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To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"
"Singh, Sandra" <Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca>

Date: 7/16/2020 7:17:27 PM

Subject: Update on Provincial Funding and Direction on Private SRO Emergency Meal Program and Proactive Cleaning Program

Attachments: ACCS - GM - Memo (Mayor and Council) - EOC SRO Emergency Food and Cleaning Program (2020-07-16).pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Attached is a memo from the General Manager of Arts, Culture, and Community Services, Sandra Singh regarding an update on the Private SRO Emergency Meal Program and Proactive Cleaning Program and the Provincial funding request for a Phase II. Of note:

- This memo is an update on the EOC Private SRO Emergency Meal Program and Cleaning Program, specifically the wind down of Phase I and the status of BC Housing and Provincial funding requests for support for a Phase II.
- Since mid-March, funded by BC Housing, the City of Vancouver partnered with multiple food service providers, building managers, volunteers and donors to deliver 1-2.5 meals a day to over 2,000 private SRO tenants.
- Funded by BC Housing, cleaning was deployed to over 60 SRO buildings, and included application of disinfectant to high traffic/high touch common areas and associated items. This covered items such as door handles, windows at egress/entry areas only, elevator buttons, handrails, counters, benches, chairs, tables, washrooms and showers, push bars, mailboxes, sink tap sets / handles, elevator hand rails, paper towel dispensing handles.
- In line with the timing of the BC Restart Plan, staff initially started to plan the wind down of Phase I of the SRO meal program to cease delivered meal provision for all buildings and tenants by early June. At the same time as the wind down of this Phase I, staff were also considering what a Phase II approach for the summer would be and, if public health order restrictions were increased in the fall, what a Phase III could entail.
- At the start of June, BC Housing identified its wish to fund its component of the program for an additional 4 weeks of meals while partners work to plan and implement Phase II. Donor driven food programs were unable to continue past early June. This four week extension was implemented and ended in the first week of July when staff wrapped up Phase I.
- EOC and ACCS leadership proposed to BC Housing a Phase II request to fund targeted SRO related community food supports through the summer and into the fall, including a specific plan to ensure a meal delivery program that can be activated if there are Covid-19 suspect cases in community that require residents to self-isolate. BC Housing confirmed they had submitted a request for further Covid funding to the Province and had included the City's food request in that submission and would have capacity to support the proposed cleaning program were the funding to be approved. They could not confirm when they would hear back from the Province. To date, there has been no confirmation of funding.
- As we plan for the next wave in the fall, BC Housing, VCH, and the City will need to plan using multiple financial scenarios to be ready for situations in which there is little or modest senior government financial support.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to email Sandra at sandra.singh@vancouver.ca.

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.

MEMORANDUM

July 16, 2020

TO: Mayor & Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Rena Kendall-Craden, Civic Engagement & Communications Director
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office

FROM: Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services

SUBJECT: Update on Provincial Funding and Direction on Private SRO Emergency Meal Program and Proactive Cleaning Program

PURPOSE

This memo is provided to Council as an update on the EOC Private SRO Emergency Meal Program and Cleaning Program, specifically the wind down of Phase I and the status of BC Housing and Provincial funding requests for future support.

BACKGROUND

- SROs are residential hotels and rooming houses that contain small single rooms and often have shared bathroom and cooking facilities. The majority of Vancouver's SROs are located in the Downtown Core, and 94% are located in the Downtown Eastside.
- SROs currently house ~7,000 residents in the City. Approximately 45% of SROs are publicly-owned, and the remainder are privately-owned. SROs are often considered a last resort before homelessness for the City's most low-income residents.
- The majority of residents living in private SROs are on limited or fixed incomes and face multiple compounding health challenges, including mental health and substance use challenges, physical disabilities, and compromised immune systems, making them much more susceptible to illness.

