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To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"

"Bromley, Malcolm" <Malcolm.Bromley@vancouver.ca>

Date: 9/26/2019 5:15:56 PM

Subject: Special Park Board meeting - Oppenheimer encampment

Attachments: Oppenheimer_presentation to Park Board_Sept26.pdf

Good afternoon Mayor and Council,

As you may be aware, a special meeting of the Park Board has been called for 6:30 this evening to address the encampment in Oppenheimer Park. Park Board has also requested that City, VFRS and VPD staff attend to speak to the topic. I will be attending, along with Deputy Chief Renning from VFRS and Deputy Chief Chow from VPD.

Please find attached the material that Deputy Chief Renning and I will be presenting to Park Board this evening. Park Board will be receiving this information in public session, although I would request that you refrain from disclosing the content of the slides prior to the meeting.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,
Paul

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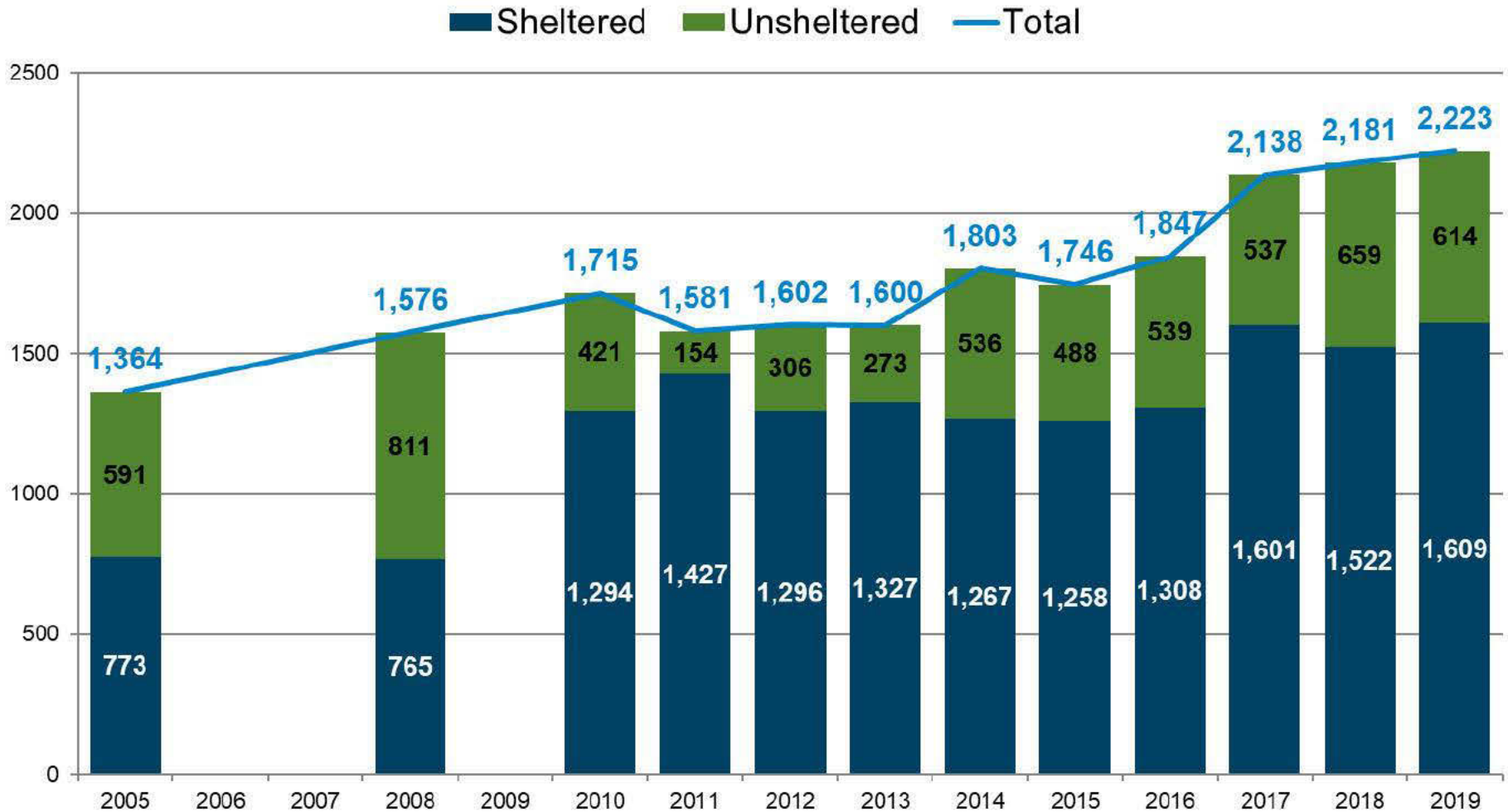
The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.

