

July 17, 2024

Dear Mayor and Council,

(Content warning – discussion of suicide)

Thank you for your previously stated support for preventing needless loss of life and trauma caused by suicide and suicide attempts off the Granville Bridge. And thank you for considering this request. We, the undersigned, urgently request that Mayor & Council support the Motion regarding Suicide Prevention Fencing for the Granville Bridge that is being brought forward to Council on July 24, 2024.

Further to the previous correspondence you have received requesting the City of Vancouver plan, fund, and install Suicide Prevention Fencing on the Granville Bridge, we write this letter to you with updated context and urgency for this initiative.

As you know, there have been numerous fatal and non-fatal incidents over the past 15 years when people in a moment of crisis have jumped from the Granville Bridge onto or near Granville Island. On a number of occasions, people have landed in the water directly beside Granville Island. First and supportive responders have saved these lives whenever possible, at great risk to their own physical and mental safety. The security staff, mariners, and other responders involved experience significant trauma from these incidents. Similarly, the staff, visitors, and tenants on Granville Island who witness suicide on the Island are also deeply affected.

As a result of suicides and suicide attempts from the Granville Bridge, Crisis Centre of BC has recently developed a Traumatic Incidence Response Standard Operating Procedure in partnership with the Union Local 20378 of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) who is the representative Union for the employees on Granville Island. The level of trauma experienced by staff witnessing or attending these unbelievable tragedies is severe and will be entirely avoidable once Suicide Prevention Fencing has been installed.

As the authorities on suicide prevention and mental health in our province, the Crisis Centre of BC and the Canadian Mental Health Association, BC Division are clear in communicating the facts; people choosing suicide by jumping from a bridge do so in a moment of crisis, and preventing this snap decision prevents the suicide. Survivors of suicide attempts in the waters around Granville Island express their extreme gratitude to the heroic people that pull them from the water, because they lived through their suicide attempt. Others that land on the



CMHC-Granville Island
1661 Duranleau Street
2nd Floor
Vancouver, BC V6H 3S3

SCHL-Granville Island
1661 rue de Duranleau
2^{ème} étage
Vancouver C-B V6H 3S3

T 604 666 6655 granvilleisland.com

Island do not get the chance to express their thanks, and we know that these are entirely preventable deaths.

Further, we understand that it is not a question of 'if', but 'when' the fencing is to be installed, and the delay is caused by not allocating the resources in the City's Capital Budget. In our view Suicide Prevention Fencing is not a luxury addition to the bridge; it is critical to maintaining safety on and around Granville Bridge.

We, the undersigned, urgently request that Mayor & Council support the Motion regarding Suicide Prevention Fencing for the Granville Bridge that is being brought forward to Council on July 24, 2024. Moving forward with this Motion at this time means significant cost savings to the long-term Capital costs of installing Suicide Prevention Fencing on the bridge, but more importantly means saving the numerous lives that would be lost in the intervening years.

Sincerely,

Tom Lancaster – General Manager, CMHC-Granville Island

Ruhamah Buchanan – President, PSAC Local 20378, Granville Island

Stacy Ashton – Executive Director, Crisis Centre of BC

Jonny Morris – Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Mental Health Association, BC

Jeannine Martin, President, Vancouver Regional Construction Association

Jane Talbot, Executive Director, Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association