

Ward 1 Neighborhood Planning Assembly (NPA)  
Wednesday, February 11, 2026  
In-person at the Friends Meeting House, 173 North Prospect Street  
And Zoom online:  
<https://zoom.us/j/96245939050>  
Webinar ID: 962 4593 9050  
Or by phone: +1 929 205 6099 ID = 962 4593 9050

Food: Rob                      Facilitator: Sam                      Recorder: Jonathan                      Setup: Sam

6:15 - Welcome and Food (Namaste Kitchen Express)

6:30 - Formal Start - Introductions and Announcements: name, street

6:40 – Speakout

6:55: City Council Updates - Allie Schachter & Carter Neubieser

7:10 – School Commission Update – Matt Price & Gary Golden

7:25 – Town Meeting Day Ballot Items and more

General Budget, and Public Safety Tax Increase –Katherine Schad, Chief Administrative Officer

REIB Charter Change - Kelli Perkins, REIB Director; Christian Berry, Communications and Community Engagement Manager; Vicky Luciano, Administrative and Financial Coordinator

8:05 – Overdose Prevention Center Listening Session – Theresa Vezina, Special Assistant

8:30 - Adjourn

Ward 1 NPA Steering Committee  
Carol Livingston [carol.livingston1951@gmail.com](mailto:carol.livingston1951@gmail.com),  
Jonathan Chapple-Sokol [chapplesokol.npasc@gmail.com](mailto:chapplesokol.npasc@gmail.com),  
Sam Doherty [samcharlesdoherty@gmail.com](mailto:samcharlesdoherty@gmail.com)  
Gretchen Platt [gshuman7005@yahoo.com](mailto:gshuman7005@yahoo.com)  
Rob Gutman [rgutman@gmail.com](mailto:rgutman@gmail.com)

### ***Participation Guidelines:***

The Ward 1 NPA is sustained by community involvement and encourages engagement at our monthly meetings per the following guidelines:

1. We are collectively responsible for following the NPA Meeting Agenda as closely as possible regarding both presentation/discussion topics and time.
2. Participants at the NPA will act in a positive, courteous manner that respects all of those present (both participants and presenters/guests) and their differing opinions, experiences and perspectives.
3. Any attendee requesting to speak who has not yet spoken at a meeting will be called on before others who have already had a chance to speak. Priority is given to Ward 1 residents.
4. Whenever speaking, please be sure to project your voice and use the provided microphone if provided.
5. If the facilitator feels the need to redirect activity in the room based on these guidelines, the facilitator will do so per point number 1 above.

**Town Meeting Day is March 3rd!**

Visit [www.bsdt.org/budget](http://www.bsdt.org/budget) for complete budget and voting information.

**BALLOT LANGUAGE** *Shall the voters of the School District approve the School Board to expend \$140,807,830 which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? Burlington School District estimates that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in per pupil education spending of \$15,774.58, which is 6.40% higher than per pupil education spending for the current year.*

### BUDGET AT A GLANCE

<b>Total Current Year Budget (FY26)</b>	<b>\$134.7 million</b>
Increases to Health Insurance, Wages, and Benefits	\$4,682,571
Federal Revenue Reductions, Debt Service and Operating Inflation	\$4,675,259
Reductions (10 FTEs, Downtown BHS Rent, Department Budgets and Reorganizations)	<b>-\$3,250,000</b>
<b>Total Proposed Budget for Next Year (FY27)</b>	<b>\$140.8 million</b>
<b>Percent Change from FY26 Budget</b>	<b>4.47%</b>



### TAX IMPACT ESTIMATES

*See reverse for more information.*

Property Tax Payer	+4.7%
Impact on \$370K homestead	\$266
Income Tax Payer	+1.89%
Impact on \$50k income	\$23

*Important Disclaimer: The actual impact on taxpayers receiving an income-based credit is a combination of changes to their incomes and house-site values over multiple years. This estimate makes assumptions about all of these variables to illustrate a hypothetical impact. Income credit lags behind the change in property tax bills by one year.*



### BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

1. Prioritizes academic achievement by providing more support for early math and literacy.
2. Drives funds towards students who need it the most with updated RISE allocations and expanded special education services.
3. Continues to align staffing to enrollment while minimizing layoffs.
4. Property Tax Rate increase assumes a \$75 million tax buy-down from the State of Vermont.
5. Development of BSD's budget is informed by the District's Strategic Plan and our North Star: *Every learner is challenged, empowered, and engaged.*



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### What is the Story Behind this Year's Budget?