Oppenheimer Park Encampment

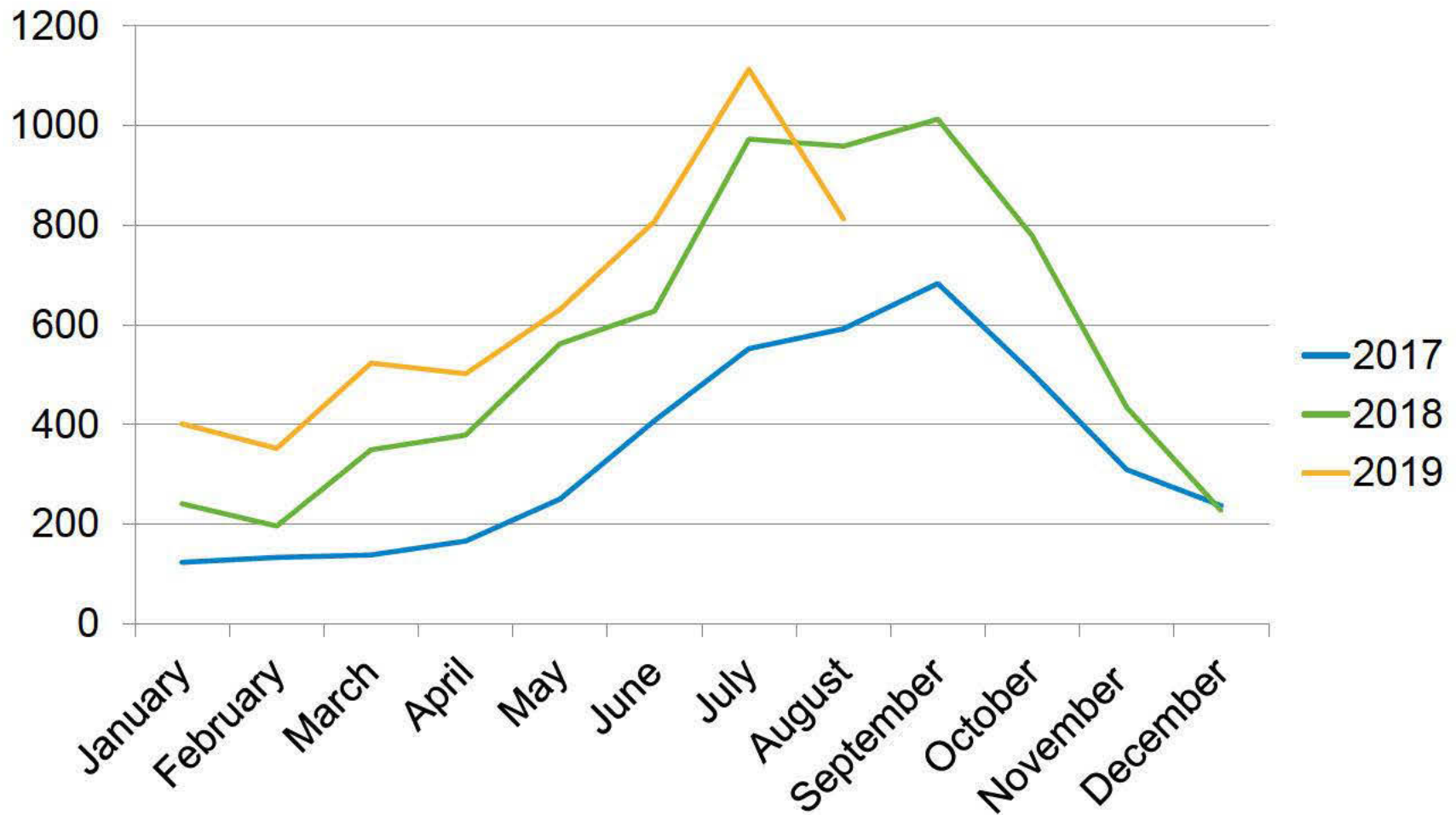
Update to Park Board
September 26, 2019



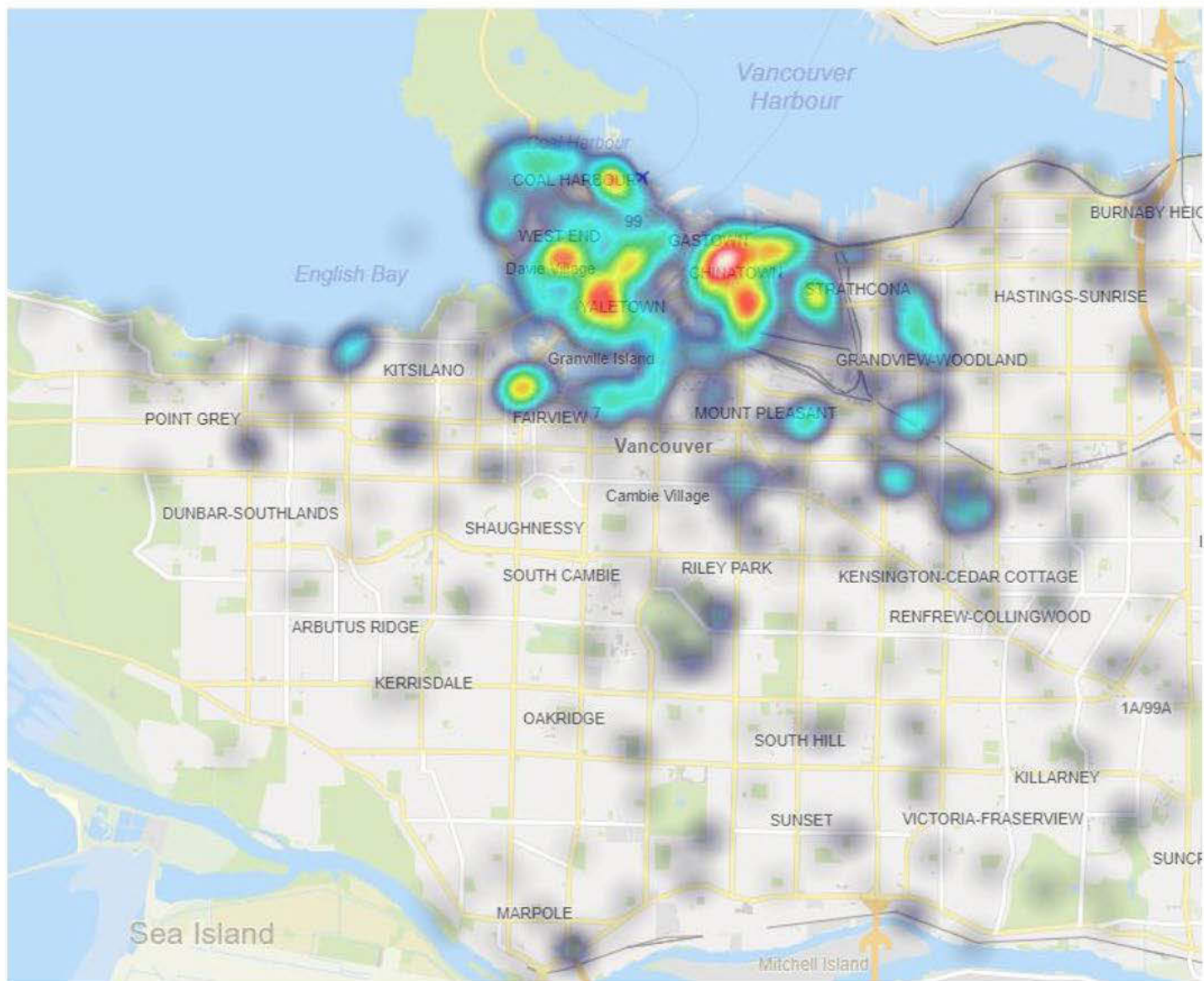
Homelessness Crisis



Tents/structures reported to 311/VanConnect



Tents/Structures Heat Map Jan-Aug 2019



- The City's Outreach team conducts early morning/late evening rounds to areas where people are sleeping outside to offer income, housing, health supports.
 - Note: Provincial Homeless Outreach Program funds 7 additional teams in neighbourhoods across the city.
- Outreach works in coordination with Engineering, Parks, VPD, VFRS to identify people sleeping outdoors who may be willing to be connected with necessary services.
- In accordance with BC jurisprudence, Engineering and Park Rangers engage with campers (from 8/9am onwards) asking that tents/structures be taken down during the day. VPD assists to keep the peace and protect staff safety as required.
- Crews clean up abandoned items as well as articles people voluntarily leave behind when asked by staff to take down their tent.
- Engineering authorized to manage structures in 6 DTES parks: Strathcona ; Victory Square; Pioneer Place (Pigeon Park); Wendy Poole; CRAB; Oppenheimer

Encampments – Recent History

- Oppenheimer Park – 2014
 - Encampment established as a protest
 - Injunction granted
