

## Strathcona Park Neighbours: Update 4

February 26, 2021

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### Direction and overall plans

- The City, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, and BC Housing continue to take collective action to address the critical needs of people experiencing homelessness - both in the encampment in Strathcona, as well as other neighbourhoods across the city. We are working together to transition people out of the encampment and bring the encampment in Strathcona Park to a close.
- We are currently focused on developing and implementing plans for bringing people inside, as well as fencing off areas of the park for remediation and reopening to the public.

### Indoor space creation

- BC Housing announced on Monday that, in partnership with the City, they will be opening two 60-bed low-barrier shelters at 875 Terminal and 15-27 West Hastings this spring. Renovations are taking place before these spaces are activated and operators will be appointed in the coming weeks. More information is available [here](#).
- We continue to work together to identify and activate other locations across Vancouver that will provide warm, safe spaces for people who are experiencing homelessness and we will keep you updated on this work as it progresses.

### Park access for neighbours during decampment

- The work to relocate people from the west side of Strathcona Park has been completed, and the last people relocated and remaining tents were taken down on Monday.
- The Park Operations team has separated the west side of the park from the east with fencing, and has begun fencing parts of the east side. We will be finalizing plans to install additional fencing as part of the remediation work required for reopening for public use.

### Questions arising since last update

- **Are VPD officers still attending incidents in the park?**  
VPD officers respond to calls for services within the park and surrounding area as required, whether the reporter of the incident is someone staying in the encampment or a neighbour to the Park. VPD officers have also been asked to attend the park alongside the rangers to maintain the peace within the area. Should you be concerned for your safety or the safety of others, call 911 as it is important that all incidents are reported.
- **Can you provide a date for when people from the park have been moved and tents taken down?**  
Minister Eby reiterated his commitment to open enough spaces to accommodate people who living in the park by the end of April. As mentioned above, the City and BC Housing have announced plans for two new shelters which will accommodate 120 people and open this spring. Both organizations are also working on plans for additional new spaces that will allow people to come inside so that they are no longer facing the challenges of living outside. It is our goal to have more spaces available than there are people in the park so that we can also provide options to people who are experiencing homelessness in other areas of the city.

- **Will parked RVs be moved?**

While the City's bylaw does not prohibit sleeping in vehicles, our parking enforcement staff are monitoring the circumstances on the streets surrounding Strathcona Park. Vehicles that are parked in contravention of the bylaw or that represent a safety hazard will be addressed as part of the plan to transition people from the park to indoors spaces and return the park to its intended use.

Last week, City staff spoke to leadership in the camp and vehicle owners about two specific vehicles that we had received complaints about, one of the vehicles has now been moved and the other has been repaired, insured and is back on the road. We are also working with local towing companies to ensure that vehicles are not towed to the park in future, without formal authorization from Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation.

- **Can the City increase garbage collection around the park?**

City Sanitation staff have increased their attendance to the park and now collect garbage from the perimeter of the park on a daily basis, as well as supporting Vancouver Board of Park and Recreation staff to clean inside the west side of the park and service the warming tent and washroom trailer.

- **Why are you not going to use the Jericho Hostel or any locations on the west side of the city?**

In October 2020, Council directed City staff to explore the possibility of using the Jericho Hostel as a shelter to support the City's emergency response to homelessness. The Park Board supported this direction in November 2020, authorizing staff to make the necessary arrangements. After touring the space and consulting with BC Housing and potential operators, the decision has been made to not activate this space as a shelter due to the location of the building, the lack of access to transit and services, and the age and design of the building mean that it would be inaccessible for people with mobility issues.

The City and Province remained committed to activating other locations across Vancouver that will provide warm, safe spaces for people who are experiencing homelessness. with the City and BC Housing are partnering to open two new low-barrier shelters at 875 Terminal Avenue and 15-27 West Hastings Street, as well as other locations that are currently being identified. The City and BC Housing both continue to look for suitable sites for supportive housing across the city that have good transit connections and access to community services that people may need.

The City, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, and BC Housing remain committed to updating you regularly regarding our work in the park. Representatives from all three organizations will be attending an up coming Strathcona Residents Association meeting. In the meantime, if you have any questions, or would like to be added to our mailing list, please email [homelessness@vancouver.ca](mailto:homelessness@vancouver.ca).