Each year, our goal is the same: to be careful with public dollars while continuing to provide excellent schools for our students. The school budget supports classroom learning, social and emotional supports, arts and music, athletics, and afterschool and summer programs that many families rely on. We knew that keeping these programs at their current level would require about a 5% increase to the District's overall budget, even after making reductions due to lower enrollment. This is a reflection of the rising costs of health care, salaries, and the day-to-day costs of running our schools (inflation). We also knew that in addition to keeping taxes low, recent achievement data makes it clear that we need to be prioritizing classroom instruction.

As a result, our proposed budget offers a number of reductions while also supporting the following instructional activities:

- 🍏 Updating the academic coaching model to include increased time spent on direct student support (e.g., intervention)
- 🍏 Revising our evaluation framework to align with the learning framework.
- 🍏 Prioritizing early literacy through the use of universal screeners and training in the science of reading.
  - 🍏 Expanding support for elementary mathematics.
  - 🍏 Expanding in-District special education programming for students with the most significant needs.

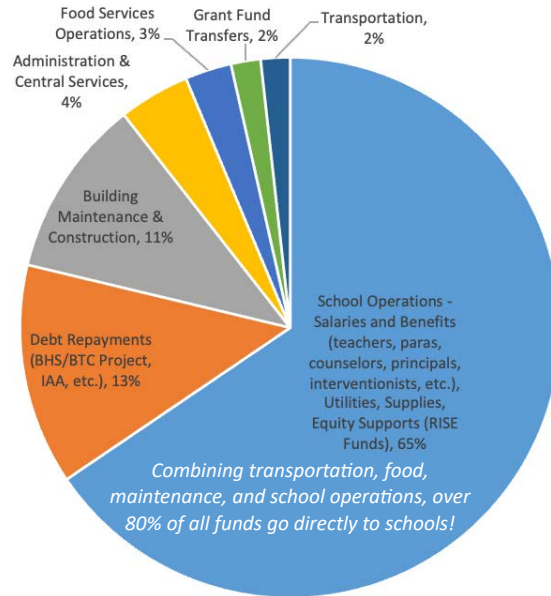
**Together, the budget represents moderate growth of 4.47%, and a moderate property tax impact of 4.7%.** It's important to know that this projected Property Tax Rate increase assumes that the Vermont legislature will add \$75 million to Vermont's Education Fund, reducing the tax impact on every community in the state. We are confident that at least this amount will be added. Without this, the tax rate increase would be 8.99%.

### How are we Working to Control Costs?

Our primary cost controlling measure is staffing. This year's budget reduces 6.5 classroom teachers in response to a decline in enrollment. An additional 3.5 district office positions are also proposed for reduction. We will also be reducing department budgets and restructuring some positions in central office. While we have faced reductions in each of the past four budget cycles, we have worked to avoid mass layoffs by spreading changes over time. As a result, attrition and restructuring have enabled us to retain almost all teachers impacted by reductions in the past few years. This remains our goal again this year.

### How Does Borrowing for the BHS/BTC Project Impact this Budget?

BSD has completed borrowing for the project. We were able to limit our total borrowing to \$159 million of the \$165 million voter authorization, saving taxpayers six million dollars of debt and well in excess of that amount in interest costs. The proposed FY27 budget includes \$13.5 million of debt service that represents the annual payment of principal and interest associated with the \$159 million that has been borrowed. For context, the projected project tax would be about 5.6% lower were it not for this debt service.



*Development of BSD's budget is informed by the District's Strategic Plan and our North Star: every learner is challenged, empowered, and engaged. Turn this document over to learn more about the budget.*



# REIB CHARTER CHANGE

OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY, INCLUSION, & BELONGING (REIB)

January 15, 2026




## REIB Charter Change: What Voters Are Being Asked to Decide

- On March 3, Burlington voters will decide whether to add the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REIB) to the City Charter
- The City Charter defines which parts of City government are permanent
- This change would make the REIB a stable, ongoing part of City government.
- Placing the REIB in the Charter helps ensure this work continues consistently over time, regardless of changes in leadership.



