

Opposition to the Supervised Consumption Services Site by Sherry Crawford

I have lived in Calgary for 35 years. I have always been proud to be a Calgarian, and felt that Calgary was a great, well-run city. But I am here today to say that I am strongly opposed to the establishment of the Supervised Consumption Services site. My daughter, a teacher, lives a block away from the SCS. When she bought her condo nine years ago, it was a safe area to raise her children. That safety has declined shockingly.

In my last visit, my little granddaughters and I had to walk past three sets of people doing drugs on the sidewalk. The visit before that, I had to walk past a person rolling around in the middle of the road. Thankfully, a police car was nearby, so I could tell them before he was run over. When I took the LRT, I had to walk through a group of a dozen disreputable, intimidating men gathered in the stairs - I've never seen that there before. My daughter's condo building has also been broken into. The neighbourhood now seems to be a magnet for all the crystal meth addicts and dealers in the city.

I do have compassion for people struggling with addiction. I volunteered at the Calgary Young Offenders Centre for eight years, and know some of the horrors that people try and forget through drugs. I have also had a good friend die through drug use. I do think every life is of value - and every life matters.

However, in order to reduce the harm that addicts do to themselves, you knowingly and deliberately choose to put the lives of all the innocent, tax paying, contributing members of society who live there at risk. As a result, people like my daughter and granddaughters have to walk in fear as they go to work or school or other community enhancing activities. You imply that all lives matter, yet you are deliberately choosing to prioritise addict's lives over those of my daughter and granddaughters.

Why should an addict's desire to take illegal drugs (often associated with criminal behaviour) take precedence over my daughter's desire for a safe neighbourhood in which to live and work and raise her children? Have you walked through that area now that the SCS is open? Have you? I have. And it's scary. And it's ugly. And it's not fair.

I can understand the desire of the government to reduce harm to addicts. But not at the cost of the desire of the law abiding people who live there to be safe. And to feel safe. They are mutually exclusive desires. Drug crime increased in that neighbourhood by 276% last year!

Do my daughter and granddaughters have less worth than an addict? Do they have less rights? How can you do this to them, and to all the other people living and working there? It's not right.

If you can't look in the mirror and swear on your honour that you would be fine having this SCS site a block from your home and your children, then move it or shut it down. And if you don't, and something does happen to one of the innocent people who live there - know that it will be a direct result of the decisions made by a city and a government that they relied on to keep them safe.

At the very least, I beg you to PLEASE greatly increase the police presence in the neighbourhood. ANY sense of safety and security comes only from the police being there.

Please, while you're considering ways to reduce harm to addicts - consider the right of the innocent, hard working, tax paying, law abiding residents to a safe environment in which to live and work and raise their children. Just like the environment in which you all live.

Thank you.

