



**DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER**  
750 17TH STREET, WEST VANCOUVER BC V7V 3T3

**16.3.**

**COUNCIL REPORT**

Date:	June 1, 2026
From:	Christina Bennett, Access and Community Services Manager
Subject:	Purple Chair Campaign

**RECOMMENDATION**

THAT the June 1, 2026 report titled Purple Chair Campaign from the Access and Community Services Manager be received for information.

**1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on the Purple Chair Campaign and the actions taken by District of West Vancouver (District) to support this North Shore-wide initiative.

**2.0 Legislation/Bylaw/Policy**

The District’s Blueprint for Social Responsibility and Change (2017) identifies plans and strategies to strengthen community social support systems and ensures that social issues are considered as an integral part of long-term planning for sustainability in West Vancouver.

The Healthy Communities Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the District and Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) supports the Purple Chair Campaign through the following priorities: substance use; housing and homelessness; poverty reduction; and the health of seniors’, children, and youth.

**3.0 Council Strategic Objective(s)/Official Community Plan**

Council Strategic Plan

Council’s Strategic Plan supports initiatives that address major community well-being issues, promotes inclusion and belonging, supports prevention through education, and strengthens community resiliency as set out under Strategic Goal 6: enhance the social well-being of our community.

Official Community Plan

The District’s Official Community Plan supports the Purple Chair Campaign through policies 2.8.2, 2.8.5, and notably the following:

- 2.8.20 Work with First Nations, neighbouring municipalities, regional and senior levels of government where shared interests or overlapping jurisdictions exist as part of municipal and relevant local area decision making processes

2.9.5 Provide accessible recreational programs and services to encourage physical and mental wellness for all ages, abilities and income.

2.9.11 Explore opportunities with community partners including Vancouver Coastal Health, senior levels of government, schools, community organizations, and non-profit service providers to provide a full continuum of support services to address needs related to physical, mental and social health, addictions, health services, emergency response, housing, homelessness, employment and food security.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

No additional financial resources are requested or required.

#### **5.0 Background**

In October 2000, the North Shore Task Force for Substance Abuse was formed in response to the need for a coordinated approach to address the issues of substance use across the North Shore. The mission of the task force is to support community organizations to reduce the impact and incidence of substance use on the North Shore through advocacy, collaboration, and leadership. In 2016, the task force went through a name change and became the North Shore Standing Committee on Substance Use (NSSCSU).

The goals of the NSSCSU are to:

1. be a forum for exchanging ideas, coordinating efforts, and supporting community-based initiatives
2. advocate for solutions to substance use
3. understand the extent of substance use on the North Shore, its impacts on the population, and the corresponding services in place to address these issues
4. develop and regularly update information on the substance use resources available on the North Shore
5. raise community awareness and engagement on issues related to substance use on the North Shore

In 2016, the Province of British Columbia (Province) declared a public health emergency related to a drastic, fatal surge in illicit drug overdoses driven by an increasingly toxic supply of drugs laced with fentanyl.

International Overdose Awareness Day is a global event that takes place annually on August 31. This global event started 25 years ago to encourage communities to take action on overdose. It aims to honour and recognize lives lost to overdose while raising awareness and reducing stigma associated with drug-related deaths. The Province began recognizing this day in 2021.

In 2024, an estimated 31 North Shore residents died from overdose. To remember those lost and to draw awareness to the issue, the NSSCSU explored bringing the Purple Chair Campaign to the North Shore as a vehicle for community involvement and education on subject of substance use and overdose. The Purple Chair Campaign is a public art awareness project designed to spark conversation, honour the lives lost, promote harm reduction, and reduce the stigma around overdose through education and storytelling. The campaign's intent is to engage individuals, municipalities, Nations, school districts, and community organizations in the painting and installation of purple chairs. The goal is to put 31 purple chairs on display publicly by August 31, 2026 to draw attention to the estimated lives lost to overdose across the North Shore in 2024.

