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# **News Release**

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## **Harm Reduction Bylaw Receives Third Reading**

**ABBOTSFORD January 13, 2014** – Following a Public Hearing, Abbotsford City Council gave second and third reading to amend the zoning bylaw that will remove the restrictions prohibiting harm reduction services in Abbotsford, announced Mayor Bruce Banman this evening.

The next step in the process is for the bylaw to receive final consideration and adoption by Council on February 3, 2014.

“It was very important for us to hear directly from the community at the Public Hearing this evening,” said Banman. “Council is committed to finding the right solution for Abbotsford and it is time to move forward on this issue.”

“In 2010, the Fraser Health Authority and the Hepatitis C Council of British Columbia submitted letters asking the City to re-examine its harm reduction regulations,” said Banman. “Council asked staff to undertake a comprehensive review of harm reduction practices and report back to Council with recommendations, which were discussed at length this evening. This is an important step for our community in providing the type of care needed.”

Abbotsford’s Zoning Bylaw was amended in 2005 to prohibit “harm reduction” activities, including the operation of needle exchanges across the entire City.

As part of the proposed bylaw amendment, a new working relationship between the City of Abbotsford, the Abbotsford Police Department and the Fraser Health Authority was established for implementing and reviewing an Abbotsford-based harm reduction program.

Council will give final read to the bylaw at the Regular session of Council on February 3, 2014 at 7:00pm in the Mastqui Centennial Auditorium.

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