

From: "Johnston, Sadhu" <Sadhu.Johnston@vancouver.ca>

To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"
"Nelms, Cheryl" <Cheryl.Nelms@vancouver.ca>
"Postma, Tobin" <Tobin.Postma@vancouver.ca>

Date: 12/9/2019 2:00:00 PM

Subject: Memo - Needle Collection

Attachments: Memo - Needle Collection.pdf

Greetings Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Cheryl Nelms regarding a consultation update for the Single Use Item Reduction Strategy.

- The memo provides information on how inappropriately used needles are managed in the City of Vancouver
- The City does not have dedicated staff or programs for responding to needle issues, but does take a proactive approach through a number of initiatives and agencies
- In 2019, Council approved an expansion on the Street Cleaning Grant Program which involved adding a new program to address micro-cleaning in priority areas for the remainder of 2019

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Cheryl Nelms at 604.873.7348 or Cheryl.nelms@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Sadhu

Sadhu Afochs Johnston | City Manager
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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

December 5, 2019

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Rena Kendall-Craden, Civic Engagement and Communications Director
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Naveen Girn, Director of Community Relations, Mayor's Office
Tobin Postma, Director of IGR & Strategic Partnerships

FROM: Cheryl Nelms
Acting General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Needle Collection

The purpose of this memo is to provide Council with information on how inappropriately discarded needles are managed in the City of Vancouver.

Background

The city started to track needle calls separately from all 311 calls in June 2016. From June to December 2016 there were 1100 needle calls to 311. In 2017 there were 2700 calls to 311, 3500 in 2018 and from January to mid-November this year there have been 4900. Approximately 75% of the calls in 2019 were made through the VanCollect App (up from 65% in 2018).

The lead agency in dealing with discarded needles is Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH). They support collection of needles in the public realm with the following:

- **Needle Van Hotline** is managed by Portland Hotel Society (PHS) and collects discarded needles from anywhere one is found, including streets, alleys, and parks. Anyone who finds a discarded needle can call the hotline and the needle will be collected within close to 1 hour. The program is funded through VCH.

Needle related 311 calls received by the City are forwarded to the needle hotline for follow up.

- **Spikes on Bikes** is another PHS initiative involving a bicycle team that serves both the West End and the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. The program provides needle collection service, as well as a number of other harm and overdose reduction services.

The City does not have a dedicated crew or program for responding to needle issues. For 311 calls we rely on the needle hotline. The City does take a proactive approach through:

