

February 13, 2007

Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health

RE: Needle Exchange

Over the past ten plus years the citizens of Tacoma have been asking for the removal of the Needle Exchange Van “curb side” delivery service which is currently located at 14th and G Street. Promises have been made to reduce its presence. Committees have been formed and hours spent discussing the issue. As of today there has been no reduction in either time or days (in fact there has been an increase) over this ten year period.

Heath Department board member Rick Talbert informed the New Tacoma Neighborhood Council on December 13, 2006 that the past ninety days had seen a marked reduction in the clients at the van site. Much to our displeasure we have been asked to wait another ninety days for further study rather than taking action by setting a deadline to remove the van from this location. At the end of this second study period we expect to see a reduction in the van's presence at the 14th and G Street location along with a formal plan to permanently eliminate the use of the van for “curb side” needle exchange. Further delay by the Health Department Staff will not be tolerated.

Now is the time for the elected officials who form the Health Board to deal with this situation. The area around 14th and G Street is rapidly changing. Soon the Marcato Condominiums will be opening their first phase. Businesses along Tacoma Avenue are working on forming an association so that they can speak with a single voice. Other development is forthcoming and we will support these individuals that will not stand for the delaying tactics that have been employed by Health Department Staff over the past years.

Sincerely,
The New Tacoma Neighborhood Council

cc: Members of the Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health
Tacoma City Council Members