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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)
Date: 8/10/2022 4:06:41 PM
Subject: [Upcoming media statement: City continues removal of structures on Hastings Street \(August 10, 2022\)](#)

Dear Mayor & Council,

I am writing to inform you that the City will be issuing the following media statement today regarding the continuing efforts to remove structures along Hastings Street and to clarify VPD's role in supporting this work. Please keep this information bulletin embargoed until it goes live from the City media email account at 4.30 pm today (Aug. 10, 2022).

All the best,
Karen

Update on City's removal of structures on Hastings Street

After weeks of discussions with community partners about the conditions on Hastings St., City staff began working yesterday with those sheltering outdoors to remove structures on East Hastings St. in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) with a focus on the 100 block. Staff are seeking to approach individuals with respect and sensitivity, encouraging and supporting voluntary removal of tents and belongings through conversation.

Staff heard from community members yesterday that more clarity and information would be appreciated regarding storage and other services, as there is still some confusion regarding availability of storage options and other services. We have concentrated our efforts today on providing this information.

At the City's request, members of the Vancouver Police Department were present yesterday to support public and staff safety while staff worked to support removal of structures. The VPD members are not involved in dismantling structures.

Yesterday afternoon's increased police presence in the area of Main St. and Hastings St. was not as a result of the City's effort to remove structures as per the Street and Traffic Bylaw and the Vancouver Fire Rescue Services (VFRS) Fire Order. To clarify, police were called by Carnegie Centre staff just before 3 p.m., who reported a man throwing computers and behaving erratically. As officers were taking him into custody, the man resisted arrest and fought with police. A large crowd gathered and became hostile and combative with the officers.

The structures removal on Hastings St. is a complex effort and the City appreciates the work of the many community organizations and social enterprises who have been contributing expertise and effort as well as the support of BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health, and the Vancouver Police Department.

We recognize that some people believe the City should not do this work, but there are significant safety risks for everyone in the neighbourhood that the City cannot ignore. We also recognize that this work will have an emotional impact on the community and everyone involved. City staff are trying to conduct the work with thoughtfulness and care of the residents and their circumstances.

City staff have been meeting with a community-based working group at least once a week since May 2022, and more frequently with service providers, including Overdose Prevention Society and the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users over the past two weeks. In addition, staff have been

distributing information flyers to the community on a regular basis. There have been three rounds of distribution, to up to 150 individuals each time. Today's flyer distribution is the fourth round of these efforts.

We ask that media be sensitive to the needs of those sheltering outdoors as well as staff and community partners in the area at this time. If gathering footage, media are asked to respect requests for distance and/or instructions by City staff or police while filming.

Media are also advised that staff are not available for interviews as they are engaged in the work.

Information on storage

The City is providing up to two large, 360 litre storage totes with wheels which means they are easy to transport, should people opt to take their belongings with them instead of having them stored. Tamper-proof labels are sealed in front noting the content's owners.

The City has put in place short term/day storage at 390 Main St. for the totes. In addition, a storage container at 987 E. Cordova is available for longer term storage. Items will be available for access at the Main St. location between 12pm - 2pm Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays (except for holidays). Alternatively, calls can be made to 1-855-297-8278 between 8am - 2pm, seven days a week to arrange access to stored belongings.

We continue to work with non profit service partners on short, medium and longer term storage options.

Background

The City's Street and Traffic By-law prohibits structures on sidewalks and the City enforces this by-law. We are also responding to Vancouver Fire Rescue Services (VFRS) Fire Order issued on July 25 ordering the removal of structures in the area due to fire risk. The City has been working with the community, non-profit organizations and those with lived experience on a thoughtful, phased approach for structure removal to adhere to the order.

Our crews continue to attend daily to clean the streets and sidewalks as much as possible. The partnership with community partners has been integral as we address both the fire and life safety risks along these blocks.

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