## What is DEI in City Government?

*Practical tools to improve systems & outcomes for everyone*

Diversity	Equity	Inclusion
<p>Recognize our community's differences</p> <p>Understand that one-size-fits-all solutions don't always work.</p> 	<p>Address barriers to access and opportunity</p>  <p>Provide fair support so all can succeed</p>	<p>Ensure people feel welcomed and valued</p>  <p>Create spaces where everyone can participate.</p>

*Focusing on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion helps the City serve all its residents effectively and fairly.*

## REIB Charter Change: What the REIB Does and Why it Matters for Burlington

### What the REIB Does in Burlington

- Supports city departments in the development, implementation, and coordination for programs and services to ensure consistency and accessibility
- Provides training and guidance for City staff, boards, and commissions
- Creates ways for community members to engage directly with City government

### Why This Matters for Burlington

- Helps the City and community respond to diverse and community-identified needs
- Supports a strong local economy and community resilience.
- Brings diverse perspectives into City decision-making and builds trust.



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## REIB Charter Change: Budget Clarity

### **Budget clarity:**

- The REIB already exists
- It represents about **0.7% of the City's General Fund**
- At its highest funding level, it has never exceeded **1% of the General Fund**



# **FY27 General Fund Budget & Police and Fire Tax Rate Increase**

## **NPA Presentation**

January-February 2026



# FY27 Budget: Big Picture

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- Estimated **\$10-12M budget gap** at this time
  - Approx. 10% of City's \$107M budget
- **Current FY27 general fund personnel estimate is \$78.5M (increase of 7.5%)**
- **This is in line with expectations**
  - Still includes estimates for health insurance & worker's comp based on timing of the current fiscal year and self-insured nature of our insurance plan



# FY27 Budget: Personnel

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- Started with FY26 personnel budget of \$73M
  - Departments recently provided updated information
- New police and fire union contract provisions unanimously supported by City Council and Mayor:
  - Add **2 new firefighters** per BFFA contract FY27
  - **Cost of living adjustments** of 7% (fire) and 4.75% (police). In line with regional salaries for first responders.
    - AFSCME negotiations start in February for FY27 so used a conservative figures for salary/benefits
    - Non-union – used AFSCME estimate as is our recent practice



# FY27 Budget: Personnel

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- Add required **annual step increases** for all eligible employees
- Increase **employer healthcare costs by 10%**
  - Based on initial estimate and subject to change based on current usage
- Increase **employer retirement costs by 5%**
  - Initial estimate
- Increase **worker's compensation** insurance costs by **5%**
  - Initial estimate



