



New London Police Department

5 Governor Winthrop Blvd. New London, CT 06320

P: (860) 447-5269

F: (860) 447-5277

W: ci.new-london.ct.us

Crime Prevention Unit

(860) 440-6678

Date: 11/1/18

RE: ODP Referral Comments: A-CURE, LLC - 607,611, 615 Bank St.

To Whom It May Concern:

As the Crime Prevention Officer for the City of New London Police Department, it is my responsibility to take the necessary steps to prevent the opportunity for crime and victimization and to create an environment where law-abiding residents feel safe to conduct business, purchase a home or raise a family. Oftentimes, commercial and business ventures can work against these noble goals and inadvertently create an environment that is un conducive to these ends.

New London is already home to a large number of crime generating and crime attracting entities; from pawn shops and liquor stores to homeless shelters and drug rehabilitation organizations, these facilities have statistically been shown to increase crime in the neighborhoods in which they are situated. A "crime generator" or "crime attractor", as studies suggest, are activity nodes that bring willing offenders and would-be victims into the same space and create an environment of opportunity for crime and disorder to occur. I believe adding yet another drug rehabilitation facility to the urban mosaic of New London would not improve the quality of life of the surrounding area and would not add to the fabric of the community; I would argue that the opposite would take place. According to a study from the UK, opioid users are significantly more likely to commit crimes than individuals who do not abuse opioids.¹ The individuals who would be seeking harm reduction services at a facility like the one A-CURE is proposing would, seemingly, be at the height of the throngs of their addiction. Individuals seeking harm reduction (clean needle exchanges, sober housing, etc.) would not be in a state of sound mind or body and would be more likely to commit crimes to fuel their addiction. Creating such a facility at the location in question would put would-be offenders and potential victims in very close proximity and would create a recipe for crime and disorder.

In addition to the potential crime concerns brought about by the clientele of such a facility, the intention of the applicant to have "business" hours to as late as 11:00pm is concerning. With residences upstairs and behind the location in question and the anticipated development of residences across the street on Parcel J, having an opioid harm reduction facility open so late and in such close proximity to residents' homes is troublesome and does not reflect positively on the image of the city. Also, the applicant had verbally expressed interest to members of the Office of Development and Planning that she would like the hours of operation of the facility to be 24 hours a day in the future. Once again, this could be problematic to say the least.

Though I am aware that my comments do not carry the weight of law and may not have an impact on the licensing decision, it is my obligation to voice concerns in regards to the placement of this facility in the City of New London and specifically at that location on Bank Street. I am fully aware that *all* individuals with opioid use disorder do not commit crimes and

¹ Hammersley R, Forsyth A, Morrison V, Davies JB. The relationship between crime and opioid use. British Journal of Addiction. 1989 Sep;84(9):1029-43. PubMed PMID: 2790266.



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many are good people seeking a better life for themselves, but I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge significant scholarship that points to these individuals as being more likely to offend and commit crimes that are in some way fueled by, or related to, their addiction to opioids. Yet another survey undertaken in 2018 revealed that "people who use opioids, including heroin, were up to 13 times more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system."² And with the facility in question being a meeting place for these individuals, the safety and quality of life of the neighboring residents and businesses may be impacted. Perhaps a neighboring jurisdiction would assist in sharing the responsibility in tending to the needs of these individuals instead of New London single-handedly shouldering the burden yet again.

I've attached a simple schematic of the surrounding area and identified the density of crime generators in the immediate area. Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

Ofc. Ryan Soccio, MPA
Crime Prevention Officer

² Chatterjee, Rhitu. "With More Opioid Use, People Are More Likely To Get Caught Up In The Justice System." NPR, NPR, 6 July 2018, www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/07/06/626176621/with-more-opioid-use-people-are-more-likely-to-get-caught-up-in-the-justice-syst.