

Special Vancouver City Council Meeting: Public Safety and Violent Crime Citywide

April 28, 2022



Section 1

Introduction

Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to organize a Special Meeting of Council, with a focus on hearing presentations from residents, businesses and community delegations and understanding concerns related to public safety and violent crime citywide.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to:
- i. Invite staff from the following city departments, agencies, and provincial ministries, to participate in this Special Council meeting with a presentation, including but not limited to:
 - The City of Vancouver
 - Homeless Outreach Team and Social Policy
 - Streets and Sanitation
 - The Vancouver Police Department and Vancouver Police Board
 - The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
 - Vancouver Coastal Health
 - BC Housing
 - Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions
 - BC Prosecution Service
 - BC Human Rights Commission
 - ii. Schedule this Special Council meeting on a weekday evening in April 2022, advertised to the public, including on social media.
- C. THAT Council direct staff, to request the Vancouver Police Department work together with them to develop an action plan and report back to Council no later than June 2022 with information and recommendations to address and mitigate public safety concerns and issues;
- FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to utilize the information from the event as part of a cooperative and collaborative approach to scoping the feasibility of a Vancouver Community Safety and Well-being Strategy, which seeks to understand and address the root causes of inequity so that all residents have access to the people, places, programs, services and supports necessary for their safety and well-being.

- Per Council's March 30, 2022 resolution
- Forum for Council to hear from residents, businesses and community delegations to understand concerns related to public safety and violent crime citywide

Participations per the Council resolution, including but not limited to ...

- The City of Vancouver
 - Homeless Outreach Team and Social Policy
 - Streets and Sanitation
 - Vancouver Police Department/Vancouver Police Board
 - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- BC Housing
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Staff extended invitations to speak to over 50 business/community organisations, including Business Improvement Areas, Community Policing Centres, and relevant not-for-profit agencies.

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FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to utilize the information from the event as part of a cooperative and collaborative approach to scoping the feasibility of a Vancouver Community Safety and Well-being Strategy, which seeks to understand and address the root causes of inequity so that all residents have access to the people, places, programs, services and supports necessary for their safety and well-being.

1. City and VPD staff to report back to Council with an action plan by June 2022
 - Recommendations to address public safety concerns/issues
2. Staff will scope feasibility of a “Vancouver Community Safety and Well-Being Strategy”
 - Understand/address root causes of inequity
 - Ensure all residents have access to the people, places, programs, services and supports necessary for their safety and well-being

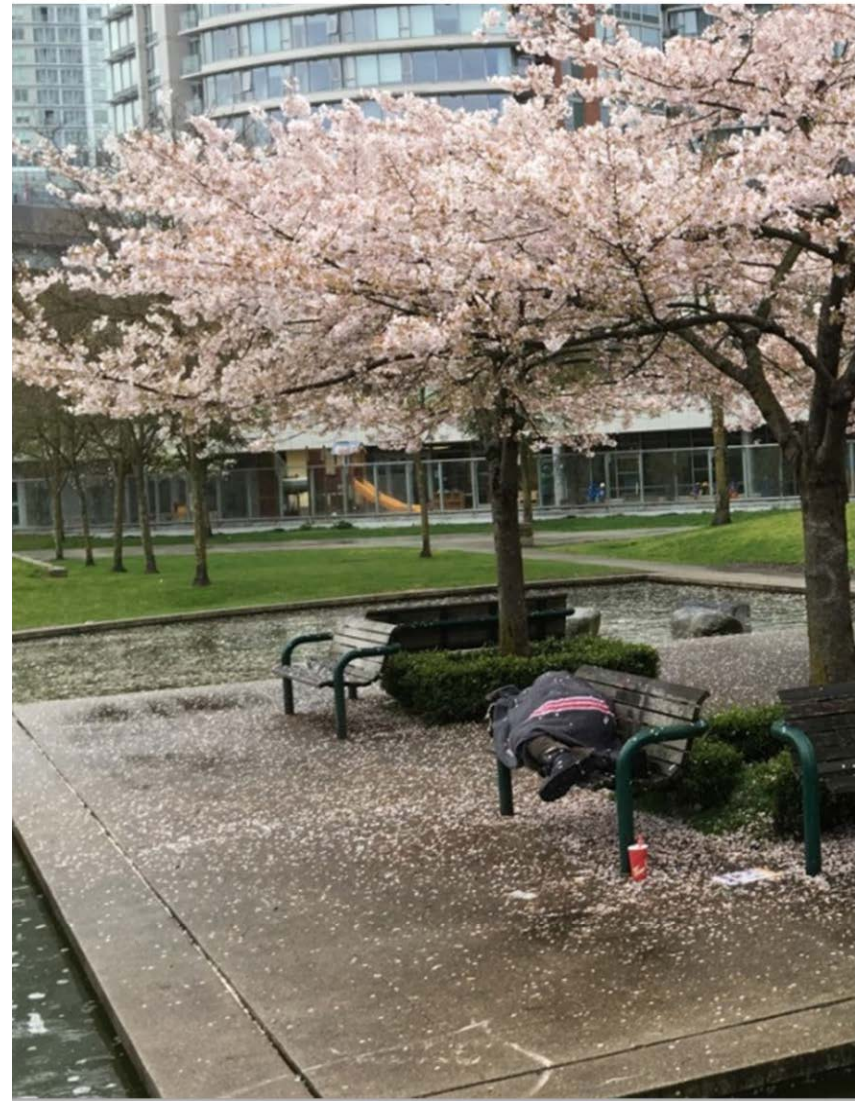
Section 2

Homeless Outreach Team & Social Policy

Sandra Singh - General Manager of Arts, Culture, & Community Services

ACCS Outline

- Intersecting Global Crises
- Social Determinants of Health
- How We Build Safety
- Intergovernmental Partnership
- ACCS Key Highlights
 - Homelessness Services
 - Social and Supportive Housing
 - Anti-Racism & Cultural Redress
 - Decriminalizing Poverty
 - Community Economic Development
 - Gender Safety
 - Urban Health & Sex Worker Safety
- Summary



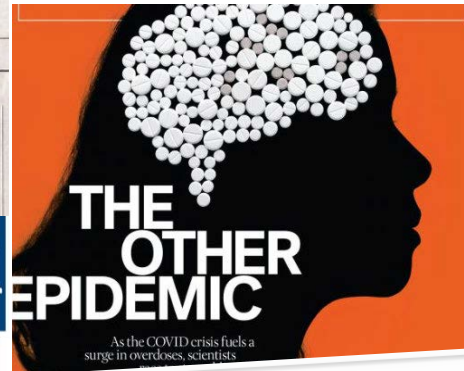
Intersecting Global Crises

Vancouver is not alone in these challenges.

