

NORTH SHORE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SUBSTANCE USE

MISSION STATEMENT

The North Shore Standing Committee on Substance Use will support community organizations to reduce the impact and incidence of substance abuse on the North Shore through advocacy, collaboration and leadership.

MINUTES

Tuesday, May 14, 2026 5:00 – 7:00 pm

In Person – Committee Room, North Vancouver Municipal Hall

Present:

Cllr James Hanson, Councillor, DNV
Cllr Don Bell, Councillor, CNV
Cllr Alison Morse, Councillor, Bowen Island
Cllr Jaime Cunliffe, Councillor, Lions Bay
Kulvir Mann, School Trustee, NV School District
Dave Stevenson, School Trustee, WV School District
Dr. Alexandria Choi, Vancouver Coastal Health
Sgt. Carla Rhodes, West Vancouver Policy Department
Sgt. David Potts, North Vancouver RCMP

Staff:

Eirikka Brandson, DNV Staff Liaison
Christina Bennett, DWV Staff Liaison
Heather Evans, CNV Staff Liaison
Isabella Pannu, DNV Community Service Clerk

Regrets:

Cllr Linda Watt, Councillor, DWV
Dr. Michelle Brousson
Inspector Judith Bertrand, North Vancouver RCMP

Representative to be confirmed, Tsleil-Waututh Nation

Representative to be confirmed, Squamish Nation

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm and committee members were introduced.

2. Adoption of Agenda

MOVED, seconded and resolved
To adopt the agenda.

CARRIED

3. Adoption of March 17, 2026 Minutes

MOVED, seconded and resolved
To adopt the minutes.

CARRIED

4. Financial Report

Heather Evans, City of North Vancouver staff liaison reported that a budget update will be circulated and discussed at the next meeting.

5. Vancouver Coastal Health Update

Dr. Choi provided a presentation addressing some of the questions raised at the March 17, 2026 committee meeting, and some of the key highlights were as follows:

- Lions Bay and West Vancouver health data is presented together.
- Current death rates compared to previous rates are difficult to compare due to differing methodology. The current crisis outstrips anything that the province has seen in previous years with a substantial increase during this current toxic drug crisis.
- In terms of local health maps, there is no one distinct area and typically areas with larger populations have more deaths. Preliminary data for 2026 indicates that there have been fewer overdoses; however, the data is incomplete and only captures the start of the year. The preliminary data also indicates that most overdoses are from employed males between the ages of 30 – 50. A chart review will be undertaken in the summer and the results shared with the committee in the fall. It was suggested that in terms of awareness, it may be beneficial for the media to also discuss drug use on the North Shore and not just focus on the downtown eastside.
- With regard to whether there was value in separating the Purple Chair Campaign from the North Shore Homelessness Task Force, members noted that people who are unhoused or underhoused are disproportionately affected by substance use and overdose. While there is overlap between the two issues, the campaign will remain on the NSHTF website until a different communication strategy is confirmed.
- Driving after cannabis use is increasing while alcohol use and driving is declining. Cannabis users underestimate risks and are twice as likely to crash after using cannabis. In terms of enforcement, the RCMP do not have a simple test particularly as the THC level does not correlate with the level of impairment.

6. Purple Chair Campaign – Updates from Committee Members and North Shore Homelessness Task Force

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.

Committee members were provided with an update as follows:

- The goal of 31 chairs will be displayed by August 31st; 24 chairs are already painted and ready to be displayed, 4 upcoming in the District of North Vancouver and 2 upcoming in the Vancouver Coastal Health offices.
- A purple chair project in schools could include painting small chairs as an art project and it was suggested that further discussion may be necessary to determine the appropriate age group for this project.
- Public engagement will include at least one public event on August 31st as well as a chair painting event earlier in August. Media and educational materials created by Capilano University students will also be shared. These materials are targeted to a variety of audiences and include infographics, fact sheets, social media posts, and posters for elementary and secondary schools.

During the discussion, some of the key highlights were as follows:

- Each municipality will be responsible for their own event and Vancouver Coastal Health can provide assistance in terms of staffing. Additional locations suggested for the placement of chairs could be Grouse Mountain, Capilano Suspension Bridge, Deep Cove, Edgemont Village, Cheakamus Centre, Kay Meek Theatre, The Silk Purse and for other locations, the committee will be required to prepare a letter.
- In terms of plaque wording for the chairs, the committee recommended the following: “North Shore Purple Chair Campaign: This purple chair honours a life lost to the toxic drug crisis.”

7. Discussion Topics for Next Meeting

The following topics will be discussed at the next meeting:

- Finalize purple chair painting event details and locations.
- A presentation from VCH on current North Shore data on cannabis use, cannabis-related harms, and, if available, cannabis-impaired driving trends.
- A presentation from RCMP/West Vancouver Police on cannabis-impaired driving, including current enforcement practices, available detection methods, emerging technologies, and enforcement challenges.
- Municipalities to provide a summary of current municipal policies related to cannabis, including retail regulations, zoning, operating hours, and smoking and vaping restrictions in public spaces.

8. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, July 29th, 2026.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 pm.