

While August 31, International Overdose Awareness Day, is a key moment for participation, the campaign is active year-round. Individuals, organizations, and schools are encouraged to paint and display purple chairs, host reflection events, or share their stories online. For more information, photos, and ways to get involved, they can visit:

northshorehomelessness.org/north-shore-purple-chair-campaign

2. Goals

The campaign aims to build a more supportive and informed community by:

- Honor community members lost to the toxic drug crisis.
- Increase awareness of the impacts of the overdose crisis on the North Shore.
- Promote harm reduction practices.
- Reduce stigma through education and storytelling.
- Build informed allies who can access supports, share resources, and strengthen solidarity by learning from other Purple Chair Campaign communities.

Purple Chair Campaign Proposal

3. Objective

To achieve widespread involvement, awareness and learning among North Shore residents, organizations and elected officials through the Purple Chair Campaign, a community wide awareness initiative.

4. Audience

The campaign targets all community members, emphasizing that everyone shares responsibility for understanding the overdose crisis and its impact on individuals, families, and the broader community. Building awareness and compassion across the entire community is essential to reducing stigma and saving lives. The campaign targets participation by organizations listed below under “Roles”.

5. Timeline

- Campaign duration: August 2025–August 2026
- Key Milestone: International Overdose Awareness Day, August 31, 2026
- Future opportunity: explore options to extend or evolve campaign beyond 2026 to maintain community engagement and awareness.

6. Key Messages

- Each purple chair represents a life lost to the toxic drug crisis on the North Shore.
- The toxic drug crisis is local, urgent, and impacts families and communities across the North Shore.
- Reducing stigma saves lives. Everyone has a role to play in creating a safer, more compassionate community.

7. Activities

Community Installation

- Paint and place 31 purple chairs across the North Shore to represent the 31 lives lost to toxic drug poisoning (“overdose”) last year.
- Municipalities and community partners display chairs in visible public spaces such as parks, libraries and community centres.
- Each chair will include signage with a QR code linking to campaign information and resources.

School-Based Activities

- Develop education and art project focused on substance use and stigma (e.g. painting mini chairs) or partner with an existing group/organization that provides similar educational materials and focus more on the chair painting component. *(to be reviewed by school board trustees)*

Community Engagement

- Host a launch event with local leaders and partners.
- Encourage residents to share photos of chairs on social media using campaign hashtags.

Information and Resources

- Prepare and disseminate educational materials through community activities and the campaign website.

8. Roles

Together, these partners will ensure that the campaign is coordinated, evidence-based, and community-driven. Their collective efforts will amplify awareness, reduce stigma, and

Purple Chair Campaign Proposal

strengthen compassion across the North Shore. We are all allies in responding to the toxic drug crisis and in building a safer, more caring community for everyone.

North Shore Standing Committee on Substance Use

Role: Co-Leadership and Coordination

Description: Provides strategic oversight, direction and alignment with municipal and regional priorities. Leads on communications with elected officials, approves key messaging and ensures consistency across participating organizations.

North Shore Homelessness Task Force

Role: Co-Leadership and Coordination

Description: Serves as the operational lead, coordinating implementation, logistics and partner engagement. Oversees chair production, placement and community event delivery.

Municipal Councils and other Elected Officials

Role: Advocacy, Endorsement and Implementation Support

Description: Seek municipal or organizational endorsement of the campaign, ensure staff participation and consider financial or in-kind support as appropriate. Approve placement of chairs and signage in public spaces, promote the campaign through municipal or organizational channels, and participate in launch and awareness events.

Vancouver Coastal Health

Role: Content accuracy and health expertise

Description: Lead on ensuring campaign messaging, education materials and resources are evidence-based and consistent with current public health guidelines. Provide technical expertise on substance use, harm reduction and stigma reduction messaging.

School Districts

Role: Education and child/youth engagement

Description: Review and approve school-based projects and activities that raise awareness about substance use, stigma and community compassion (e.g., classroom art projects or educational resources).

Community Committee on Substance Use and other Community Organizations

Role: Local implementation and outreach

Description: Support campaign activities such as chair painting, placement, awareness events and distribution of educational materials.

Residents

Role: Public engagement and awareness

Description: Participate by sharing stories, photos and reflections on social media using campaign hashtags and by engaging in open conversations to help reduce stigma and increase understanding.

9. Communication channels

Campaign communication will be coordinated across multiple platforms to ensure consistent and accessible messaging.

- Website: a dedicated campaign page will be hosted by the North Shore Homelessness Task Force ([Purple Chair Campaign](#)). The page will include FAQs, educational resources, campaign updates, and opportunities for community involvement.

Purple Chair Campaign Proposal

- Social media: the campaign will be promoted on Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter) using hashtags (#PurpleChairNS, #EndStigmaNS). Content will include stories, photos, key messages and partner highlights.
- Local Media: Press releases, interviews and feature stories will be shared through the North Shore News and other local outlets to amplify campaign visibility.
- Newsletters: Information will be distributed through community and organizational newsletters, including the North Shore Inter-Agency Network, school and PAC newsletters, and to North Shore Homelessness Task Force subscribers.
- On-site Signage: Each chair installation will include signage with QR codes linking directly to campaign information, local support services, and overdose prevention resources located on website ([Purple Chair Campaign](#)).

10. Output

By the end of the campaign (August 31, 2026), the following outcomes are anticipated:

- Thirty-one purple chairs painted and placed across North Shore by August 31, 2026
- Endorsement and participation from all North Shore Municipal Councils.
- Engagement and collaboration with North Shore First Nations partners.
- Active involvement from community organizations and local service providers.
- Broad-growing public awareness and visible community participation through advocacy and storytelling (considering the short time frame).
- A digital Campaign Toolkit for partners, including social media graphics, key messages and educational resources on the toxic drug crisis and its local impacts.
- Accessible resources and information materials on stigma reduction and overdose prevention, available online and in print.
- Media coverage and social media engagement metrics collected to evaluate campaign reach and impact.

11. Evaluation

Campaign performance will be assessed through media analytics, partner feedback, and community engagement data. A summary report will be shared publicly to highlight outcomes, lessons learned and opportunities for future initiatives.

12. Budget

The North Shore Standing Committee on Substance Use has approved \$2,500 in funding to be used for the Purple Chair Campaign.

Financial Contributions to date:

- \$997.89 has been used to purchase paint, supplies, tarps and event materials for the launch at Ray Perrault Park.
- Remaining funds will support future chair-painting events, signage and campaign expenses through 2026.

In-Kind Contributions to date:

- City of North Vancouver waived the park permit fees and provided tables and chairs for the launch event at Ray Perrault Park.
- Urban Repurpose donated 20 chairs for painting.
- Home Depot (West Vancouver) donated 7 cans of spray paint (another 25 have been offered)
- District of West Vancouver loaned two button making machines for the interactive station at the launch event.