COMMENTARY

COVID-19's Disproportionate Impact on Communities of Color Spotlights the Nation's Systemic Inequities

Gracia, J. Nadine MD, MSCE



The New York Times

Overdose Deaths Reached Record High as the Pandemic Spread

More than 100,000 Americans died from drug overdoses in the yearlong period ending in April, government researchers said.

Give this article



VIEWPOINTS

History tells us the pandemic mental health crisis is far from over

by Sandhira Wijayarane April 18, 2022

York Times

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JULY 28, 2018



Housing Crisis Grows as HUD Sits on Sideline

theguardian

Housing crisis ... but not for all

Home > Coronavirus (COVID-19) Local News

Poverty Report charts path out of COVID for marginalized groups

Canada's minister of families says report will 'help inform' government policy moving forward

Canadian Press
Jan 3, 2022 6:00 PM



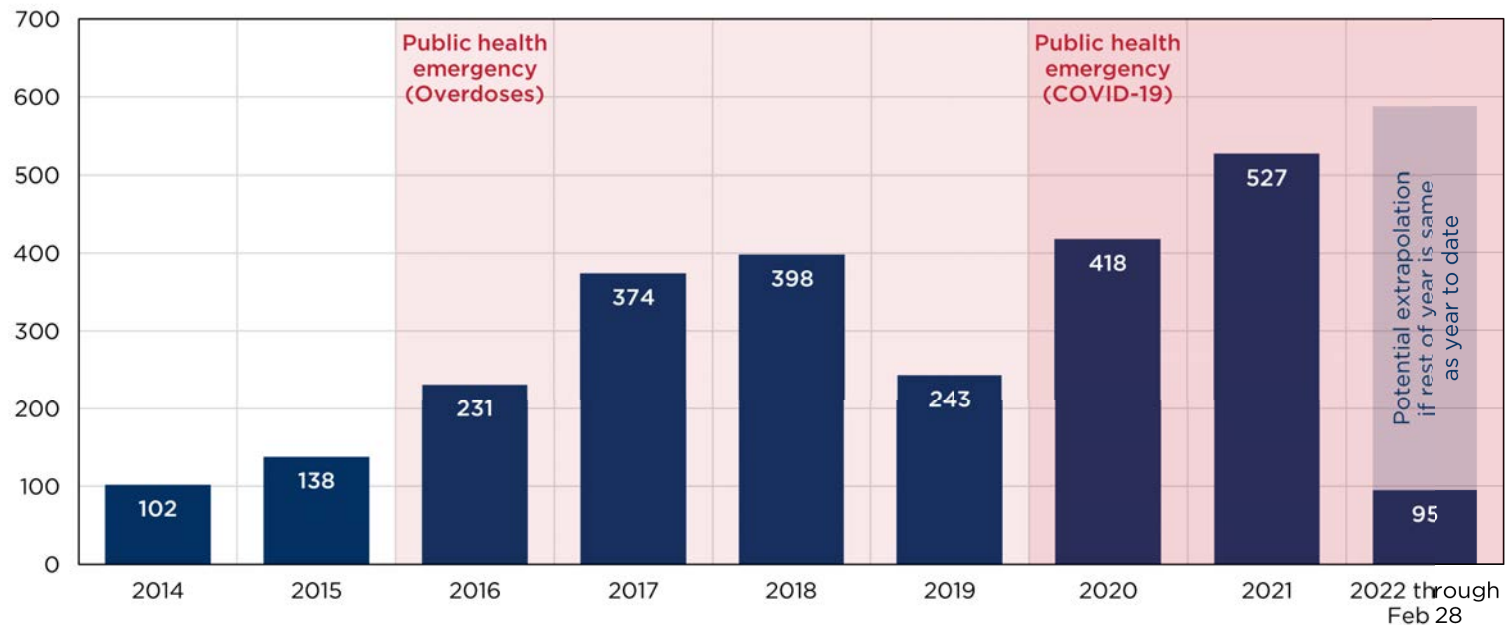
The Daily Telegraph

Life put on hold

Whole households with symptoms of virus must stay indoors for two weeks
Avoid pubs, theatres, large gatherings
Think of...

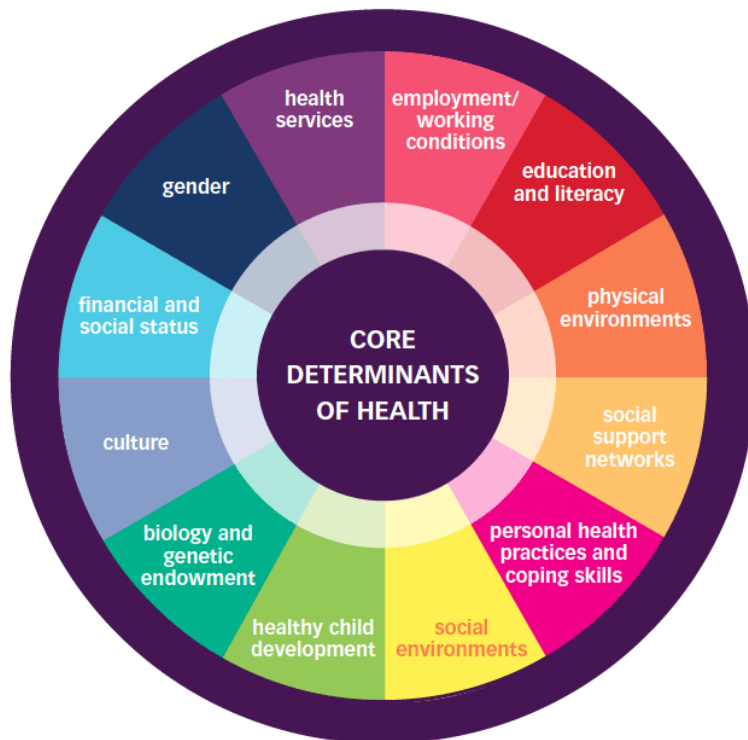
2022: A Critical Year to Address the Worsening Overdose Crisis

