

Dear Chair and Members of the Planning and Environment Committee,

I am writing this letter of submission in support of both 241 Simcoe Street and 446 York Street as appropriate locations for permanent Supervised Consumption Facilities. Both locations, are of optimal location for this community based support service.

The 241 Simcoe Street site to be located within a London Middlesex Housing Corporation building is a brilliant example of collaboration between multiple sectors of support services. This addresses a need where there have been events that demonstrate a great need. Services coming alongside those who need this service, where they need this service thus meeting them where they are at, is a vital piece in supporting persons who inject and use drugs.

446 York Street and its proximity to the Men's Mission is once again a fine example of meeting the need of a community. Persons who are clients of the Men's Mission will benefit from the increase in wraparound services available to them in the close vicinity of one another. It will make access to services much less of a barrier to these individuals who are often precariously housed or are of no fixed address. Thus, they can access supports and services from both the Men's Mission and the Supervised Consumption Facility. Additionally, those who are located within the surrounding area who will use this service will benefit as well.

The two proposed facilities are in addition to a mobile van that will make 4 stops within the city. At this time, Health Canada, does not allow for the mobile van to be the sole support for Supervised Consumption in a community- it must be in addition to facilities with (a) fixed address(es).

I feel at this time that the two sites selected in addition to the mobile van would allow support for persons within our community who are often marginalized, unable to access services due to numerous barriers and in need of a multi-service supports. With access to the Supervised Consumption Facilities and mobile van, these individuals will be connected to supports, community and receive the care, support and dignity they need and deserve.

As someone, who lives closely to both the Men's Mission and the proposed Supervised Consumption Facility at 446 York Street I am in full support of this location. I feel that with the proper protocols, procedures and provisions we can and will welcome this much needed service into the neighbourhood. There is great need- London and these identified communities and neighbourhoods are in need of our love, compassion, care and support. In tandem with other support services (e.g. the Men's Mission nearby and the wraparound services available at the Site) we can support these individuals when and where they need it the most. They are people's family members, friends, and loved ones. It's time we come alongside them where they are, doing the best we can to support them during often difficult times when they are likely to face many barriers.

With a population of almost 500,000, London is within the top 10 biggest cities in Canada and we need to reflect that- and so do our services. We are a city rich in diversity, and in need. The time is now as we face multiple crises related to the opioid drug crisis. London must continue to be a leader in our response to the opioid crisis- in mid February the community opened the province of Ontario's first sanctioned Temporary Overdose Prevention Site- which has had enormous positive impact with over 2100 visits and only a few medical events which were taken care of on-site. These people, these community members- got help, got support and received love and care.

I urge the Chair and all Members of the Planning and Environment Committee that you please support the endorsement of both 241 Simcoe Street and 446 York Street as appropriate locations for permanent Supervised Consumption Facilities and when such time occurs that zoning by-laws for Supervised Consumption Facilities are established that the two above locations be automatically grandfathered into such zoning.

Thank you for your consideration,

Deana Ruston
Ward 13/ Downtown Resident