 - Occupants who were homeless were supported to transition to shelter. Most subsequently moved to the Quality Inn which was leased on a short term by CoV.
- 58 West Hastings – 2016
 - Encampment established as a protest in July
 - Injunction granted in November
 - Occupants who were homeless were supported to transition to shelter
- 950 Main Street – 2017
 - Encampment established as a protest in April; City property leased to Lu'Ma Native Housing for affordable housing development
 - Injunction granted to Lu'Ma in June
 - Occupants who were homeless were offered option to transition to shelter
- 1100 Franklin Street - 2017
 - Encampment established in June as a protest following order to vacate 950 Main
 - Occupants voluntarily relocated to shelter in December; no injunction sought
 - Site subsequently deployed for temporary modular housing

Oppenheimer Park 2019

- Began in October 2018 with a small number of people experiencing homelessness and sleeping in park
- Tent count steadily increased ~20 (Feb) to ~200 (Aug)
- Individuals sleeping in the park also increased ~25 (Feb) to ~137 (Aug)
- Outreach staff attended the park daily; additional evening visits to provide information on shelter and nearby warming centre options over the winter months
- ~ 45 people sleeping in park were housed, many more provided with income and other support (eg., ID).
- February: Fire Chief's Order issued to address safety risks in encampment
- March: Council and Park Board motions re camping in Oppenheimer
- Steady deterioration in safety conditions and increasing risk for campers and neighbourhood; field house closed due to staff safety issues
- Engineering removed equivalent to 807 cubic yards of material (approx. 135 dumpsters) between January and July

Order to Remove Structures

- August 19, 9:00am - Park Board GM issued Order that all tents/structures must be removed from the park by 6:00pm on August 21, 2019.
- At the time the order was issued, BC Housing confirmed the following options available for people camping in the park and who required housing:
 - BC Housing - 123 units
 - COV - 11 units
 - 60 shelter spaces also made available
- At that time, the available housing and shelter capacity was sufficient to accommodate everyone who was staying in the park
- BC Housing, VCH and CoV Outreach staff established a process of assessment; housing offers were prioritized for people who had been sleeping in the park for the longest period of time.
- August 19-23 - concerted effort by Parks, City VFRS, VPD, BC Housing, VCH and housing providers to transition individuals to available housing/shelter, including moving assistance and storage of belongings