Annual Overdose Deaths in City of Vancouver, 2014 to Present



Data Source: BC Coroners Service, Overdose Deaths in British Columbia statistical reports

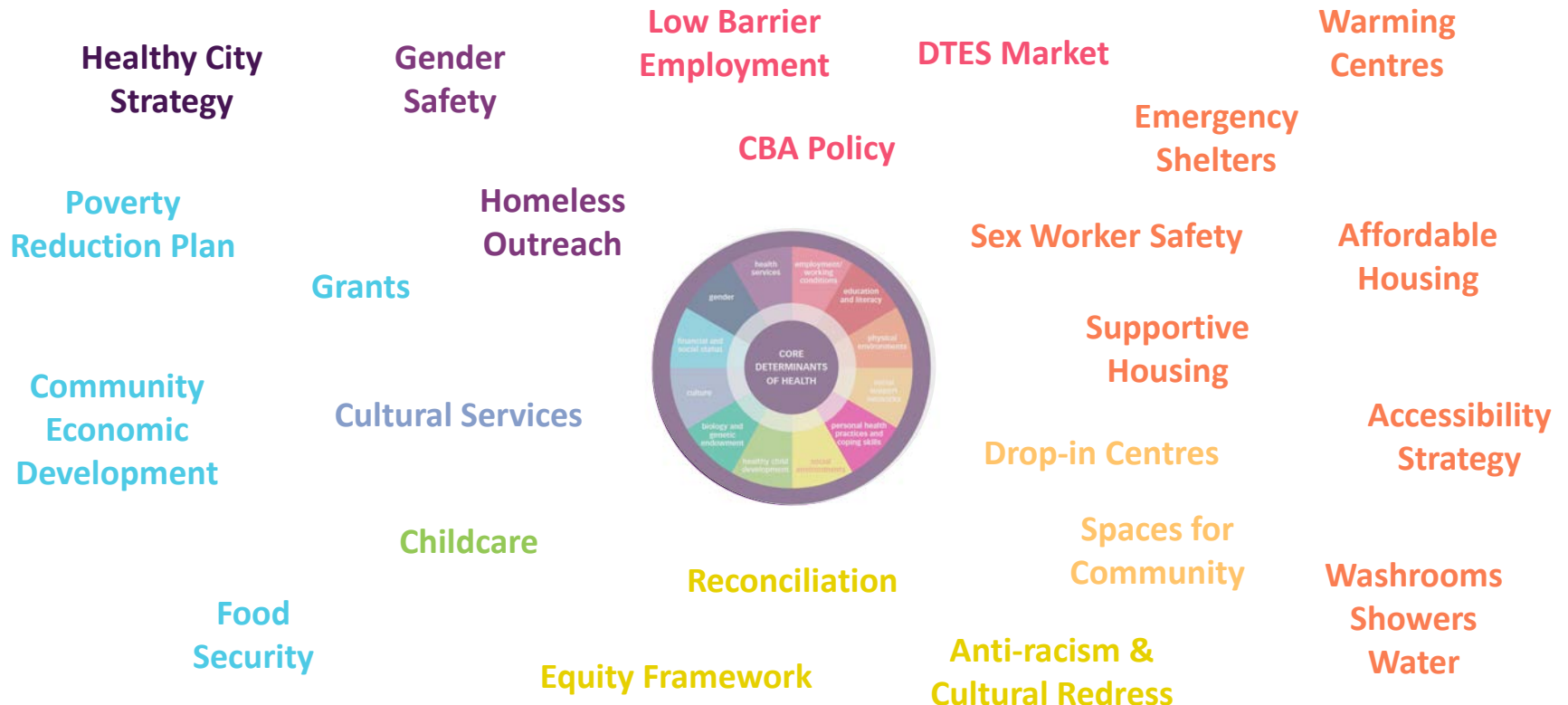
Social Determinants of Health



Build community safety through Social Determinants of Health and address root causes

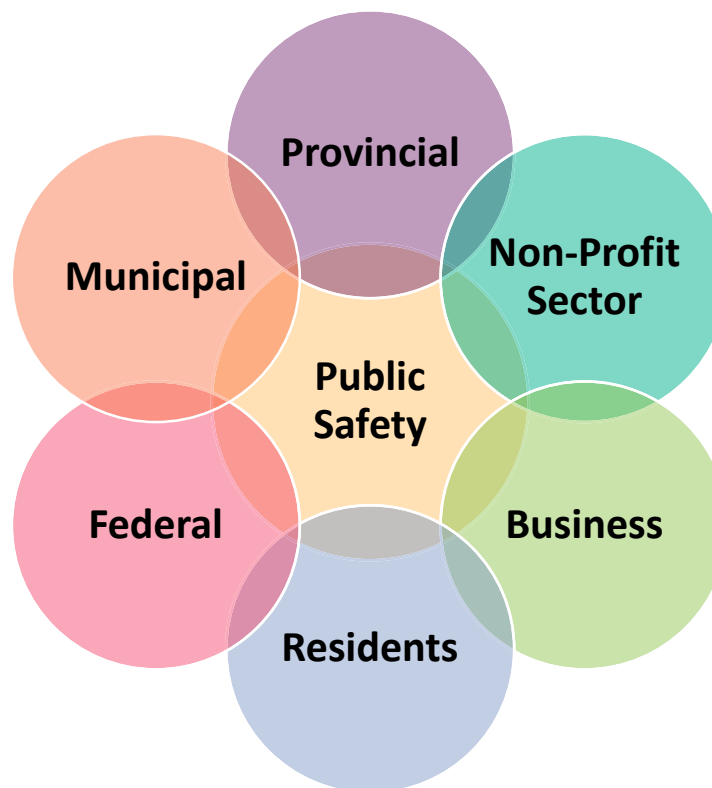
Social Determinants: the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life.

