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To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
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Date: 6/2/2020 3:26:18 PM
Subject: VPD response to protest activity

Dear Mayor and Council,

We received multiple emails regarding protests. We will be responding to those separately as we get responses from VPD. The first Councillor request was to "understand the approach of the police as it pertains to de-escalation tactics to allow the protest to occur while minimizing any provoked or unprovoked escalation as we have seen across North America".

Response:

Vancouver Police have a well-defined and well-trained public safety unit. Police train regularly with Vancouver Fire Rescue Services for a variety of public order scenarios and teams of firefighters and police officers deploy in partnership at major public gatherings.

Specialized planners in the VPD's Emergency Operations and Planning Section develop the police response to protests based on the information available. This planning can be done days or weeks in advance, or even in just a few hours. Planners contact organizers in advance to establish a relationship and a mutual understanding of public safety goals.

The VPD evaluates more than 500 protests and demonstrations each year and deploys officers to more than 200. Each event is assessed based on several factors, including location and expected attendance.

The VPD's public demonstration guidelines are available at vpd.ca. The guidelines outline the VPD's approach to maintaining public safety at protests. The VPD values peaceful protest and protects the right of citizens to have their voices heard. When officers are deployed to a protest, their primary responsibility is to protect the safety of protestors, the public and other police officers.

On the ground, police use a "meet and greet" model to ensure protestors know the police are available to help and understand the public safety perspective. This approach demonstrates police accessibility and creates dialogue between police and protestors. It goes a long way in conflict management and de-escalation, if the need arises.

Protests are monitored in real-time and police response to issues that arise is proportionate, legal, accountable, necessary, and ethical. As protests can be fluid in nature, police prepare for a variety of scenarios and have the ability to adjust plans quickly, should the need arise.

We ensure our officers have the right training to be flexible in the field and use their problem solving skills to resolve any issues that arise and quell any potential conflict. This approach is preferred over rigid enforcement of the law. If enforcement action is required, police will assess the risk and impact of actions and ensure police action is proportionate to the priority and the severity of the situation. Police aim to ensure actions are the least intrusive required to ensure public safety. The VPD's approach and training reflects leading approaches in other areas of the world, like the United Kingdom.

For operational reasons, I am unable to provide additional details about police planning for protests, however, I

invite Councillors wishing to gain further insight into police and fire response at public events, to join VPD for a set joint training day. These joint public order training days will resume once the COVID-19 risk has subsided.

Best,
Sadhu

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Pronouns: he, him, his



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.