

Attachment 2

Operations Support Team Update

Operations Support Team— Q2 2025 Update

Team purpose: The team includes members from Civic Buildings and Properties, Community Services, Engineering Operations, Fire, Human Resources, Integrated Services, Parks and Recreation, and Police. It also includes the recently established Community Liaison Officer Program, and the One Number to Call: Community Support Line.

This team responds to issues related to bylaw compliance, cleanliness, emergency situations, fire prevention, life safety, and public space activation and animation such as events. This team also assesses and monitors staff needs, ensuring compliance with the City's obligations under collective agreements and WorkSafeBC, and providing compassionate response training for City staff.

Staff Training, Procedures, and Policies Update

Human Resources continues to support the training for the Crises Response Outreach Team and frontline staff working on the three crises. The following training courses from the Standardized Training Suite have been provided to staff between January and May 2025:

- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
(Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC) – 11 attended
- Homelessness 101 (Free Online by Homeless Hub)
 - Self-paced online
 - Departments are continuing to enroll the applicable staff
- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Standard (CMHA) – 23 attended
- Resilient Minds® – Building the Psychological Strength of Community Workers (CMHA) – 9 attended
- Workplace Violence Prevention and De-escalation (ARETE) – 46 attended

For the fall, six additional sessions have been scheduled for the above courses for those staff unable to attend the previous sessions.

All courses within the Standardized Training Suite are available to Priority 1, 2, and 3 staff groups identified from each department, based on a risk assessment of their work and interaction with the three crises.

The Operations Support Team, including the Policies and Procedures Subcommittee, are developing an integrated and collaborative document that includes guiding principles for City departments when drafting policies and procedures for the Crises Response Pilot Project.

Sanitation and Washrooms Update

The sanitation trailer with attendant services, which is located on Front Street and adjacent the Purpose Shelter, remains fully operational. This sanitation trailer, which is funded by BC Housing, includes two toilets, two sinks and two showers. The average monthly use is estimated at 1,300 visits. The sanitation trailer replaced a portable toilet that the City had provided in the same location.

Implementation of the permanent free-standing, prefabricated public toilet was put on hold. As directed by Council, staff shifted their focus to the development of a Citywide Toilet Strategy. Work on the strategy is ongoing and a recent update was provided to Council on May 5, 2025. Notably, one of the identified priority groups is people experiencing homelessness. Staff working on the strategy will ensure alignment with the objectives of the Crises Response Pilot Project.

With respect to street cleanliness, and the presence of drug paraphernalia, human waste and litter on both public and private property, staff and a specialist contractor continue to conduct proactive daily cleaning and respond to complaints as they arise. Staff safety is of utmost importance, and with the support of the Community Liaison Officer Program staff attend to the most challenging of clean-ups. Incidents of human waste reported by staff and the contractor have remained consistent between 2024 and 2025, incidents of reported drug paraphernalia have seen an increase in 2025. With increased support to private property and the development of mobile device tracking programs, staff are still early in data collection and the ability to determine trends.

Activation and Animation Update

Following the Downtown Livability: Public Realm Improvements and Activation Report to Council in December 2022, construction on the Fourth Street Stairs and Flex Space Project located at the east end of the Front Street Mews (below the parkade) has started. This design will feature:

- permanent concrete stairs;

- colourful paving treatment to reinforce this area as public space, and to encourage regular recreational activity in the covered area (beneath the existing parkade structure);
- feature lighting;
- hard surface treatment for the area hillside to mitigate invasive species growth, and to minimize risks associated with some current activities;
- improved drainage;
- integrated flex space with opportunities for a wide range of programs and large-scale community events, as well as day-to-day activities (i.e., informal seating, street-style skate features, and two half-court basketball courts).

Construction is expected to be completed by fall 2025.

Community Liaison Officer Program Update

The Community Liaison Officer Program launched in January 2025 with a manager and two officers. A third officer was added in April 2025. As of May 2025, this program includes coverage seven days a week, including evenings on Fridays and Saturdays. Community Liaison Officers can assist with a number of different calls, including but not limited to:

- Reports of a tent or structure around a public space
- Reports of drug paraphernalia in the community
- Reports of a person and/or their belongings impacting pedestrian traffic or spaces like fire exits

Statistics from February to May 2025:

- 221 contacts in February 2025
- 187 contacts in March 2025
- 151 contacts in April 2025
- 256 contacts in May 2025

Community Liaison Officer Program highlights

Over the 2025 winter season, the team was able to manage a significant number of structures and tents that had been assembled along Front Street. The team was also able to ensure the area remained clean, orderly and safe. Due to the program and its empathetic and compassionate approach, the team has accomplished its work mainly through voluntary compliance, and with the assistance of Engineering Operations. There have been no incidents and no medical issues, and this has reduced reliance on the Police.

During the winter months, there was a deterioration in conditions along Alexander Street. Again, through the program's empathetic and compassionate approach, and relationship building, the team were able to gain voluntary compliance and had the space cleaned with all City services restored in a matter of hours.

The program continues to attend to both the Front and Alexander Streets multiple times each day, building relationships and assessing the needs of individuals in the area, as well as the needs of the community-at-large.

Community Liaison Officers have both proactively and reactively responded to situations near local businesses. In one instance, the team found two individuals in the parking lot of a Downtown New Westminster business; both appeared to be in medical distress. One individual was able to gather their belongings and carry on; the other required medical assistance. The Community Liaison Officers attempted to keep the person conscious and continued to assess their condition. The staff working at the business had also reached out to police prior to Community Liaison Officers attending. Once police arrived both teams opted to contact Fire to assess the individual.

During another early morning patrol, Community Liaison Officers were met with two individuals who were arguing behind a Downtown New Westminster business; the argument appeared to be over belongings. The argument was escalating and becoming more volatile. The team was able to calm the two individuals before the incident became physical, with both individuals eventually going their separate ways.

While responding to a call of a "person down" at the rear of a Downtown New Westminster residential building, Community Liaison Officers noticed two people on the sidewalk. One of the two individuals was unresponsive, and Community Liaison Officers began administering CPR on the individual, until Fire arrived and was able to take over.

The Community Liaison Officer Program has also received a number of instances of positive feedback. In March 2025, feedback was shared with the program regarding a Downtown New Westminster resident who had been "extremely critical" of the Crises Response Pilot Project for many months. The resident was told to contact the Community Liaison Officer Program with their concerns and they eventually did. The resident in question later sent a note to the program, calling the team very responsive while also noting that their efforts to take action are a good start.

One Number to Call: Community Support Line

The One Number to Call: Community Support Line was created after receiving feedback related to the pilot project, and in particular from the business community. This number began operating in May 2025. The goal of the number is to streamline processes and make it easier for business owners and operators and members of the public to get in touch with someone who can assist them in connecting with the appropriate team to address their concern. The number is answered by a person 24-hours a day, seven days a week. The Community Liaison Officer Program is responsible for handling the operation of the phone line. Calls to this number are directed to one of the following:

- the Crises Response Outreach Team;
- the Community Liaison Officer Program;
- the Biohazard Removal Program or Engineering Operations;
- the caller is asked to hang-up and dial the non-emergency line;
- the caller is asked to hang-up and dial 9-1-1.