

Memorandum of Understanding

1.0 Parties

Between:

The Ministry of Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing (The Ministry)

And

City of Victoria (CoV)

2.0 Preamble

On March 17, 2020, the Province of British Columbia declared a public health emergency due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. An unintended consequence of responding to the pandemic was the closure and reduction of services for people who are experiencing homelessness. Reduced capacity in shelters, hospitals and other institutions, as well as loss of housing, income and connections to services led to an increase of people sheltering in parks and public spaces. The parties recognize that a collaborative approach to bringing people indoors and preventing further encampments is essential for the well-being of some of BC's most vulnerable citizens.

3.0 Purpose

This MOU has been developed to formalize the parties' shared commitment to a coordinated approach to ending and preventing encampments that preserves dignity for homeless encampment residents, respects the need for culturally appropriate services for Indigenous people, and considers the needs of the surrounding community.

The objectives of the MOU are to:

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved in the decampment of Victoria City parks and public spaces and confirm our shared commitment to transition an estimated 200 people sheltering in Victoria City Parks and other public spaces by April 30, 2021 into shelters, temporary or permanent housing with health, cultural and social support services.
- Confirm the shared commitment of partners working together to prevent the need for future encampments by addressing medium and long-term affordable housing, health, mental health, cultural and social support needs.
- Recognize the combined obligation to act immediately in a positive and compassionate way with viable alternatives and access to social and health services to support those experiencing homelessness and camping in parks and public spaces.

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4.0 Commitments in the Decampment of Victoria City parks and other public spaces

The Ministry

- To work collaboratively with the City of Victoria in the planning, coordination and provision of housing, transition and supports for people leaving the encampments.
- Through BC Housing, lead the Province's operational planning and supports for temporary support services, encampment transitions such as the provision of shelter and housing through coordinated access, housing outreach services, decampment coordination, selection of operators, and making necessary renovations to new indoor accommodations for camp residents, coordination of First Nations territorial welcome and closing ceremonies, and as a partner in other service coordination.
- To liaise with other Ministries, including Health, to coordinate supports for people in and transitioning from the encampments and into temporary housing – including COVID-19 prevention, primary nursing support and outreach, harm reduction and addictions supports.

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- To lead the City's operational supports for decampments, participate in operational planning, provide land for housing, land use decision-making, bylaw enforcement following the close of the encampment.
- To liaise with Victoria and Esquimalt Police, Victoria Fire, and community and Indigenous partners.
- As encampments are dismantled, to lead the physical management of the sites in coordination with BC Housing, relevant ministry staff and outreach workers, including fencing, storage, and logistics to support people to transition from the parks encampment and to prevent infill of the park after people living in the encampment are transitioned indoors through bylaw enforcement and by seeking an injunction if necessary.
- To ensure areas impacted by sheltering activities in Beacon Hill Park and other City parks as required are remediated for future community use.
- To apply by no later than April 16, 2021 for the Federal-Provincial Strengthening Communities' Services program for funding (up to \$2.5 million for communities between 5,000 and 200,000 people) seeking temporary shelter and services and to reduce community concerns about public health and safety in neighbourhoods (including cleaning and waste management, police protective services and bylaw

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enforcement, fire safety and outreach teams to connect people to resources and support programs).

5.0 Commitments in Public Communication

All Parties:

- To ensure that parties co-ordinate public statements and communications on any decampment activities.

6.0 Commitments in Responding to Future Encampments

The Ministry

- To provide housing outreach through BC Housing and to act as the Provincial liaison for coordinated health, housing, cultural and social supports to address the needs of people forming encampments
- To work with the City of Victoria and partners to develop temporary and permanent housing options to meet community needs and to create flow in established shelter and supportive housing.

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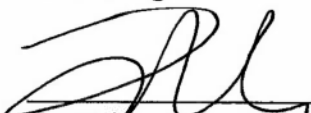
- To work with provincial, federal and community partners to provide outreach, supports and a range of housing options to unsheltered people, including those in encampments.
- To work with the Capital Regional District to bring forward available land and buildings for housing or shelter and to expedite land use decisions necessary to rapidly respond to housing need.

Signatures:



David Eby, QC
Attorney General and Minister Responsible
for Housing

March 23, 2021
Date



Lisa Helps
Mayor, City of Victoria

March 25, 2021
Date