



December 23, 2024

To: Each Mayor & Council of the Greater Victoria Area, Capital Regional District (CRD) Board members all being participants, and Juan De Fuca Electoral Areas(s) for the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee (VFC&YJC), and Regional Governance Council - Integrated Police Units

Dear All,

At its regular meeting of November 28, 2024, the VFC&YJC passed the following motion:

"That Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee directs the Chair to send a cover letter signed by the chair together with the Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST) Business Case Report (Report) dated September 2024 addressed to VFC&YJC prepared by Dr. Rebecca Nelems to each municipal Council within the Capital Regional District (CRD), the JDF Electoral Area(s), and the CRD Board for informational purposes as well as for their consideration of support for the Report's proposed plan(s) and its recommendations"

Mobile Youth Services Team (MYST): Critical Status Report and Recommendations was prepared by Dr. Rebeccah Nelems, PhD and released June 2024. Dr. Nelems provides three main recommendations:

- 1. To secure long-term, 5-year funding to support two full-time MYST teams.***
- 2. To urgently convene local leadership across education, health, police, legal services, child and family services, and all levels of government to strategize and guide long-term, inter-institutional funding mechanisms and strategies.***
- 3. To conduct research on MYST as a model of youth-centred, wraparound support that could be replicated in other municipalities and capital regional districts across Canada.***

As you are likely aware, the VFC&YJC has been advocating to the Province for expanded staffing and stable, long-term funding for MYST since 2021. The CRD Board of Directors and municipal councils representing Colwood, Highlands, Langford, Metchosin, Oak Bay, Sooke and Victoria have also submitted letters to the Province in strong support of MYST.

The VFC&YJC's latest position on what we deem an essential service is fully captured in an op-ed published in the [Victoria Times Colonist on Oct. 23](#).

As it states: *"The region needs more MYST teams, not fewer. This unique service bridges the gap between social services, health, education and justice systems, catching youth who might otherwise fall through the cracks."*

The potential loss of this vital and proven counselling resource is not in line with the province's announced goals to address the issues facing vulnerable youth and their families in our complex, anxious modern society. Trusted relationships built through this specialized and high-functioning team cannot be lost due to an interruption of service."

The VFC&YJC strongly urges your councils, boards and elected representatives to carefully read Dr. Nelems's report while considering how we all in the Greater Victoria Area can best support our most vulnerable young people.

Sincerely,

Marie-Térèse Little, Chair, VFC&YJC
Mayor, District of Metchosin
Vice-Chair, Capital Regional District

Please consider copying your letters of support to the Premier and following **Provincial Ministers**:

- *Premier of BC David Eby,
- *Attorney General & Deputy Premier: Honourable Niki Sharma,
- *Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General: Honourable Gary Begg,
- *Minister of Health: Honourable Josie Osbourne,
- *Minister of Children and Family Development: Honourable Grace Lore,
- *Minister of Education and Child Care: Honourable Lisa Beare,
- *Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation: Honourable Christine Boyle,
- *Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction: Honourable Sheila Malcolmson,
- *Minister of State for Child Care and Children and Youth with Support needs: Honourable Jodie Wickens,
- *Minister of State for Community Safety and Integrated Services: Honourable Terry Yung,
- *And Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee (for our records).

As well as to **Federal Members of Parliament:**

- *The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc- Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions & Intergovernmental Affairs,
- *The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos- Minister of Public Services and Procurement,
- *The Honourable Sean Fraser -Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities,
- *The Honourable-Mark Holland- Minister of Health,
- *The Honourable Marci Len- Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth,
- *The Honourable-Ya'ara Saks- Minister of Mental Health and Addictions,
- *The Honourable Jenna Sudds- Minister of Families, Children and Social Development,
- *The Honourable Arif Virani- Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada

Additionally to: Leader of the NDP- Jagmeet Singh, House Leader of the NDP- Peter Julian, Standing Committee on Health, and Member of Parliament- Laurel Collins, NDP Critic for Families Children and Social Development

About the VFCYJC

The Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee was founded in 1966 under the [BC Provincial Court Act](#) and expanded under the Federal [Youth Criminal Justice Act](#). The VFCYJC is a Delegated Commission of the Capital Regional District as established by [Bylaw No. 4453](#). Our objectives, as per this bylaw, are the following: *“(a) to identify, inform, educate, advocate for, and report on, gaps in regional resources for youth justice and family court issues; (b) to act as a resource for the public and youth & family organizations; (c) to encourage collaboration between and visibility of community services.”*

For more information, visit the [VFC&YJC website](#) and our [meetings & agendas](#) archive.

Thank you.