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To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

Date: 11/20/2024 11:02:40 AM

Subject: Upcoming news release: City responds to growing illegal street vending in the Downtown Eastside (November 20, 2024)

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Dear Mayor and Council,

*For those who already saw the previous (now recalled) version of this message, I am terribly sorry about missing deleting the stray letter from "Fwd" in the subject line. Please accept this substitute message for your files.*

I am writing to inform you that the City will be issuing the below news release today regarding increased enforcement of illegal vending on the Downtown Eastside. Please keep this news release embargoed until it goes live from the City media email account at approximately noon today.

Details of this work were shared with you in a confidential Briefing Note to Council on November 18.

Maria will reply to this email with the relevant Vancouver.ca link once the release is posted.

Best,  
Sandra

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City of Vancouver  
News release  
November 20, 2024

#### City responds to growing illegal street vending in the Downtown Eastside

Starting today, in response to concerns around public safety and accessibility on the 000-block of East Hastings, the City will begin taking a firmer approach to enforcement of the [Street and Traffic By-law](#) on Hastings St to address congestion and safety risks due to illegal street vending.

The street vending scene on Hastings St has also become a primary destination for stolen goods, both locally and across the region. Addressing this activity is a priority for the City. There is also significant spillover onto the street, creating additional safety risks for both pedestrians and motorists.

The increased enforcement in the area aims to support safer access for all pedestrians, particularly those with mobility needs and to address the misuse of City sidewalks for the fencing of stolen goods. Engineering Services, with support from the Vancouver Police Department, will step up enforcement on Hastings St, requiring vendors to clear the sidewalks. If vendors do not comply, staff may impound their items. Penalties for unpermitted vending may also include fines.

"Our first priority is the safety and well-being of all Vancouverites, especially those in our vulnerable communities," says Mayor Ken Sim. "Increased enforcement of illegal vending demonstrates our continued commitment to ensuring the Downtown Eastside streets are safe and accessible for everyone."

"The illicit market on East Hastings Street has fueled a violent shoplifting epidemic that continues to impact the safety of business owners, staff, and shoppers throughout Vancouver," says Chief Adam Palmer. "Thousands of dollars in merchandise is stolen every day— often with violence by repeat offenders – and resold for pennies on the dollar by criminal networks in the Downtown Eastside."

The City recognizes that there are vulnerable people in the Downtown Eastside who rely on subsistence vending to supplement their income or engage in street vending under threat from predatory criminals. Staff are actively exploring ways that the City could work with the Downtown Eastside community economic development organizations to expand alternate, safer, and legal pathways for low-barrier income generation.

The By-law against illegal selling on the street applies to all areas of the city. Property owners who see vending in front of their business should call 311 to report the address.

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