How We Build Community Safety



Intersecting Responsibilities

Partnership and collaboration between all levels of government, the non-profit sector, business, and individual residents are keys to success.



ACCS Initiatives Underway



Photo Credit: Lani Brunn

Homelessness Services

Homelessness Services is the Gateway to access resources that keep people safe and address the Social Determinants of Health



OUTREACH H 2021

- COV's Outreach Team:
- 6,438 unique clients served
 - 2,139 were new to our services
 - 957 housing units secured
 - ~ 80% remain housed after 6 mos



SHELTER S 2021/22

- 1576 TOTAL spaces city-wide,
591 COV operates or partners on:
- 394 year-round shelter beds
 - 34 Winter-only shelter beds
 - 62 Provincial EWR mats
 - 101 Warming Centre spaces

What does the research and data tell us?

People experiencing homelessness are up to **7 X more likely to be a victim of a violent crime** compared to the general population.

Homelessness and police-recorded crime victimization: a nationwide, register-based cohort study. The Lancet Public Health 2020.

People experiencing homelessness:

- Are more likely to be targets of violent crime and assault
- Under report non-violent crime
- 72% had been victims of crime within the previous year

Better Together.

Neighbourhood Collective Action Pilot

GOALS

- Increase community engagement and awareness
- Build on existing partnerships and create new ones
- Collaborate on solutions and respond to neighbourhood concerns
- Improve sense of belonging and connection
- Build and maintain positive relationships

COMPONENTS

- Neighbourhood Collective Action Tables
- Peer Stewardship Program
- Education and Training Program
- Outreach and Coordination
- Neighbourhood Cleanliness

Social & Supportive Housing

The City partners with senior levels of government and through programs, policy and regulation supports the delivery of affordable, accessible homes for all.



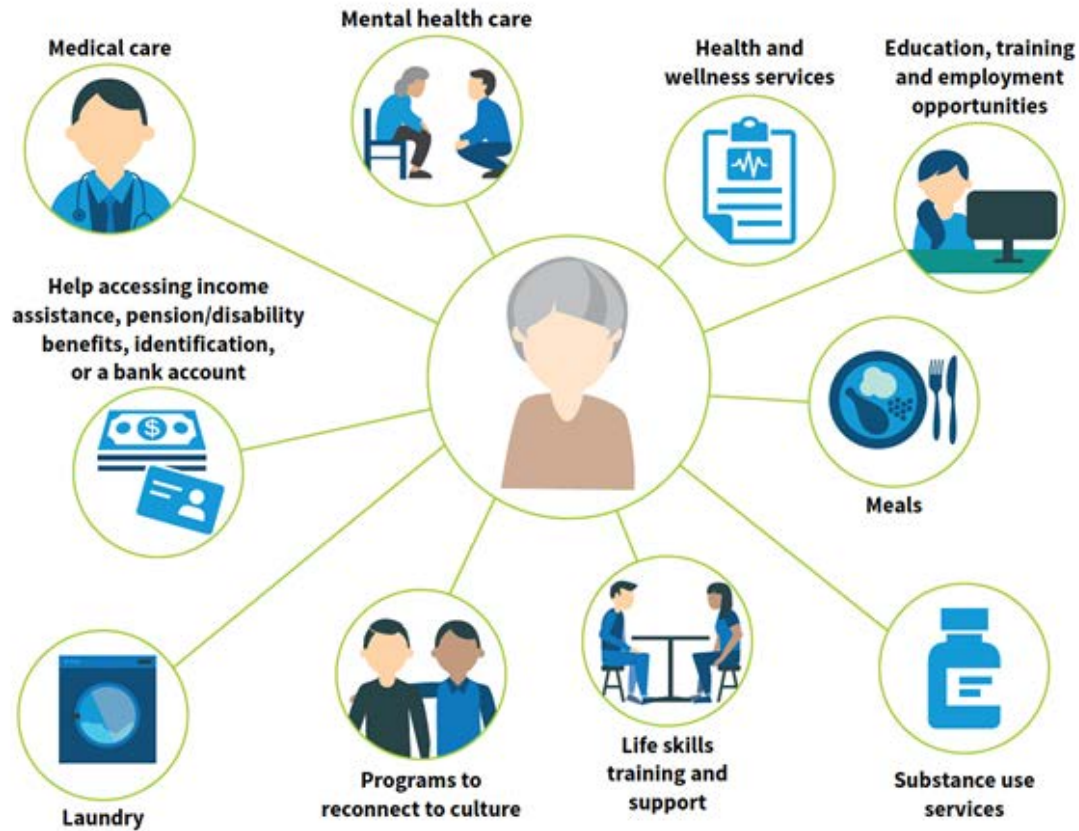
PRIORITIES 2021/2022

- Vacancy Control in SROs to address speculative investment
- Intergovernmental Investment Strategy for SRO Replacement

PRIORITIES 2021/22

- 300+ units of new Permanent Modular Supportive Housing
- Rapid delivery of new RHI funded supportive homes
- Partnering with VCH, BC Housing on Complex Care Housing

Supportive Housing & Safety



Anti-Racism and Cultural Redress

The anti-racism and cultural redress work seeks to address systemic racism and its impact on racialized communities, including manifestations of anti-Black, anti- Indigenous and anti-Asian racism. Acknowledging the truth about historical injustices and their impact on communities today ensures that these injustices are adequately addressed. Work underway includes:

- Standing Up to the Rise in anti-Asian Racism, All Racism and Hate Crimes
- Addressing anti-Black Racism
- Historical Discrimination Against People of South Asian Descent in Vancouver
- Safety for Residents with Precarious Status: Delivering Access without Fear
- Combatting Antisemitism in Vancouver
- Chinatown Transformation
- Northeast False Creek Plan's commitment to address the historic intentional displacement of Black Canadians of Hogan's Alley by the City
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People Task Force (CMO)



