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## Mayor Lisa Helps and Council, and Mayor Desjardins and Council.

I have contacted City Hall on several occasions over the past two years, mainly concerned about the health hazards of the city sidewalks in the Harris Green and downtown areas, plus the escalating situation of open drug dealing, vulnerable people, and concern for my own personal safety where I live in the Chinatown area, and also where I work, at the Victoria Conservatory of Music (VCM) in Harris Green.

There has been an open problem with addiction on the streets in Victoria long before Covid. Now it is now so much worse and my daily walk to the VCM is all about avoiding what could be volatile situations with vulnerable people. I see the slow destruction and vandalism of the exterior of the building where I work, and every day I try to keep my distance from the many individuals with serious mental and addiction problems, plus navigate the streets with added debris under foot including excrement, drug paraphernalia and bodily fluids.

The VCM is under threat every day from our neighbours on Pandora. Numerous times I have walked past older men dealing drugs with young girls on the steps of the VCM. I find this the most disturbing aspect of the situation on the Pandora block. It makes me feel fearful to see young women, so vulnerable, unstable and easily influenced, to be given drugs in full daylight on the steps of a music school. It's heartbreaking to know they are at risk from rape and violence. I regularly see people crumpled up on the steps of the VCM on Quadra Street and I don't know if they have overdosed, are asleep, or dead. Our Pandora neighbours run across red traffic lights, ride bikes on sidewalks, throw garbage all around our site and often invade the parking lot to inject drugs, and get inside the school if they see an opportunity to do so. To see so many people with loss of dignity wandering our streets not only causes me distress, it makes me aware that when I am on the streets I could easily be a victim of an assault. The City are failing in their duty of care to provide a safe and healthy environment for the people who live and work here.

I feel strongly that the Police need to have the power and the resources to have more people out in the community working with Social Services and health care professionals to be able to find a way forward to reduce the level of chaos we see on the streets and bring back safety to where we live and work. There is clearly criminal activity and public disorder on our streets and the Municipality must fund the resources needed to let the Police do their jobs by enforcing bylaws and by working with other agencies to help people get the support they so badly need.

I also note the City recently announced the Victoria Music Strategy. One of the priorities is Connecting People and Spaces. The Alix Goolden Hall is a premier music venue and is being held hostage in the Pandora block, unable to open its front doors to the public. The future of the building looks very bleak and your Music Strategy rings very hollow.

The City needs to give the Police the support they need, work with experts and the Provincial and Federal Government to find and fund solutions and take action!

Judi Scown-Gearv

Victoria