

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

Wednesday, July 29, 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
Cllr Linda Watt, Councillor, DWV
Kulvir Mann, School Trustee, NV School District
Dr. Alexandria Choi, Vancouver Coastal Health
Sgt. Carla Rhodes, West Vancouver Policy Department
Inspector Judith Bertrand, North Vancouver RCMP

Guests:

Rune Mikkelsen, Director of Operations
Turning Point Recovery
Yvonne Tan, Medical resident

Staff:

Eirikka Brandson, DNV Staff Liaison
Christina Bennett, DWV Staff Liaison
Joshua Poole, DNV Community Service Clerk

Regrets:

Dr. Michelle Brousson
Dave Stevenson, School Trustee, WV School District
Inspector Judith Bertrand, North Vancouver RCMP
Heather Evans, CNV Staff Liaison

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 5:08pm and committee members were introduced.

2. Adoption of Agenda

International Opioid Overdose Awareness Day (August 1st) was added to the agenda.

MOVED, seconded and resolved
To adopt the amended agenda.

CARRIED

3. Adoption of May 14, 2026 Minutes

MOVED, seconded and resolved
To adopt the minutes.

CARRIED

4. Financial Update / Financial Report

The North Shore Homelessness Task Force has applied for a grant to support the development of a standalone website for the purple chair campaign. The website would serve as a landing page and provide information about the campaign. Notification regarding the outcome of the grant is expected sometime in August.

Approximately \$250 remains from the \$2,500 provided to the campaign by the committee. These funds have been used to cover the cost of the plaques and project supplies for the painting events.

It was also reported that approximately \$15,000 in additional funds remains available to the committee. Confirmation of the exact balance is pending from the City of North Vancouver, which holds the account.

MOVED, seconded and resolved

Consideration for additional amounts to the purple chair campaign, specifically for plaques for the proposed amount of \$500.

CARRIED

5. Purple Chair Campaign and Opioid Overdose Awareness

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 a person who is loved, missed and remembered. Chairs are painted and placed throughout the North Shore as a visible symbol of lives lost and a call to action. Purple is intentionally recognized as a colour of grief and overdose awareness, while the empty chair symbolizes the absence of someone who should still be here.

Committee members were provided with an update as follows:

- The goal is to have 31 chairs completed and displayed by August 31, 2026. To date, 24 chairs have been completed. Vancouver Coastal Health will paint three chairs and the District of North Vancouver will paint four chairs at the August 5 painting event. One remaining chair is available to be claimed and painted at the event, which will be held at Ray Perrault Park and hosted by the North Shore Homelessness Task Force.
- Three additional events are planned for August 31, 2026, in recognition of International Overdose Day. Events will take place at the West Vancouver Community Centre, Lions Gate Hospital and the North Vancouver City Library and will be hosted by the respective agencies, with support from VCH staff. Activities and resources will include naloxone training, harm reduction information and supplies, button making, information booths and additional educational materials. Event posters will be shared with the committee.
- Thirty-one plaques have been created and locations for the chairs are being finalized.

6. RCMP/West Vancouver Police – Cannabis Detection Methods

A presentation was provided on cannabis detection methods and how police investigate suspected cannabis impaired driving. Cannabis was legalized in October 2018, and since legalization there have been approximately 308 investigations involving suspected drug-impaired driving.

- Police may assess potential impairment based on odour, physical signs, admission of recent consumption, and reasonable suspicion. Where impairment is not immediately clear, a Standardized Field Sobriety Test (SFST) may be administered by an officer with the required training. The results help determine whether further assessment is required.
- Where an individual is arrested for suspected drug-impaired driving, a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) may conduct a further assessment at the police station. The assessment involves a number of tests and observations to determine whether the individual is impaired.
- Challenges remain with roadside cannabis testing, as current technology does not provide an accurate measure of cannabis impairment. This presents challenges for applying the Immediate Roadside Prohibition (IRP) program to cannabis.
- Information from a VCH survey was shared regarding the general lack of concern among the public about the consequences of cannabis impaired driving. The presenters noted that consuming cannabis and alcohol together can have a multiplicative effect on impairment.
- An individual may still be investigating and potentially charged with impaired driving where their alcohol breath sample is below the legal limit if there is evidence of impairment by another substance.

7. Turning Point Recovery Society

Turning Point Recovery Society has operated for approximately 40 years, supporting individuals and families in British Columbia who are experiencing substance use, housing instability, affordability challenges and other barriers. Programs and services include stabilization and residential recovery programs, pre-care and continuing-care counselling, second-stage recovery, supportive and community housing, and employment supports.

Turning Point's recovery philosophy is recovery-oriented, person-centered, trauma-informed, strength-based, evidence-formed.

Turning Point operates two residential locations on the North Shore (one for men, the other for women). Each location has 10 beds and offers a 90-day residential recovery program that includes individual counselling, group programming, life skills and recovery planning. Four beds at each location are designated as Vancouver Coastal Health priority access beds.

Referrals for these beds may come from Stepping Stones, HOpe Center, Lions Gate Hospital, Health Connection Clinic, Foundry NorthShore.

The following information was also provided:

- Continuum of Care: Services include referral, pre-care counselling, stabilization, residential recovery, continuing-care counselling, second-stage recovery housing, employment and community integration.
- Stabilization Programs: Turning Point operates a 10-bed stabilization program in Squamish and a 12-bed program in Vancouver. These programs provide short-term stays of approximately four to six weeks. Counselors have master's degrees.
- Pre-Care Counselling: Support is provided before admission and includes recovery planning and goal setting, motivation and engagement, and referrals to other supports.
- Continuing-Care Counselling: Support is provided following treatment and during the transition back into community, including individual and recovery counselling, goal setting and accountability.
- Storeys Housing: Located in Richmond, the program provides up to 18 months of safe, affordable housing for individuals transitioning from residential recovery. The Storey's Café is located on the main floor and provides paid work experience for individuals in recovery.
- Harbour House: Provides second-stage housing for women and children escaping abuse.
- Reaching Home: A community-based housing program supporting individuals who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The program assists participants in securing housing and connecting with resources and other supports.

8. Vancouver Coastal Health Update

An update was not provided because of the recent work action and staff being assigned to other places.

9. Discussion Topics for Next Meeting

The following topics will be discussed at the next meeting:

- Success of the Purple Chair Campaign
- Coastal Health Update
- Update on Opioid Awareness Day
- Request from Vancouver Coastal Health for municipalities to advertise a survey

10. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, September 9th, 2026.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 pm.