Peninsula Community Planning Board
1220 Rosecrans Street PMB 549
San Diego, CA 92106
pcpbsd@gmail.com

Date: May 16th, 2024

TO: Todd Gloria, City of San Diego Mayor
Dr. Jennifer Campbell, Councilmember District 2
City of San Diego Environmental Services Department

Subject: Request to install safe hypodermic needle disposal systems in areas of the community with high volumes of unhoused and drug use in public spaces to reduce unsafe biohazards in the Peninsula Community.

The Peninsula Community Planning Board would like to propose an environmental mitigation for the Point Loma Peninsula Community. People in the community feel unsafe walking around certain parts of the environment due to the fear of encountering or stepping on used hypodermic needles or other biological hazards that are left behind by the unhoused population and those suffering from drug addiction. Constituents of the community should feel safe to walk comfortably on beaches and in public areas without the concern of encountering biological hazards.

We, the high school liaisons on the Environmental Committee of the Peninsula Community Planning Board, have researched and worked on potential solutions to combat the pollution of our beaches and communities by these improperly disposed hypodermic needles. Citizens of the community have long struggled with encountering these hazards: both scattered along public walkways, beaches, and littered on their personal property. As a result many have avoided fully enjoying some of the community's most breathtaking public spaces out of fear of incidents with improperly disposed hypodermic needles. The needle disposal system currently in place consists of mail-back services and drop-off programs. These systems can be effective for many needle-using communities, but for the unhoused in our community and those who struggle with drug addiction, these systems are inaccessible and inconvenient. This inaccessibility to existing safe needle disposal systems causes the build up of improperly disposed of syringes in our environment. This buildup of needles pollutes our environment, results in many accidents, and negatively impacts the serenity of the peninsula's environment.

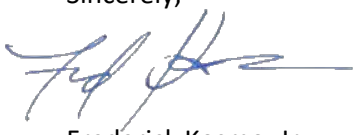
Therefore we propose the installation of public safe needle disposal systems in areas of the community affected by homelessness and drug use. Quantitative research performed into the effectiveness of needle and syringe programs illustrates that in cities such as San Francisco, where public needle disposal systems are in place, have 8 times less needles on the streets than a city like Miami, with no needle disposal systems (Tookes et al.)1. We further researched the effects of safe public needle disposal

systems, and if they were actually used by the people they were intended to help. Quantitative research demonstrates that with the implementation of these disposal systems, many respondents claimed to have safely utilized these systems and disposed of their needles properly (Levine et al.)2. Positive literature such as those previously mentioned and many more illustrate the beneficial effects safe needle systems can have in drug affected populations.

We propose that the city of San Diego follow the blueprint set forth by cities such as San Francisco, by installing these systems safely in discrete but accessible public locations, such as public restrooms by the beaches, near public trash cans in areas of the Midway District, in public parks, and other areas with high volumes of drug affected individuals. In researching the installation and maintenance of these programs in the City of San Francisco, we consulted the office of Mr. Asha Safaí of San Francisco, who advised us on how the city of San Francisco installed and continues to maintain these systems. The city of San Francisco works with local nonprofits in conjunction with both state and federal programs to maintain and install these systems. The City of San Francisco gathers many of the materials and supplies for the programs through the California State Clearinghouse at no cost; the California State Clearinghouse receives money from federal grants for syringe programs to install throughout the state. If these systems were to be installed within our community, research supports that we would see a reduction in improperly disposed syringes in our environment. Our proposal is that the City of San Diego works in conjunction with the state and California State Clearinghouse to secure funding and materials for the implementation of these systems into afflicted communities. In addition to the implementation of these systems, we propose the City of San Diego work to maintain and protect these systems by installing the heavy metal locked boxes as pictured in the later in the letter, or install metal grates around more vulnerable systems to protect them from vandalism or theft. We believe our proposal for the City to work in conjunction with nonprofits, state, and federal organizations to install, maintain, and secure these systems will help reduce the pollution of biohazards in our beautiful peninsula community.

Thank you for your concern about this important issue. We hope our proposition can make a positive impact on our peninsula community, by improving the safety of our beautiful environment so that all community members can feel safe in the beauty of the peninsula. We appreciate your commitment to serving the public and kindly request a prompt response regarding the action the City of San Diego will take in response to our request. This letter was approved unanimously with a vote of 12-0.

Sincerely,



Frederick Kosmo, Jr.

PCPB-Chair

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1 Tookes, Hansel, et al. “A Comparison of Syringe Disposal Practices among Injection Drug Users in a City with versus a City without Needle and Syringe Programs.” Science Direct, Elsevier, 1 June 2012, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0376871611005229. Accessed 14 Mar. 2024.

2 Levine, Harry , et al. “Syringe Disposal among People Who Inject Drugs before and after the Implementation of a Syringe Services Program.” Science Direct, Elsevier, 1 Sept. 2019, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0376871619301978?via%3Dihub. Accessed 2 Apr. 2024.