- In the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic response households were recommended to stay home and stay put to protect themselves and others and to stem the transmission of COVID-19. In this context it was recognized by the City, VCH and BC Housing (The Partners) this would be a challenge for residents in congregate-style SRO Housing. Low-income residents in SRO hotels with shared bathrooms and cooking facilities, and often struggle to safely and adequately store food supplies, would struggle to self-isolate without external supports.
- Additionally, Covid-19s disruption to existing income streams, free or low-cost meal services, local restaurants in the DTES added an additional layer of food insecurity and risk for this group of residents.

Food and Cleaning Program Overview:

- During Phase I of the Covid-19 pandemic, when the rates of transmission and course of the response was yet unclear for VCH and partners, the provision of meal delivery services and proactive cleaning services were critical in supporting social distancing, shelter-in-place, and providing both a safe environment, and access to healthy, nutrient dense meals for low income and at-risk SRO tenants.
- The EOC Community Resilience Team's goal was to rapidly deploy and sustain meal provision to private SRO tenants through to the end of May to support the projected Phase 1 sheltering period. This goal was achieved through a combination of public (BC Housing and City of Vancouver) and private funds (various donors) and the efforts of many community partners.
- Since mid-March, the City of Vancouver partnered with multiple food service providers, building managers, volunteers and donors to deliver 1-2.5 meals a day to over 2,000 private SRO tenants.
- The City of Vancouver worked very closely and rapidly with the managers of private SRO buildings and community groups (SRO-Collaborative, Hua Foundation) to quickly assess broad need and attempt to prioritize food distribution across the SRO stock.
- Given the nature of the emergency, partners agreed to focus on broad delivery to all residents in participant buildings where the owners and partners identified a need and desire for meal delivery.
- Proactive disinfecting cleaning services were provided through a contracted company began in mid-April with a goal of reducing the potential for COVID transmission in congregate housing environments such as SROs, where unrelated tenants typically share kitchen facilities and bathrooms.
- Cleaning was deployed to over 60 SRO buildings, and included application of disinfectant to high traffic/high touch common areas and associated items. This covered items such as door handles, windows at egress/entry areas only, elevator buttons, handrails, counters, benches, chairs, tables, washrooms and showers, push bars, mailboxes, sink tap sets / handles, elevator hand rails, paper towel dispensing handles.

- Funding increments from BC Housing were reviewed, approved and relayed every two weeks to the City of Vancouver. The SRO food program relied substantially on site manager cooperation to distribute meals to tenants, BC Housing funding, and private donor funding assistance.

Phase I Wind Down & Phase II Transition:

- The relaxation of social isolation restrictions by the Provincial Health Officer had from the outset has been targeted as the time to complete the initial Phase I response and pivot into more sustainable, efficient and responsive services.
- While tenants and building managers were very thankful for the meal program, it was not surprising to find evidence of overall fatigue with the prepared, packaged meals toward the final weeks of the program.
- Building managers took on a significant role in delivering food within the building, and some tenants expressed increasing fatigue with delivered meals (requests for ending or decreasing services). Additionally, reports of challenges with food wastage and concerns about unattended meals leading to pests or food spoilage increased.
- In line with the timing of the BC Restart Plan, staff initially started to plan the wind down of Phase I of the SRO meal program to cease delivered meal provision for all buildings and tenants by early June. At the same time as the wind down of this Phase I, staff were also considering what a Phase II approach for the summer would be and, if public health order restrictions were increased in the fall, what a Phase III could entail.
- At the start of June, BC Housing identified its wish to fund its component of the program for an additional 4 weeks of meals while partners work to plan and implement Phase II. Donor driven food programs were unable to continue past early June.
- Staff re-engaged with building owners, community partners and vendors on ability and willingness to continue meal services. There were some decreases in participation as some buildings and tenants declined continuing with meal delivery. This latest contract extension from BCH funded meal service from June 8 to July 6-8.

