

Attn: Clerk, Planning and Environment Committee,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the rezoning of 446 York Street to permit the operation of a supervised consumption facility. As an epidemiologist and expert on injection drug use, I can attest to the extensive scientific literature supporting the benefits of these services for people who use drugs and the broader community. I am also a resident of Old East, having lived at Dundas and Adelaide for five years. I understand the impact that public drug use has had on our communities. Our underhoused and homeless neighbours who inject drugs have been forced to use a variety of unsafe and unsupervised injection sites: alleys, public washrooms, etc. I'm happy that the temporary overdose prevention site has helped to bring them off the street and into a safe, warm, and supervised environment where equipment can be safely disposed of. Regional HIV/AIDS Connection and its partners have demonstrated their ability to operate this service safely and with respect for their clients and the surrounding area, and I have the utmost confidence that they will do the same with the permanent site.

I am unfortunately unable to attend to the Planning and Environment Committee Meeting as I am in Sierra Leone, supporting that country to implement their first needle and syringe exchange program. Canada's evidence-based and compassionate response to people who use drugs is inspiring life-saving action globally, and I sure hope and expect that we will continue to take such a forward-thinking approach right here in London. I give permission for my letter to be noted on the committee agenda.

I imagine that the opportunity to save lives through a zoning decision is quite rare. I urge you not to squander the opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ayden Scheim, PhD

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