# FY27 Budget: Operating

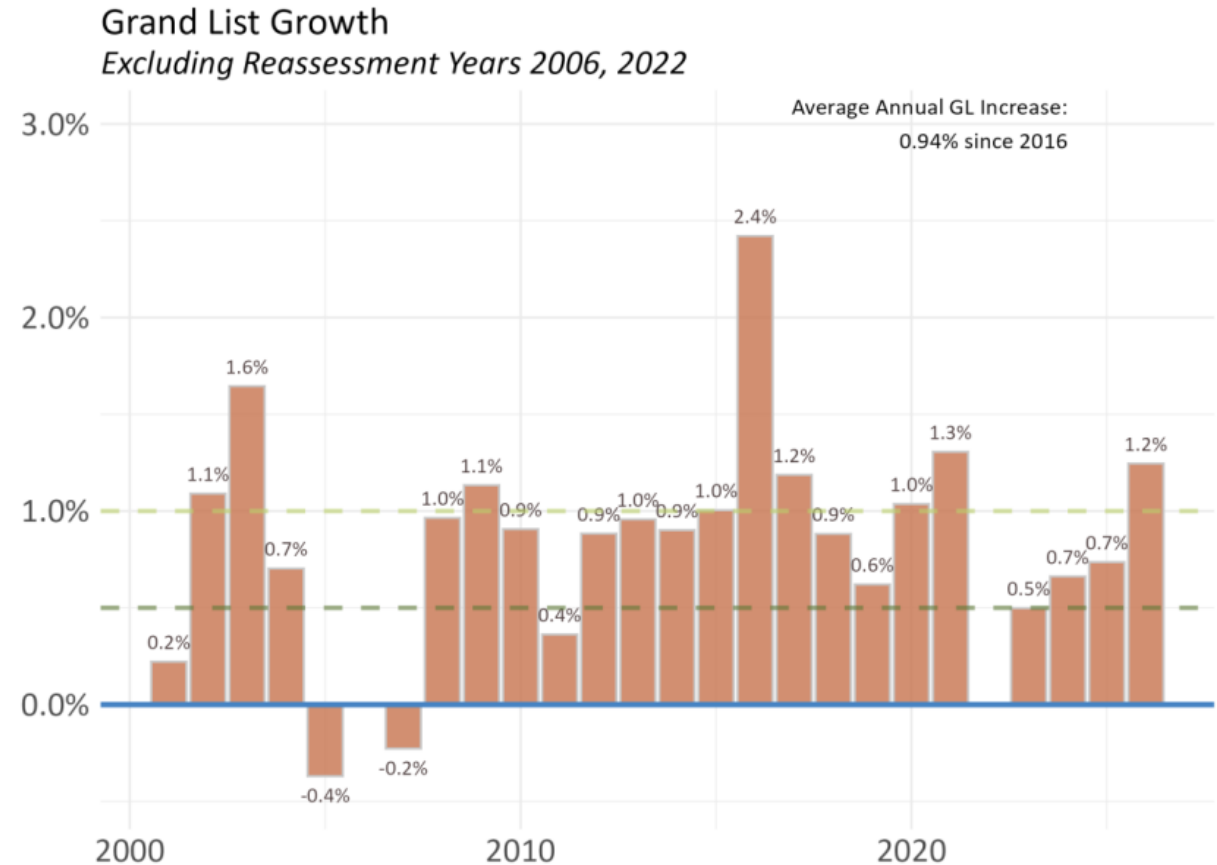
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- Add **3% for inflation** on most other non-personnel operating costs
- Added money to have cash available to purchase **9 new vehicles on the urgent/dire need list**: 6 are for Police & Fire, remaining are for Parks
  - Since 2013, City has constrained replacement of vehicles and equipment for budget reasons
  - In 2020, fleet committee estimated City needs \$2.7M/year for sustainable replacement of fleet
  - City has not yet been able to find sustainable fleet money in budget
  - Situation is no longer sustainable for first responders



# Why Ongoing Structural Budget Gap?

- Grand List is foundation of our revenue: property taxes.
- Property taxes represent **approximately half** of City's General Fund revenue
  - Other revenue comes from grants, other types of taxes (ex: gross receipts), and fees.
- **Our Grand List grows at a lower rate than our operating costs.**
- **Average annual grand list growth of 1.05% since 2016**
- Note: In FY27, we no longer collect \$1M of business personal property tax revenue, and there is no replacement source of revenue.





# Why Ongoing Structural Budget Gap?

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- **The City has overly relied on one-time funds.** We are changing this practice and removing historically unachievable revenues from our budget.
- FY26 Included **\$1.2M of ARPA funding** for police and fire salaries that is no longer available.
- FY26 included **\$650k of one-time increased collection** of delinquent property taxes and gross receipts – removing for further discussion.
- Some revenues overbudgeted in recent years, and budget not met – revising downward to make realistic creates an **additional expected gap of \$1.3M**



# Why Ongoing Structural Budget Gap?

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- The City has grown the size of our workforce, services and programming over the past decade.
- The City added 98 FTEs positions with salaries funded by the General Fund between FY14 – FY24.
  - This is an ongoing operational expense we added with one-time revenue sources in many cases.



# Balanced Budget: 3-Part Approach

- A gap of \$10-12M in City budget of \$107M is approximately 10% and will **require a balanced, three-part approach:**
  - Raise Revenue
  - Rightsize Government
  - Realize Strategic Opportunities





# Raise Revenue: Raise Police & Fire Tax

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- One option to raise revenue is **\$0.05 increase to police & fire tax**
- **Would raise about \$3M toward projected gap**
- Overall expected increase to FY27 compensation and benefits for police & fire is **\$3.05M**
  - Excluding retirement, which is covered by dedicated tax
- Current police & fire tax projected to raise \$6.4M this year
  - In contrast, budgets for those departments are \$39.1M
  - Police & fire tax only raises 16% of costs for the services
- **Bipartisan City Council vote (9-3) to place tax rate increase on TMD March ballot**



