



# Living in our Parks - Unhoused and Human Rights

URBAN RELATIONSHIPS  
Overview





We acknowledge we are situated on the traditional lands of the Coast Salish peoples, and in particular, we acknowledge our relationships with the q'wá:nł'ən' (Kwantlen), q'íc'əy' (Katzie), Máthxwi (Matsqui) and Se'mya'me (Semiahmoo) First Nations.

## MISSION

### Decolonize the Vancouver Park Board

The Park Board recognizes the institution's colonial history and upholds the Board's commitment to the 11 Reconciliation Strategies.

## VISION

An evolvable organization in which every employee and Commissioner recognizes the humanity in themselves by recognizing and respecting the humanity of First Peoples; and an organization that sets a worldwide example in treating Reconciliation as a decolonization process.

April 16, 2018

## VALUES

These values are your compass to help guide the way you work, interact with colleagues, external partners and the public.



### PATIENCE

Colonialism didn't happen overnight. Untangling it takes time. We will pace ourselves for the marathon, not the sprint. We will adjust deadlines to ensure things are done well and respectfully.



### CLARITY

We will focus on how colonialism functions to exclude, not on how to include.



### PRAGMATISM

All staff are inheriting a system not of our making. The Park Board Reconciliation Team (PBRT) is here to assist colleagues with examining the ways colonialism continues to damage others. Blame is unproductive.



### LEADERSHIP

We will nurture and sustain each other, demonstrating Indigenous principles in the way we function as a team.



### LEARNING

We consent to learn in public. We will make mistakes. We will sit with those mistakes, be transparent about them, and use them both to learn and to teach. Our mistakes will be diagnostic tools.

## **Provide an overview of the Urban Relationships department**

- Background & Formation of Urban Relationships
- Human rights
- Scope of Work
- Engagement
- Closing Remarks



# Background & Formation of Urban Relationships



## Oppenheimer → Strathcona → CRAB Park

- Encampment established as a protest
- Significant health/safety conditions and increasing risk for campers and neighborhood
- Hard place to live; cold, wet, dirty
- Individuals sheltering in the park have a sense of community, assist each other to some degree
- Communal food and warming tents set up
- No clear leader or spokesperson for the encampment
- Legal advocates are present and do voice concerns on behalf of people sheltering in the park
- Local area residents and businesses have concerns

- Oppenheimer Encampment(s)
  - First long-standing critical mass encampment
  - Resolved via a legal injunction (Board Decision)
  
- Strathcona Encampment
  - Grew as a result of the injunction at port of Vancouver encampment (established soon after oppenheimer was decamped)
  - Resolved via a legal injunction (Board Decision) – MOU established
  
- CRAB Park Encampment
  - Grew as a result of the Strathcona closure
  - A legal injunction was requested (Board Decision), final ruling on hold – housing available OR critical health and safety risk
  - GM notice in place, to allow for special consideration from the by-law

## July 2021 (GM Order #1)

- Intent - to inform due to continued noncompliance with the Park By-laws, A temporary shelter restriction was placed on temporary shelters in CRAB park. Limited uptake.
- In September, staff from Parks, Carnegie Outreach, BC Housing and Engineering assist folks as they moved into shelters or housing. There was no enforcement necessary and VPD was not in the park for this initiative
- Some individuals sheltering in the park remained





## Notice from the General Manager of the Park Board

Effective Thursday, April 7, 2022, pursuant to the Parks Control By-law, the General Manager of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation designates the northwest point of CRAB Park at Portside (shaded orange in below map) as an area acceptable for temporary daytime shelter.



For more information call:  
211 - Shelter and Street Help Line | 311 - City Services

Effective Thursday, April 7, 2022, temporary daytime shelters will be permitted in the northwest point of CRAB Park at Portside, as shown in the above map.

Address: CRAB Park at Portside, 101 E Waterfront Road, Vancouver, BC



General Manager - Vancouver Park Board

April 7, 2022  
Date

October 2021 - A petition was served to the General Manager challenging the validity of the GM Orders issued due to a gap in required process

January 13th, 2022 - BC Supreme Court Ruling: Injunction to be put on hold - exceptional Circumstances

- History of encampments
- GM discretion of daytime sheltering
- Justification of injunction
- Health and Safety

GM Notice issued April 7, 2022 to allow daytime sheltering in designated area.

