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To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL" <CCDTMACDL@vancouver.ca>
Date: 4/12/2017 4:36:12 PM
Subject: Coordination of CoV response to street homelessness and related issues

Good afternoon Mayor and Councillors,

As you are aware, we have been increasingly challenged in recent years to respond to the scale and impact of street homelessness, mental illness and addiction in our city. Teams working in several different departments are engaged with these issues, including Community Services, Streets, Sanitation, Parks and Fire, as well as VPD, Vancouver Coastal Health, BC Housing and other partners. Our front-line staff are doing excellent work under difficult circumstances, but the fundamental social issues are complex and demand a systemic response.

In looking back at our experiences over the past three years, there are clear lessons regarding the need for a well-coordinated approach as well as the level of focus required to effectively provide that coordination. Other cities wrestling with analogous challenges have also reached similar conclusions.

Given the cross-organizational nature of the challenge and response, Sadhu has asked me to represent the City Manager's Office in ensuring that our operational efforts related to street homelessness, encampments, street disorder and related issues are integrated and aligned with the policy direction set out by Council. To this end, we are re-purposing a funded position and have asked Tobin Postma to join the CMO and support this coordination. Tobin has had substantial involvement with this work over the past two years, including a critical role in managing our response to the encampment at 58 W Hastings in 2016 and leading the DTES Street Vending Project team in 2015. I am excited that we are able to leverage Tobin's skill set, experience and the strong relationships he has established internally and externally.

To confirm, the establishment of this role does not alter the existing accountability of operating departments for the delivery of their programs/services. Rather, Tobin will support alignment and prioritization of effort across departments. He will be accountable to ensure we have robust operational plans, monitoring and reporting process, identifying emerging risks and seeking opportunities to innovate and/or better leverage resources.

Tobin will be working under the title of Director, Strategic Initiatives and will transition out of his current responsibilities with Corporate Communications over the coming weeks.

Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions.

Many thanks,
Paul

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