Decriminalizing Poverty: Action While Planning with Community

Alternatives to Street Clearing:

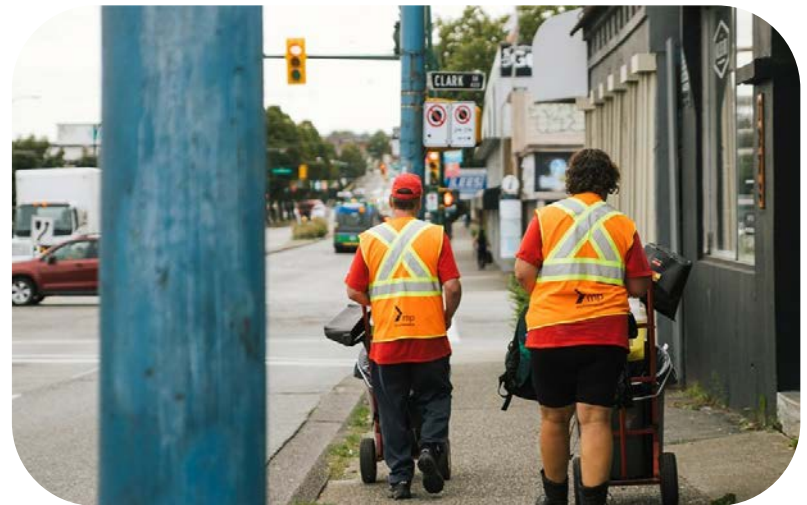
Identify better ways to keep people safe

Alternatives to 911:

Examine alternatives to police when calls around mental health, substance overdose and sexual assault calls are made

Restorative Justice:

Provide funding to support Vancouver being a restorative city to strengthen relationships and view conflict as an opportunity for positive change



Community Economic Development

Community Benefit Agreements

- 2021: SPH procured ~\$35M in local goods/services & ~\$9M towards social impact and diverse owned businesses
- 56 new jobs for people who faced barriers to employment (Yr 1 SPH CBA)
- 2022: 12 new developments will be actively applying the CBA policy
- 2023: 1500+ new jobs will be available for local and equity-denied people

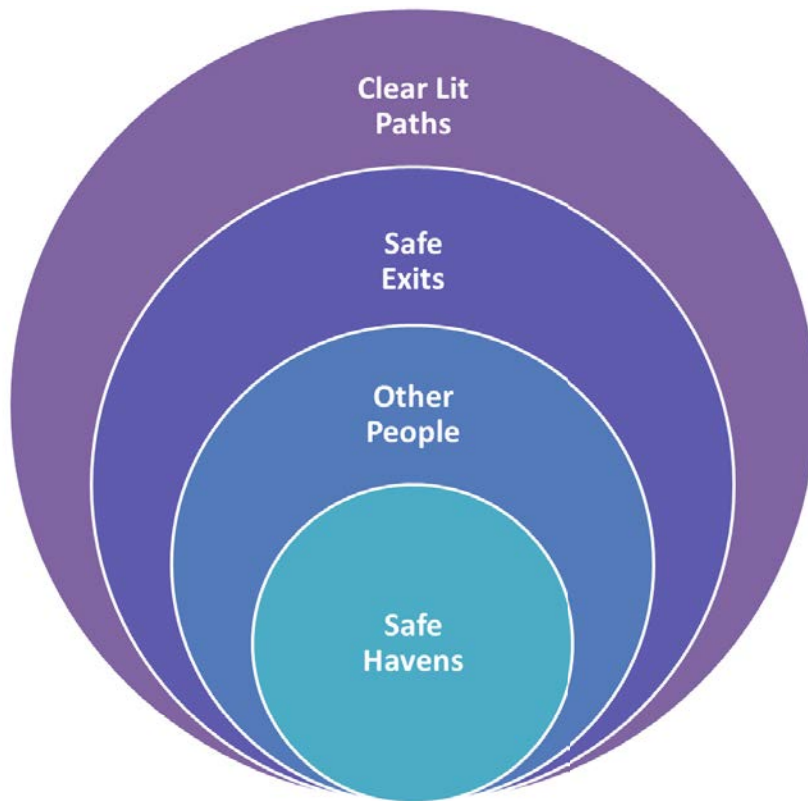
Reduced Fare Transit Pilot

- Free transit passes to equity-denied individuals
- Passes used to access basic needs, visit family/friends, access nature & work/school
- Pilot supports ongoing advocacy to develop more affordable and equitable transit policies

Informal Economy: Markets

- DTES market supported 40-60 Vendors daily
- DTES market was home to 123 unique Vendors for 2021
- Support an annual women's market that is also moving online for women to sell their wares

Gender Safety



All groups in the UN Safe Cities Survey preferred either peer/outreach teams or security guards to police intervention as a first option for intervention.



Urban Health & Sex Worker Safety

- Mayor's Overdose Emergency Task Force
- Community Action Team
 - Safe Supply Working Group
 - Youth Overdose Prevention Working Group
 - Inhalation Working Group
 - Anti-Stigma Working Group
- Safe Spaces for Drinkers
- Sex Work Response Guidelines
- Sex Work Community Engagement
- Washroom Trailer Program:
Water & Washrooms as a Human Right