# Municipal Tax Effect

Note: \$353K is current median assessed value for home or condo in Burlington



Fiscal Year	Muni Tax Rate	Total Muni Tax on \$353K Property	\$ Increase	% Increase
FY22	\$.6704	\$2,367		
FY23	\$.7085	\$2,501	\$134	5.7%
FY24	\$.7523	\$2,655	\$154	6.2%
FY25	\$.8326	\$2,939	\$284	10.7%
FY26	\$.8556	\$3,020	\$81	2.8%
<b>FY27</b>	<b>\$.9363 *</b>	<b>\$3,305</b>	<b>\$285</b>	<b>9.4%</b>



\* Proposed rate for FY27 including \$.05 police and tax increase + other increases required by Charter.



# Preliminary Early Balanced Solution

Category	Solution	Amount	Notes
Raise Revenue	Increase Police & Fire Property Tax \$.05	\$ 3M	Council approved question to be placed on Town Meeting Day ballot.
Raise Revenue	Utilize One-Time Revenues	\$ 2M	Exploring use of dedicated tax balances from many years previous in appropriate, budget-relieving ways.
Raise Revenue	Enhance Collections	\$ 1M	Examples include parking tickets, ambulance fees and building permits. Refine amount.
Rightsize Government	Reduce Government Expenses 5-10%	\$ 3M	Department Heads made recommendations for further discussion.
Rightsize Government	Create Voluntary Furlough Program	\$ 0.2M	HR moving forward to create voluntary program.
Realize Strategic Opportunities	Sale of City Property	\$ 1M	Vacant properties or used for parking. Would create one-time money and add to ongoing property tax revenue.
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 10.2M</b>	

*Numbers are preliminary, and this is just an initial look at one way we could choose to structure the solution.*



# Summary

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- \$10-12M current gap
- Will utilize a three-part approach to handle – raising revenue, rightsizing government, and realizing strategic opportunities
- \$0.05 increase to police and fire tax will raise \$3M, which pays for increases City is obligated to contract to pay to those employees
- Vote happens on Town Meeting Day, March 3
- Each department will present budget to Board of Finance in early April
- Budget drafted by Mayor and must be approved by June 30 by City Council



# Your Voice Matters: Join the Listening Sessions

## Burlington's Overdose Prevention Center

The City of Burlington is opening an Overdose Prevention Center.

These listening sessions are part of our commitment to transparency and community engagement.

We'll share key information and survey findings, and hear your perspectives on community priorities as we move forward with implementation.

### Ward 1 Neighborhood Planning Assembly (NPA)

**Wednesday, February 11, 2026**  
**At 8:00PM**

**In-person at the Friends Meeting  
House, 173 North Prospect Street**

**And Zoom online:**  
**<https://zoom.us/j/96245939050>**

**[See NPA Full Agenda Here.](#)**

### For inquiries :

[tvezina@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:tvezina@burlingtonvt.gov)  
[jess@vcjr.org](mailto:jess@vcjr.org)

#### What to Expect:

- Brief presentation on survey findings and next steps.
- Structured discussion guided & inclusive.
- A welcoming space for community input.



# Burlington Overdose Prevention Center



## Introductions and Overview

- What is an Overdose Prevention Center (OPC)?
- What is the status of the OPC in Burlington?
- OPC Services Assessment
- Tonight's Listening Session

Burlington  
Overdose  
Prevention  
Center



## Tonight's Listening Session

- Preliminary survey results
- Evaluation next steps
- Discussion with Ward 1 residents
  - What positive impact do you hope the OPC will bring to our community?
  - Do you have concerns or questions related to the OPC?
  - What would you like to see for ongoing communication once the OPC opens?

# Burlington Overdose Prevention Center

## Services Assessment



### Services Assessment Overview

- The City of Burlington contracted with Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) to inform the Services Assessment report required by the OPC Guidelines.
- Purpose is to engage people with living experience and the wider Burlington professional and residential community to help inform the City and VCJR in the implement of the OPC.

### Evaluation Activities to Date

- In-person surveys with people with 49 people with living experience\*
- Online community survey completed with over 1500 responses\*
- Ongoing tracking of community engagement activities

\*Preliminary findings only include quantitative data. Qualitative (open-ended) data will be shared in final report

# Who did we hear from?

## 49 individuals completed the in-person PWLE Survey

- All respondents used an illicit substance within the past 30 days
- 84% of respondents reported not having a stable place to live, with 80% unsheltered
- 86% used drugs at least once per day
- 43% used drugs alone most of the time or always
- 47% had at least one overdose in the past year.