The NSSCSU, at its July 9, 2025 meeting, approved the following motion:

*THAT the Committee:*

- *Approves bringing information about the Purple Chair Campaign back to each respective group to determine support for their participation;*
- *Supports the campaign's goal of painting and placing 31 chairs by August 31, 2026, to represent the number of overdose related deaths in 2024;*
- *Agrees that, once the North Shore Homelessness Task Force has a clearer understanding of the costs, the Committee will consider using project funds to cover any shortfall, up to \$2,500; and*
- *Intends to initiate media outreach in the lead-up to the awareness campaign.*

In order to increase participation in the Purple Chair Campaign, the NSSCSU, at its December 3, 2025 meeting, approved the following motion:

*THAT the North Shore Standing Committee on Substance Use recommend that Council reports be prepared and include the following recommendations:*

- *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.*
- *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.*
- *Direct relevant municipal departments (e.g. parks, facilities, community planning, and communications) to coordinate internally and with campaign partners to support implementation where feasible.*
- *Request 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.*

- *Request that staff report back after August 31, 2026, with an outcome report of the campaign.*

The District has been actively engaged in Purple Chair Campaign initiatives since July 2025 which align with the motions made by the NSSCSU.

## 6.0 Analysis

### 6.1 Discussion

The goal of the Purple Chair Campaign is to promote community understanding, reduce exclusion, acknowledge the impact of the drug crisis on residents and families, and support a healthier and more socially connected community.

The following were conducted by the District to support this initiative in 2025:

- participated in the launch event on August 21 at Ray Perrault Park in North Vancouver by painting chairs and producing and providing Purple Chair promotional buttons
- amplified the campaign messages through District social media platforms, posters, and signage
- supported the Youth Services Whatever Committee in painting a chair
- displayed two purple chairs in the Lalji Family Atrium at the West Vancouver Community Centre from August 29 to September 5, one painted by staff at the launch event and the second by the Youth Services Whatever Committee
- shared the Purple Chair Campaign information with Enhance West Van to include in their September Newsletter



Building on the initiatives completed in 2025, staff continued to engage the public in early 2026 through a collaboration between Youth Services Intergenerational Committee and Seniors' Outreach. The collaboration included displaying a purple chair in both the Seniors' Activity Centre (SAC) and the Youth Hub from January until mid April. The chairs included questions about substance use and addiction to encourage discussion.

In April, staff also hosted a forum on substance use that included presentations from Dr. Alex Choi, VCH Chief Medical Health Officer for the North Shore, and Foundry North Shore followed by questions and discussion on health and addiction.

In the coming months, staff will continue to participate in the Purple Chair Campaign through chair painting, hosting purple chairs in District facilities, and continuing to amplify the Purple Chair Campaign messaging through the District's Communications, Indigenous, and Community Relationships department.

The Purple Chair Campaign is expected to reach their target of 31 Purple Chairs placed around the North Shore by August 31, 2026 with support from the District, as well as from:

- Bowen Island Municipality;
- City of North Vancouver;
- District of North Vancouver;
- Village of Lions Bay;
- VCH; and
- other community organizations.

If participation continues to grow, the NSSCSU may even exceed their target of 31 purple chairs.

## 6.2 Climate Change & Sustainability

The Purple Chair Campaign contributes to social sustainability of the community by improving public health, strengthening social inclusion, community connectedness, and local resilience.

## 6.3 Public Engagement and Outreach

District staff engaged the public at both the SAC and the Youth Hub by gathering feedback on substance use and addiction. A community forum was also held on the same topic, which prompted many questions and engagement from the larger community.

## 7.0 Options

### 7.1 Recommended Option

THAT the June 1, 2026 report titled Purple Chair Campaign from the Access and Community Services Manager be received for information.

### 7.2 Considered Options

THAT staff provide further information on the Purple Chair Campaign as directed by Council.

## 8.0 Conclusion

Participating in the Purple Chair Campaign provides a meaningful opportunity for the North Shore to come together and remember that every life lost to overdose matters; while also challenging the stigma and encouraging dialogue about substance use for the betterment of the community.

Author:



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Christina Bennett, Access and Community Services Manager

Concurrence:



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Alison Gelz, Senior Manager, Community Services