Washroom Trailer Program: Perspectives From Neighbours

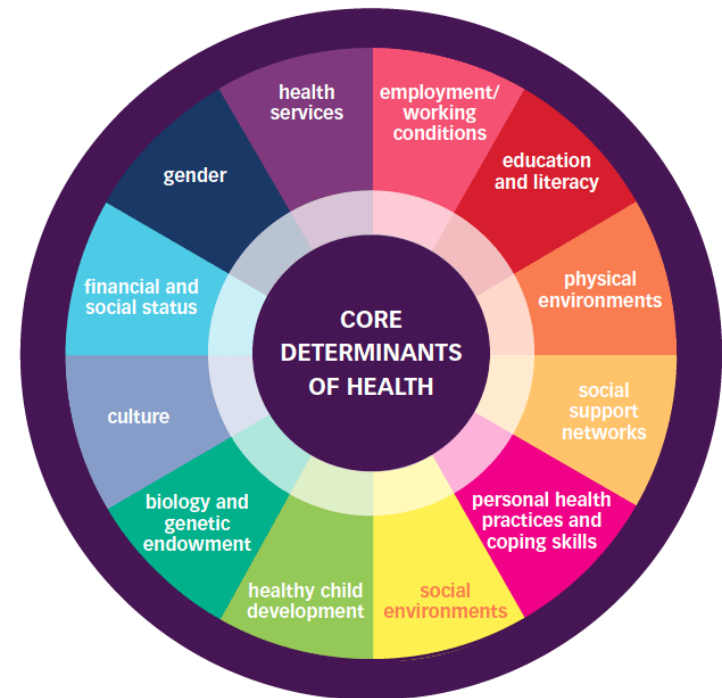
“Please do continue with this project. I do believe how we treat these women is a testimony to the fabric and strength of our city.”

“To hear from them that the basic kindness that has been shown of providing the most basic of facilities to people working long shifts on their feet, of bringing dignity to members of the working class so often scorned or ignored, is having an impact, is creating community and hope.”



Summary: Equity & the SDH are Essential to Community Safety

- Social determinants of health are also human rights.
- Many of the issues are global issues.
- By addressing inequities, including risk to life safety, we advance both individual and community well-being and safety



Section 3

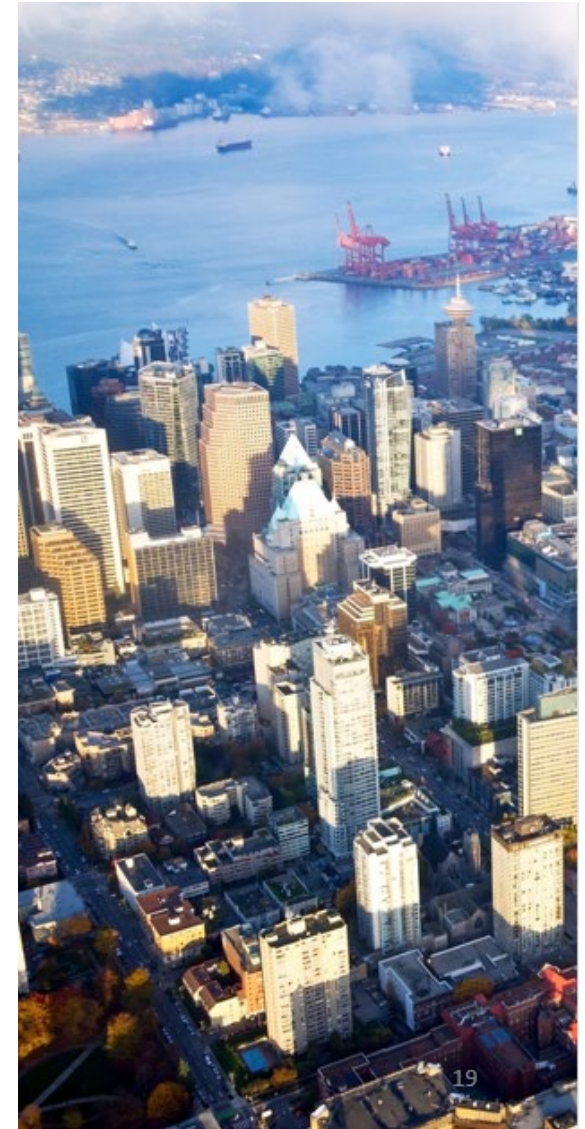
Streets and Sanitation

Margaret Wittgens, Deputy General Manager, Engineering Services



Safety for all

- Engineering Services' mandate is focused on public safety on our streets, sidewalks, and in public spaces
- Clean, safe streets and public spaces involve the City and partners
- Stakeholders have requested increased service levels and additional upgrades in order to contribute to a clean and positive public realm





Clean Public Realm

A range of programs designed to maintain adequate levels of cleanliness in the public realm **prioritize protection of public health and safety and the environment.**

Core Services include:

- Street cleaning, litter pick-up, & abandoned waste collection
- Graffiti removal (public property) & mural program
- Removal of structures to ensure streets & sidewalks are clean and accessible

Recent new investments include:

- **\$672,000** for enhanced cleaning in priority areas, needle clean up
- **\$100,000** for Feces Removal Response Pilot





Creating new public spaces

- Creating new public spaces across the city including plazas, patios, Parklets
 - **36** new public spaces created during the pandemic
 - **700** temporary patios permitted





Building and maintaining community partnerships

Working with BIA partners to implement programs for cleanliness and low barrier employment:

- Street Cleaning Grant Program
- Public Space Stewardship
- Emergency Graffiti and Security Patrol Top-up Funding to the Chinatown BIA
- **\$500,000** directed to the BIAs to support additional graffiti removal



What we Heard – Opportunities & Constraints

- Provide more lighting on the streets and plazas
 - LED light replacements underway
 - Additional plaza lighting dependent on capital funds
- Increase frequency of micro-cleaning
 - Gastown/Chinatown/DTES currently receive daily service
 - Funding and agency capacity limit further increases
- Support bringing people/animation to Downtown
 - Currently support BIAs' vision for public spaces (events, festivals, etc.)
 - Continue expanding uses of public spaces, including plazas and patios

What we Heard – Opportunities & Constraints

- Enhance public realm and City infrastructure maintenance
 - Maintain current service levels for litter cans
 - Current operating budgets allow small-scale work on street amenity improvements
 - Additional budget needed to increase service levels or add litter cans

- Additional Graffiti Measures
 - \$500,000 to BIAs for additional graffiti removal
 - City provides graffiti cleaning supplies to BIAs