## 1505 respondents completed the online community survey

- 75% of survey respondents identified as Burlington residents, 45% work in Burlington, and 2% are Burlington business owners
- 8% identified as a person who used to use or currently uses non-prescription opioids or stimulants

# Where are people using drugs in Burlington?

Location of drug use	N=49
Where you are currently living or staying	77%
Outside location, not specified (e.g., park, alley)	69%
Car or other vehicle	67%
Outside at City Hall Park	63%
Other residence (friend or acquaintance)	61%
Public restroom	57%
Outside on or near Church Street	55%
Outside at Waterfront	51%
Public building (e.g., library)	43%

# Utilization and Perception of the OPC

## PWLE utilization of the OPC

- Of the 49 respondents, 92% responded that they would consider using the OPC once it opens, with 73% responding that they would use the OPC always or most of the time.

## Community Perception of the OPC

- On scale of 1 (least helpful) to 10 (most helpful), the most selected answer was 10, the median answer was 7 and the average answer was 6.3

# Respondents' Preferred OPC Location

**PWLE survey:** How likely would you be to use an OPC at various locations?

**Community survey:** Where should an OPC be located in Burlington to be most effective?

- Downtown Burlington was the most selected response on both PWLE and community surveys
- The ONE and Riverside/Intervale area were a close 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> choice on both surveys

## Location Factors (from community survey)

When asked which are important factors when considering the vicinity of the OPC:

Accessibility for potential clients was the most common response (52%), followed by proximity to schools/playgrounds (40%), other support services (40%), and transportation (38%)

# Access to the OPC (PWLE survey)

➤ **Time** PWLE are willing to travel to access an OPC:

5-15 minutes: 60%

15-25 minutes: 23%

25-35 minutes: 13%

➤ 68% of PWLE responded that they would be likely or very likely use a **free shuttle** if it were offered between downtown and the location of the OPC

➤ 75% of PWLE responded that they would be likely or very likely to use the OPC if it was a **mobile van** that traveled around Burlington.

# Security and Safety at the OPC (PWLE Survey)

- **OPC Security** How would a security guard inside the OPC make you feel?
  - More safe: 53%
  - Less safe: 19%
  - Neither more safe or less safe: 28%
- How would a security guard outside the OPC make you feel?
  - More safe: 47%
  - Less safe: 19%
  - Neither more safe or less safe: 34%

# Public Health Outcomes

Community survey respondents ranked the order of importance of seven identified public health outcomes (in order of most importance to least)

#1 Prevent overdoses and save lives

#2 Reduce the number of people using drugs outdoors and in public spaces

#3 Help connect people to drug treatment and health and social services

#4 Less burden on emergency rooms, police, fire, & EMS by reducing overdose-related calls

#5 Reduce crime in the area surrounding the overdose prevention center

#6 Reduce number of syringes or other litter related to drug use discarded in public

#7 Reduce HIV and hepatitis C transmission due to syringe sharing

# Services and Supports

- The majority of **PWLE respondents** reported that proposed OPC services such as medical care, STI testing, bathrooms and showers, peer support, drug checking, on-site buprenorphine, mental health and drug treatment referrals, and support with basic needs are important or very important
- **Community survey respondents** ranked possible OPC services: Referrals to drug treatment, Mental health services or referrals, on-site buprenorphine treatment, bathrooms, and peer support were noted among the most important services to offer at the OPC

# Ongoing Community Conversations

<b>Community survey: How would you want to engage in community conversations around the OPC?</b>	
Online form submitted to city or site employee	42%
Community gathering events	40%
Virtual gathering	38%
NPA Meetings	36%
In-person gatherings	34%
Community listening sessions	33%
E-mail address city or site employee	25%
Comment box located at City Hall, Library, etc.	19%
Phone number to leave voicemail or text message	19%
Other	11%

# Next Steps

- Continued engagement at NPA meetings, focus groups, attendance at community meetings, and interviews with people with living experience
- Final report with findings to inform the Services Assessment in April
- Link to [Annual Progress Report](#)
- Hiring OPC Project Manager