

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

11. Public Safety: Evaluating and Addressing Any Impacts of City of Vancouver Actions on Neighbourhood Safety

Submitted by: Councillor De Genova

WHEREAS:

1. Vancouver City Council advocated for the province to provide housing and wrap-around supports for people in encampments in Oppenheimer (May 2020) and (April 2021). The encampment ended after the Province responded by securing 686 housing units and community centre spaces. Over 180 people moved out of Strathcona Park into housing units described as temporary transitional housing;ⁱ
2. On September 11, 2020, Mayor Stewart called a Special Council meeting where he brought a motion asking Council to endorse work on three housing options for unsheltered residents in Vancouver.ⁱⁱ In October 2020, Council voted to allocate \$30 million of city funding to this plan;
3. The City of Vancouver does not require commitments from senior levels of government to fund adequate supports to meet the complex care needs of residents in transitional or supportive housing;
4. Adequate support for complex care models often reaches beyond a housing unit in a building with a front desk clerk. Non-profit operators cannot provide further support for mental health, addictions, or trauma without funding;
5. Evidence-based research and success rates reinforce the importance of robust supports and care models, such as the Red Fish Healing Centre, opening in Coquitlam on Riverview Lands in October 2021. Operated by BC Mental Health & Substance Use Services, this 105-bed facility will treat people from across the province with concurrent diagnoses and complex substance use and mental health issues. The only centre of its kind in North America, six domains of wellness complete this model of care, including 'meaningful life';ⁱⁱⁱ
6. Vancouver Police continue to warn the public about dramatic increases in violent crime compared to reports filed pre-pandemic; examples reported include:
 - Sexual assaults by strangers (129% increase comparing July 2021 and 2019);^{iv}
 - Commercial break-ins, property damage and theft. Violent shoplifting (260% increase from 2019 to 2020);^v
 - Drastic rise in hate crimes (116% increase, with anti-Asian hate crimes rising 878% from 2019 to 2020, when compared with data from 2019);

7. The media has reported concerns of Vancouver residents for their safety after violent crimes in their neighbourhoods. Examples of incidents causing fear include assaults on young children, home invasions, stabbings and the recent violent sexual assault that left a senior with life-threatening injuries;
8. Several media outlets have reported expensive and repeat damage to storefronts of small businesses, especially in Downtown and the West End. Hit with these costs on top of losses from COVID-19, many small businesses find it difficult to continue operating; and
9. Residents living in strata condos and rental buildings are frustrated as property damage continues daily, resulting in increased strata fees and costs associated with their housing.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to host and facilitate a roundtable, inviting Business Improvement Associations (BIAs) to each select a few members to share concerns or perspectives on increased property crime, theft and violent shoplifting;

FURTHER THAT representatives from the Vancouver Police Department, Vancouver Coastal Health and BC Housing, also be invited to this roundtable;

AND FURTHER THAT staff report back to Council with a summary and any recommendations before the end of Q4 2021.

- B. THAT Council direct staff to request on behalf of Council to the Vancouver Police Department, responsible for the Community Policing Centres Budget, to consider and report back with options for resident participation in safety measures and programs, especially in neighbourhoods experiencing high levels of violent crime;

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to request on behalf of Council that the Vancouver Police Department share monthly updates to Council members on serious crime and violent crime in Vancouver.

- C. THAT Council direct staff to approach staff in the appropriate ministries, including the Ministry for Mental Health and Addictions, the Ministry for Social Development and Poverty Reduction and BC Housing, and request funding for centres such as Redfish Healing Centre be considered for transitional and supportive housing in the City of Vancouver.

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ⁱ More than 180 move out of Strathcona Park encampment ahead of Friday deadline: Park Board. April 2021. Global News BC: <https://globalnews.ca/news/7823881/strathcona-park-encampment-deadline/#:~:text=The%20Vancouver%20Park%20Board%20says%20more%20than%20180,the%20East%20Vancouver%20park%20by%2010%20a.m.%20Friday.>

ⁱⁱ Council Member's Motion: Emergency COVID-19 Relief for Unsheltered Vancouver Residents. September 2020. <https://council.vancouver.ca/20200911/documents/spec1.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Red Fish Healing Centre for Mental Health and Addiction. BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services. <http://www.bcmhsus.ca/our-services/provincial-integrated-mental-health-addiction-programs/red-fish-healing-centre>

^{iv} VPD warns sex assaults on the rise throughout the city. (2021 August) Vancouver Police Department <https://vpd.ca/news/2021/08/11/vpd-warns-sex-assaults-on-the-rise-throughout-the-city/>

^v VPD responds to rising crime in downtown core. (2021 September) Vancouver Police Department <https://vpd.ca/news/2021/09/16/vpd-responds-to-rising-crime-in-downtown-core/>