THANK YOU

Section 4

Vancouver Police Department

Chief Adam Palmer, Chief constable for the Vancouver Police Department



AGENDA

1. Crime Picture
2. Under-Reporting
3. VPD Response
4. Next Steps

VIOLENT CRIME

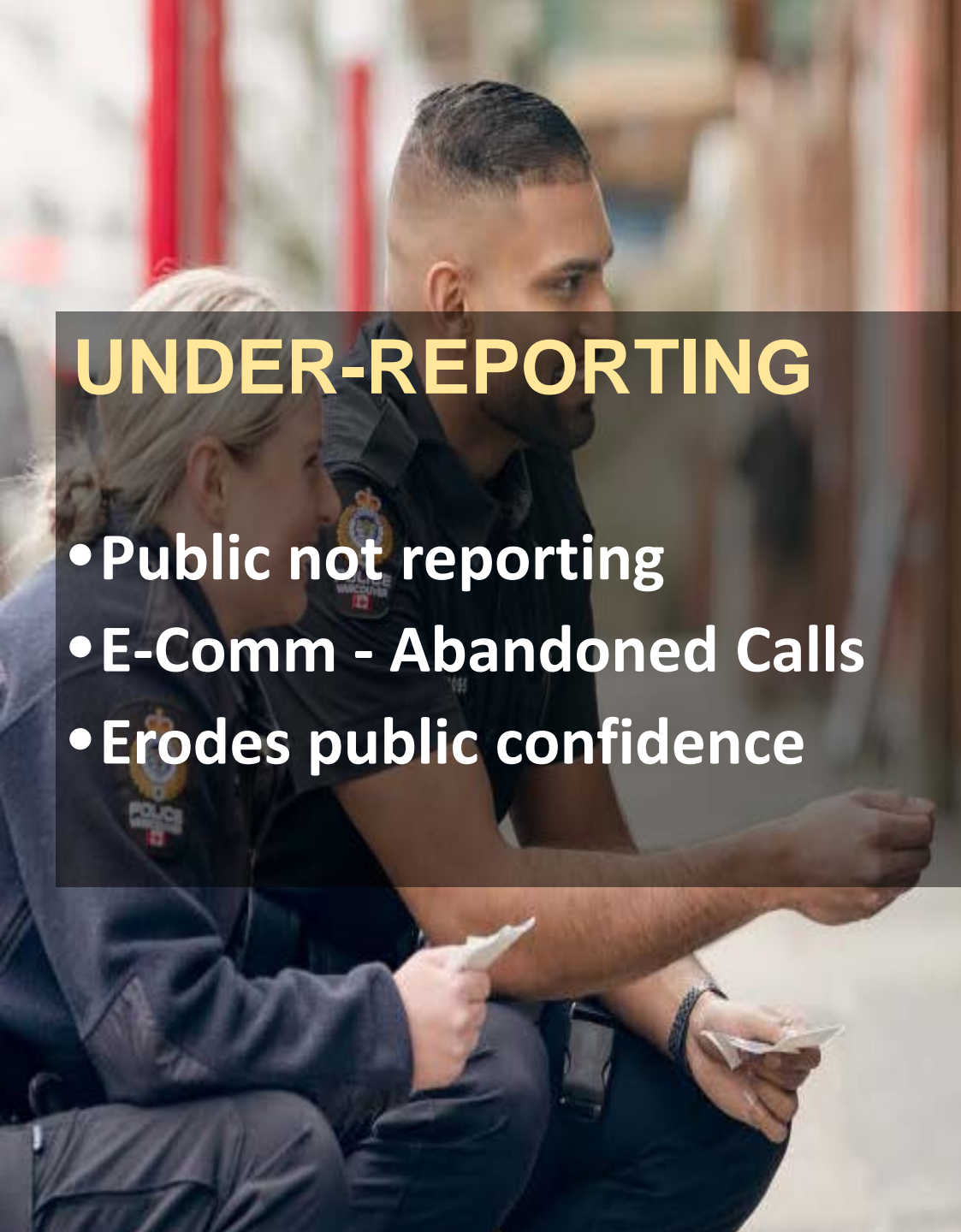
- 2021 vs. pre-pandemic **+ 7.1%**
- Violent CSI **4th highest**
 - 2020 vs. 2019 **+ 4.2%**
 - vs. Canadian average **+ 7.8%**
- Unprovoked stranger assaults **4 per day**
- Anti-Asian hate crime **+ 575%**

PROPERTY CRIME

- 2021 vs. pre-pandemic ↓ 32%
- Graffiti vs. pre-pandemic + 58%
- Graffiti in Chinatown + 296%
- Under-reporting of graffiti

UNDER-REPORTING

- Public not reporting
- E-Comm - Abandoned Calls
- Erodes public confidence



MORE THAN JUST CRIME

- Car accidents
- Missing persons
- Domestic disputes
- Persons in distress
- Elopees from hospital
- Municipal bylaw offenses
- Provincial statutes
- Marine policing
- Prowlers
- Protests
- Suicidal persons
- Abandoned 9-1-1 calls
- Suspicious circumstances
- Assist other agencies (e.g. City)
- Disturbances
- Duty to warn
- And many more...





VPD RESPONSE

- Focused policing
- Increased police presence
- Public engagement
- Technology/analytics
- Engaging Crown Counsel

The background image shows the entrance of a hospital emergency department. A sign above the entrance reads "TECK EMERGENCY CENTRE" in white letters on a blue background. Below this, a large red sign says "EMERGENCY". In the foreground, the interior of a car is visible, including the steering wheel, dashboard, and side mirror. Three people are standing outside the entrance: a man in a grey shirt and glasses, a woman with long dark hair, and another woman in a blue shirt. They are all wearing face masks and appear to be in conversation. An ambulance is parked near the entrance.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

- Partnerships work
- Coordination and alignment
- Core and essential services
- Accountability
- Evidence-based strategies

Section 5

Vancouver Board of Parks & Recreation

Amit Gandha, Director of Parks & Betty Lepps, Director Urban Relationships



■ City and Parks and Recreation Staff alignment:

- Diversity
- Equity & Inclusion
- Safety
- Decolonization



- **Community Safety**
 - Park Activation
 - Park Maintenance
 - Park Rangers
 - Washroom Maintenance
 - Urban Relationships
 - Summary

Community Safety – Park Activation

- Safety for all through community activation:
 - “Harm reduction through the arts” approach
 - Collaboration with surrounding community groups and artists
 - Steering committee, facilitators and program participants include local residents, people with lived experience, community partners



- Team UP takes an interdisciplinary, team approach to identifying and addressing immediate needs in key parks while developing innovative ways to work strategically in the long term to:
 - Expand park programming and access for diverse populations by activating spaces through arts, recreation, connection to nature and stewardship.
 - Develop strategies to sustain park activations, alleviate tensions and improve safety and park user experiences.
 - Increase urban park cleanliness through strategic improvements and operational interventions.



