

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 13, 2025

Mayor Ken Sim and VPD launch long-term initiative to dismantle organized crime in Vancouver

VANCOUVER, BC – Today, Mayor Ken Sim and the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) announced Task Force Barrage, a major, long-term operation to dismantle organized crime networks and target predatory criminals in the Downtown Eastside and beyond, ensuring a safer and more livable city for all Vancouver residents.

Building on ongoing police efforts, Task Force Barrage will expand investigations to target organized crime, put more officers on the street, and enhance community partnerships to improve public safety. This long-term, sustained effort aims to disrupt criminal networks, hold offenders accountable, and make Vancouver’s streets safer.

“The status quo in the Downtown Eastside isn’t working,” said Mayor Sim. “Organized crime, drug trafficking, and repeat offenders are preying on the most vulnerable, while everyday Vancouverites continue to see the impacts of crime. We were elected to do things differently, and that’s exactly what we’re doing.”

Task Force Barrage expands tactics like the Integrated Response Teams (IRT), which bring together VPD, Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services (VFRS), bylaw officers, sanitation crews, and engineering teams to ensure clear sidewalks and community safety for residents, workers, and visitors. It will also include the continuation of Project Brighthaven, which provided additional police officers in Gastown to support revitalization efforts in the area.

“We are committed to working collaboratively throughout the entire community to foster positive relationships and address deeply rooted issues that make living in the Downtown Eastside often feel unsafe,” said VPD Chief Adam Palmer. “We will always have empathy and compassion for people whose life circumstances have brought them here. By and large, I know we have people’s support to make this a safer place. Our priority is, and will always be, to focus on violent criminals and drug traffickers who commit crime and victimize others in the community.”

Since taking office, Mayor Sim and City Council have fully funded the VPD and VFRS, hired 200 new police officers and 35 mental health workers, introduced the province’s first Indigenous Crisis Response Team and secured millions in funding for youth violence prevention. These investments have contributed to a citywide decline in both violent and property crime. But Mayor Sim emphasized that more action is needed.

“Policing alone isn’t the answer, but it is part of the solution. A safer Vancouver requires strong partnerships—between the community, law enforcement, mental health workers, and all levels of government,” Mayor Sim added. “The City of Vancouver is stepping up, and we encourage senior levels of government to do the same.”

A funding request for Task Force Barrage is expected to come to City Council later this year. The City and VPD will provide regular updates as work continues to combat crime and protect Vancouver’s most vulnerable residents.

-30-

Media Contact:

Kalith Nanayakkara
Press Secretary, Office of the Mayor
Kalith.nanayakkara@vancouver.ca