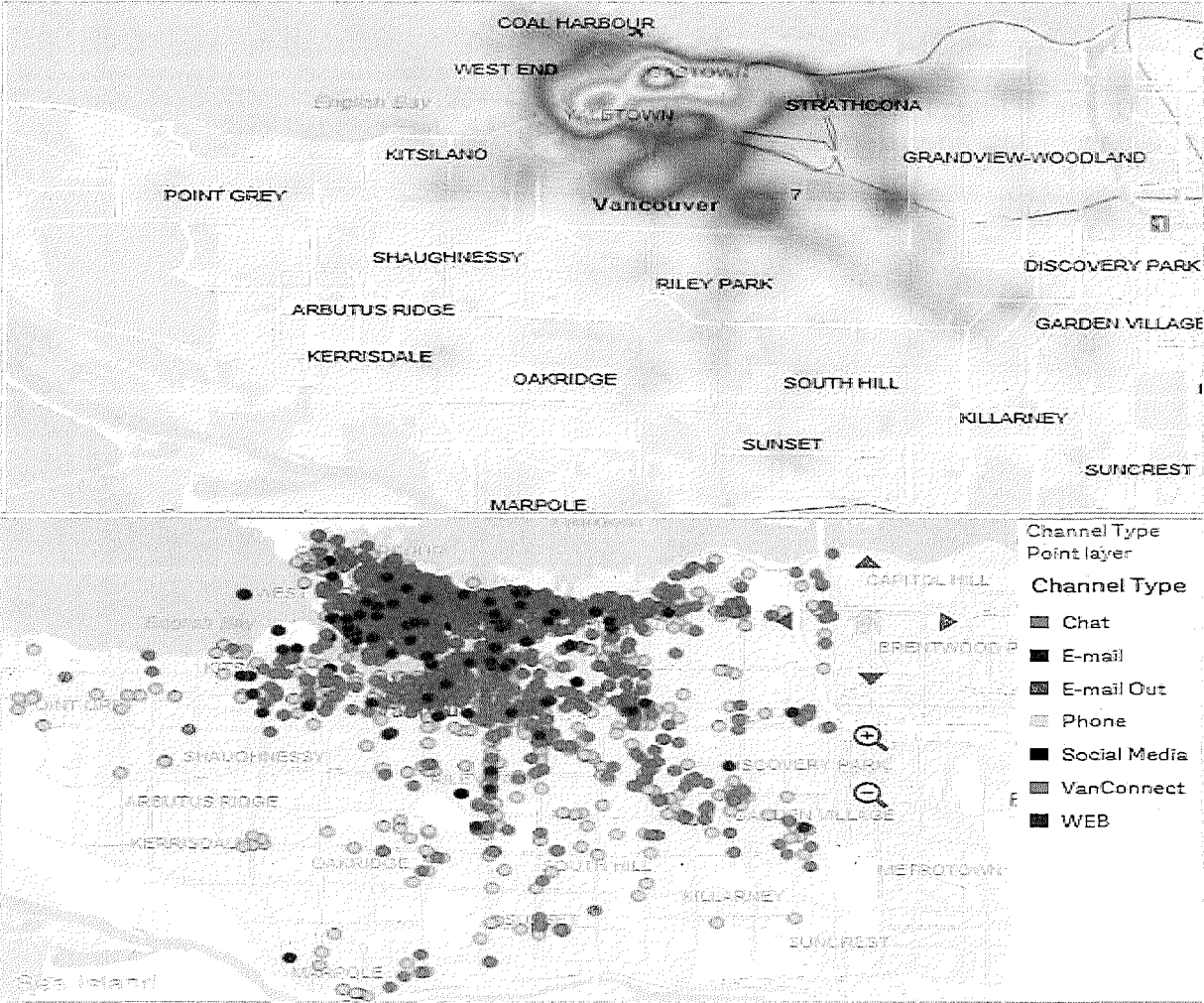
- **City supported Micro-cleaners** who collect litter, including needles, from City streets, sidewalks and lanes daily throughout the year under the Engineering managed Street Cleaning Grant Program. These activities take place predominantly in the Downtown core and DTES but also occur in BIA's and in priority areas identified by City staff based on feedback from the public and known problem areas. In 2018, over 70,000 needles were collected through this program and we are projecting 110,000 needles in 2019 as a result of the expanded grant program.
- **City Crews** collect needles as part of regular street cleaning activities, primarily through mechanical sweeping and flushing. Crews also collect needles when mixed with piles of abandoned garbage, encampment cleanups, when disposed in public litter receptacles, and as part of larger litter collection activities.
- **Goodbye Graffiti (GG)** is contracted by the City to provide graffiti removal services from City property. Starting in Dec 2018, staff worked with GG to pilot needle collection as part of their graffiti removal routes. This is currently a no-cost pilot and it is anticipated that GG will include this service as a value-add option in the next contract proposal (2020), it is unknown if additional costs will be involved. The pilot will result in an additional 8,000 needles collected in 2019.
- **Needle Boxes** are built by the City and installed in various locations by City or Parks crews, in consultation with VCH, and emptied by Parks or a VCH supported team.

Other agencies:

- **Park Board** collects needles from City Parks as part of regular operations maintenance and through their Park Ranger program. Parks staff also empty needle boxes which have been placed in a select number of parks. In addition, regular needle patrols have been implemented in particularly problematic areas around Andy Livingston Park.
- **BIA Programs (select)** involve hiring non-profits and/or for-profits to do cleaning in their areas. These activities are primarily focused on litter collection but needle collection would be included as part of that work. Staff do not have further details on these activities.
- **Community Volunteers** lead litter cleanups citywide, supported by City provided supplies and related program materials. As with the BIA programs, these activities are focused on litter pickup and volunteers are asked to report needles to the Needle Van Hotline, however a small number of volunteers have reported collecting needles.

If residents find a needle on the street or in the park, they can call 311, report through the VanConnect app, or call the Needle Van Hotline at 604-657-6561. Alternatively they can email needlevan@phs.ca.

2019 Discarded Needle Requests - Heat Map and Reporting Methods



Looking forward

In June 2019, Council approved an expansion to the Street Cleaning Grant Program which included additional micro-cleaning (litter and needle collection) in BIA’s and a new program to address priority areas for the remainder of 2019. The new program involves having a micro-cleaning service that is able to shift to areas of temporary need based on feedback from residents, businesses, or other stakeholders which provides flexibility in adapting to changing conditions. Some of the priority areas currently targeted include Crosstown, sections of Kingsway, Victoria Drive and Northeast False Creek. The 2020 budget, subject to Council

approval, will allow that expanded program to continue for the full year, supporting additional collection of litter and needles.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to contact Cheryl Nelms, Acting General Manager, Engineering Services at 604 - 873 - 7348.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Cheryl Nelms".

Cheryl Nelms, P.Eng., PhD
Acting General Manager, Engineering Services

604.873.7348 | cheryl.nelms@vancouver.ca