21 days of crafts, active games and sports for children and family

8 pop-up intergenerational community dance events for dancers from 8 to 80



- Parks and greenspace in urban centres are facing pressure to accommodate a variety of uses amid growing populations and smaller private living quarters.
- Park spaces provide health benefits.
- During the COVID pandemic, park space use rose over 150% across Canada.
- The increasing demands have outpaced resources to deliver adequate services.

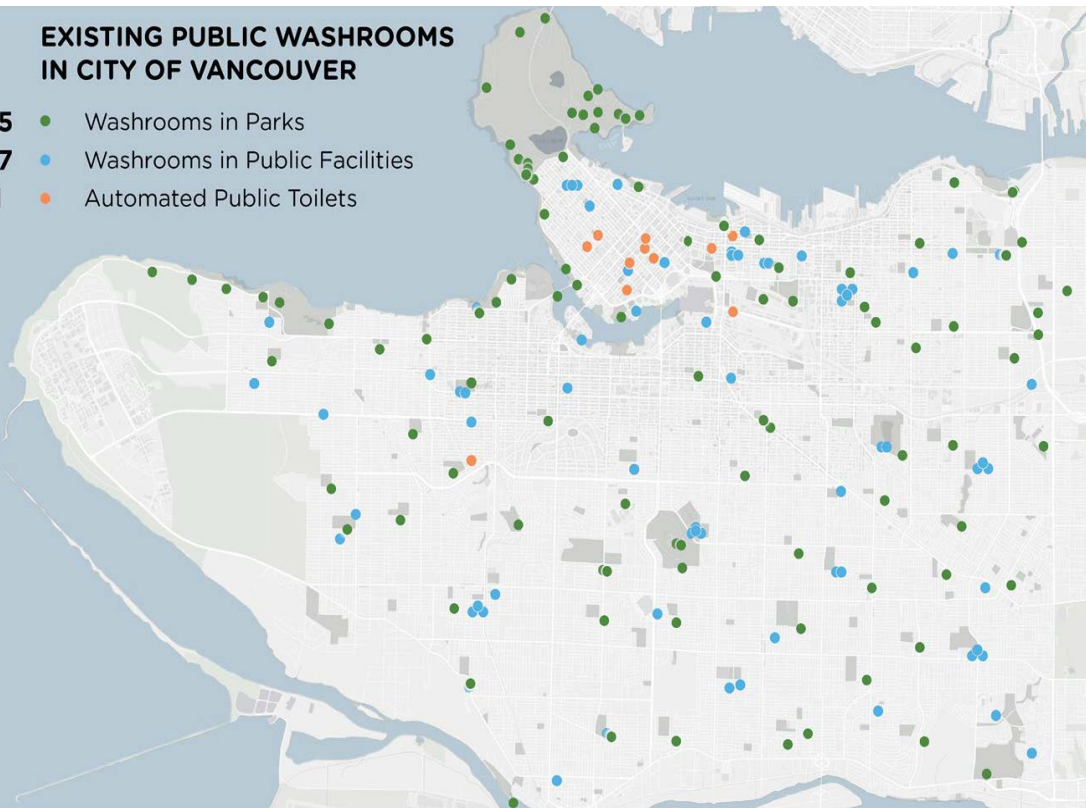


- Increasing capacity of Park Ranges will:
 - Improve safety
 - Welcome individuals to our parks and recreational spaces
 - Connect and build relationships with the community



EXISTING PUBLIC WASHROOMS IN CITY OF VANCOUVER

- 95 ● Washrooms in Parks
- 67 ● Washrooms in Public Facilities
- 11 ● Automated Public Toilets



■ Building Services Workers:

- Increasing the services levels to park washrooms improves park experience and overall comfort in using the amenities.
- Increased level of services reduce out of service periods for those that depend on public washrooms.
- Service level increase proactively addresses maintenance issues earlier and avoids long delays that prevents out of commission amenities.

■ Urban Relationships

Ubuntu (South African word)

- Working together in collaboration.
- Increase safety/well-being.
- Creating a safe diverse and equitable space for all to utilize.



- Parks and Recreation strives to improve the park experiences.
- Park Activation delivers benefits for the entire community.
- Incremental shifts and services will lead to improvements.
- Resourcing needed to support the improvements.



Appendix – Related Motions

Prioritizing Public safety (Member's Motion B6)

Date Approved: March 30th, 2022



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ii. Schedule this Special Council meeting on a weekday evening in April 2022, advertised to the public, including on social media.

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

Date Approved: October 5th, 2021



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

Date Approved: October 7th, 2020

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

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- The City of Vancouver:
- Homeless Outreach Team and Social Policy;
- Streets and Sanitation;
- The Vancouver Police Department;
- The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation;
- Vancouver Coastal Health;

ii. Schedule this Special Council meeting on a weekday evening in October 2020, advertised to the public, including on social media.

B. THAT Council direct staff, including staff responsible for streets and sanitation, the Homeless Outreach Team and Social Policy, to work with the Vancouver Police Department and report back to Council with information and recommendations, no later than the end of November 2020, including:

- i. Neighbourhood specific action to improve public safety and deter violent crime and street disorder;
- ii. Specific consideration to improve public safety for vulnerable and marginalized people in Vancouver;
- iii. Consideration for the City of Vancouver's Four Pillars Drug Strategy.