Services, Funders and Residents Served by EOC SRO Emergency Meal Program

Vendors	Funder	# Residents Served	# Daily Meals Served	Contract Start Date	Contract End Date
VCC (Round 1)	BC Housing	486	972	March 28th	May 24th
Potluck & Partners (Round 1)	BC Housing	1,186	1,186	April 3rd	May 28th
VCC (Round 2)	BC Housing	432	833	June 8th	July 6th
Jade Dynasty (Sun Yat-Sen)	BC Housing	194	388	June 10th	July 7th

Potluck & Partners (Round 2)	BC Housing	423	846	June 8th	July 8th
Savoury Chef/ Streetohome/Giustra	Private Donors	210	420	April 6th	May 20th
Hua Foundation /Floata/Chinatown Today	Private Donors/ BC Housing	257 (currently 188)	188	April 22nd	June 4th
Chambar Food Coalition	Private Donors	914	914	April 28th	May 19 th

- Cleaning Program - As part of the Phase I ramp down, in consultation with partners, and with support of VCH, staff discontinued the proactive cleaning program to SRO buildings on July 4th.

Phase II and Beyond - Cov Request to BCH/Province:

- EOC and ACCS leadership proposed to BCH a request to fund SRO related community food supports through the summer (Phase II) and into the fall, including a specific plan to ensure a meal delivery program that can be activated if there are Covid-19 suspect or positive cases in community that require residents to self-isolate or a resurgence (Phase III). The proposal outlines below ensures support for both targeted health-oriented food programming and addressing broader food insecurity.
 - **COVID-19 Tactical Private SRO Meal Program:** a meal delivery service for any confirmed COVID-19 suspect or positive residents in private SROs in coordination with Public Health that can meet any future self-isolation requirements for these tenants.
 - **Community-Led Food Programs to Address Food Insecurity in SROs:** Staff developed funding proposals with community partners working in Private SROs and Society Buildings for support for more strategic food and meal delivery initiatives for high-risk sub-populations. We were prioritizing and advocating for government investment in strong community-based partner who can ensure meal or food delivery is responsibly and effectively delivered and can leverage additional support for tenants beyond food (e.g. house cleaning, community/peer support, overdose response).
 - **General Food Insecurity in the DTES:** While the SRO meal program was well-supported in Phase I, the broader issue of food insecurity in the DTES remains significant and did not receive as much government support. In addition to engaging BC Housing, staff sought to engage government partners in discussions around food security supports for people who are homeless or inadequately or precariously housed.
 - **Private SRO Proactive Cleaning:** With the halting of the proactive disinfecting services at the start of July, the City requested that the funding envelope supported for this work by BCH, be held to support any future need for cleaning in response to Covid-19 suspect or positive cases through the summer and into the fall to ensure partners were ready to respond in a timely manner in an emergency.

Response from BC Housing - July 3, 2020:

- **Phase II Private SRO Food/Meal Program Funding**
 - BC Housing submitted a request for \$400K for the Private SRO Phase II food program to support community-based food program to the Province. It is unclear when they will hear back; possibly late July.
 - At this time there is no further funding available so the EOC will wind down Phase I meal delivery services and await funding information re: Phase II.

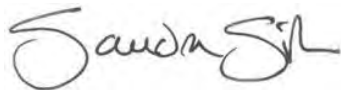
- **Phase II Private SRO Cleaning Funding**
 - BCH cannot allow the City to carry forward the Phase I balance of \$124K in the SRO cleaning allocation to support Phase II as requested.
 - If BC Housing's Provincial request is approved, BC Housing will allocate some amount of Phase II cleaning \$ to support private SROs.

Next Wave Planning (Phase III):

- As we plan for the next wave in the fall, BC Housing, VCH, and the City will need to plan using multiple financial scenarios to be ready for situations in which there is little or modest Provincial financial support.

FINAL REMARKS

If Council has any further questions or needs additional information, please feel free to contact Sandra Singh directly at sandra.singh@vancouver.ca.



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