- 130 people accepted housing offers in August
 - 44 (34%) women
 - 66 (51%) who identify as Indigenous
- Approximately 120 tents remain on site; many unoccupied or used for storage
- Outreach is working with 55 people experiencing homelessness who are staying in the park
 - 40 identify as male; 14 identify as female; 1 identifies as trans
- A small number of people have declined to identify themselves or are not interested in Outreach's assistance.
- Outreach staff continue working with people in the park but have scaled back 7am visits to 2 days per week
 - Encampments elsewhere in city need support
 - Challenges working with people in the current environment
- Staff continue to invite park sleepers to seek further assistance by visiting the Outreach office (390 Powell).

Life Safety Risks

- Fire Chief's order issued in February 2019
- Sets out a number of conditions to reduce the fire hazard for people living in the park
- Continued non-compliance with the order
- Regular inspections indicate an elevated risk to life, injury and fire, due to the constant use of restricted fuels, propane appliances, BBQ's, heating devices, and candles used in tents.
- Anticipate fire/life safety risks to accelerate as weather gets colder
- Since Jan 2019, VFRS has responded to:
 - 20 tent fires
 - 62 medical calls
 - 93 other miscellaneous responses



Financial Implications (estimated)

January 1 – July 31, 2019

Department	Description	Cost
Engineering (Street Ops and Sanitation)	Varied service levels including daily weekday cleanups (Jan-Apr), expanded 7 day clean up (May) and current service of Wed, Thurs and Sat	\$95,000
Park Board	Ranger visits, janitorial costs for cleaning of Fieldhouse and port-a-potties as well as regular park maintenance	\$200,000
ACCS	Additional staff for Fieldhouse (6 days to 7 days a week) and additional staffing costs for Outreach	\$60,000
VF&RS	Fire Prevention staff enforcing Fire Chief's Order	\$240,000
VPD	On-duty resources and call-out incremental resources	\$222,000
Total*		\$817,000
*Excludes VPD/VFRS patrol and emergency response		

August 19-23, 2019

- Total City/Park Board cost = \$117,500
- Includes wages, supplies and other incidentals for Outreach, Engineering, VFRS, VPD, and Parks staff
- Excludes costs incurred by BCH and VCH

- City staff do not support sanctioned or managed encampments as a response to the homelessness crisis
 - Significant health and life safety risks to individuals sleeping outside; sub-optimal setting to engage with individuals experiencing homelessness
 - Not possible to manage an uncontrolled outdoor site safely and effectively; controls necessary to provide a safe and secure site would exclude many campers
 - Very limited site options in Vancouver's dense urban core
 - Significant operational challenges; costs \$1M - 2M per year
 - No provincial funding or support to operate sanctioned encampments
 - Experience in other cities has not demonstrated effectiveness in supporting transition to housing or mitigating growth of street homelessness
- City staff are focused on supporting people to transition to indoor spaces, including shelters and other longer term housing options as they become available

- Ongoing engagement with Province/BCH re: shelter capacity
 - Temporary Winter Shelters (operated November-April)
 - CoV provides space or pays lease costs and all tenant improvements; BCH contributes operating funding; non-profits operate
 - Approx. 200 of 300 temporary winter shelter beds funded to operate through March 2020
 - Working with BCH to secure 100 beds for this winter
 - Extreme Weather Shelters (activated when temp “feels like 0°C”)
 - Evelyn Saller Centre - 40 beds; BCH contributes operating funding.
- CoV Warming Centres (activated when “feels like -5°C”)
 - Entirely CoV funded – approx. 200 spaces in 2018/19
 - Working to secure sites for upcoming winter
- Temporary Modular Housing program
 - CoV provides land or lease costs and regulatory process/approvals; BCH provides capital and operating; non-profits operate and provide services
 - 600 homes on 10 sites now tenanted, 58 units on Vanness Ave pending approval
 - All units targeted to those experiencing or at risk of homelessness
 - Identification of potential sites and funding opportunities for additional projects in process

Questions