## April 2022

- A new department was created from a rights-based lens for those sheltering in the park
- A Director was hired as part of its efforts working with hundreds of vulnerable park users sleeping or sheltering in parks and to work with partners to help fulfill the City's humanitarian responsibilities to their citizens and improve the use in Vancouver parks
- The department works on JEDDI (Justice, Equity, Decolonization, Diversity, and Inclusion), in collaboration with other Park Board departments, most often Park Operations (Rangers) and is part of the Provincial encampment response
- This department is one of the first in North America doing this rights/equity based work in parks. Therefore, municipalities receiving the similar ruling or experiencing a higher number of individuals sleeping in parks, are asking for consultation, our participation at round tables, and involvement in research to further the work on encampments



# Human Rights





# Activity





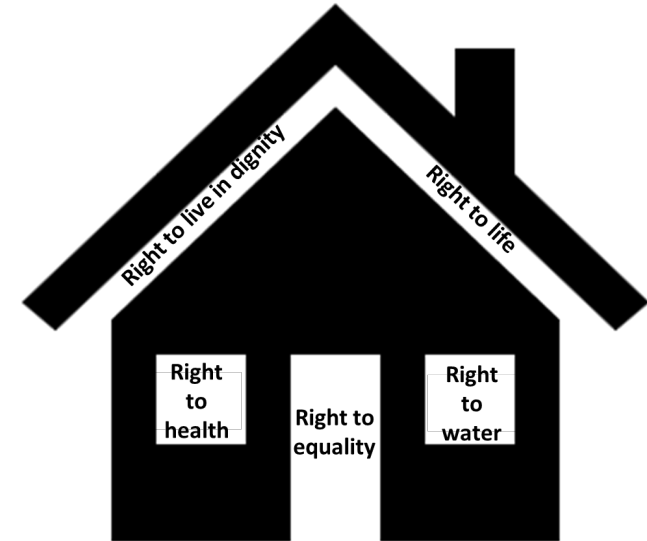
- Housing is essential to the inherent dignity and well-being of the person and to building sustainable and inclusive communities
- Advocate for appropriate long term supportive housing, if unable to, ensure encampments support the human rights and dignity of those in them, in a manner that respects human rights and promotes human well-being and safe communities
- Improved housing outcomes are best achieved through cooperation between governments and civil society as well as the meaningful involvement of local communities

## What is the right to housing?

- The right to live in security, dignity and peace
- A framework to guide all government decisions
- Key to ensure just, equal, and happy cities
- Housing Adequacy

## What does it mean for a home to be adequate?

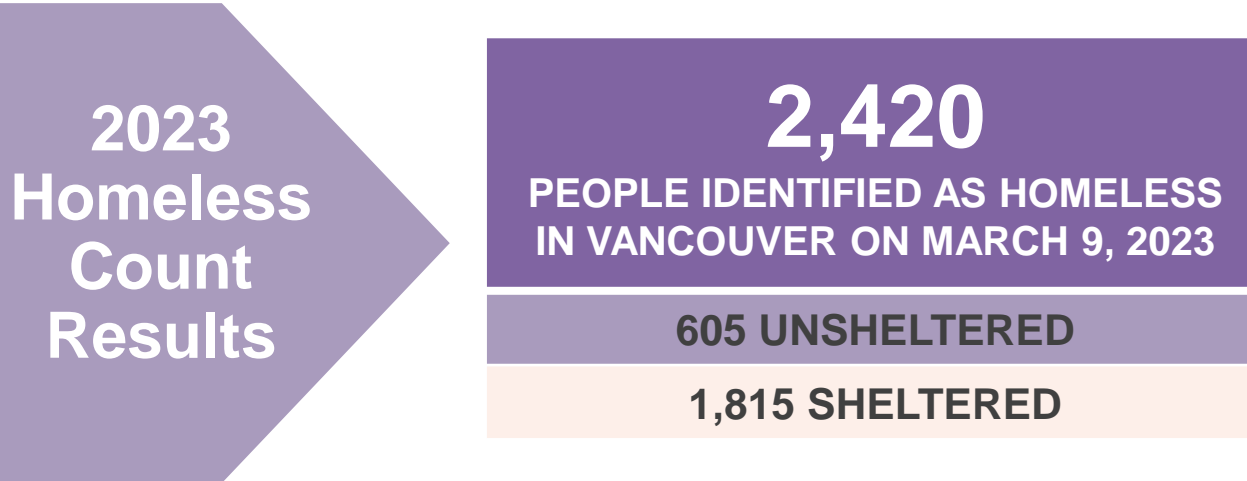
- Affordability
- Security of Tenure
- Habitability
- Accessibility
- Availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure
- Location
- Cultural adequacy





The extent of homelessness and the number of homeless encampments across the country are indicative of the urgent need to establish a new mechanism, the sole purpose of which is to address and prevent homelessness and encampments on a priority basis, recognizing it is a fundamental violation of human rights

Within a human rights framework, it is understood that solutions are unlikely to be effective when imposed by governments on those most affected. Solutions must be developed and implemented collaboratively. Not only does this result in knowledge exchange, but it raises the stakes, resulting in a heightened commitment by everyone engaged to ensure the success of proposed solutions

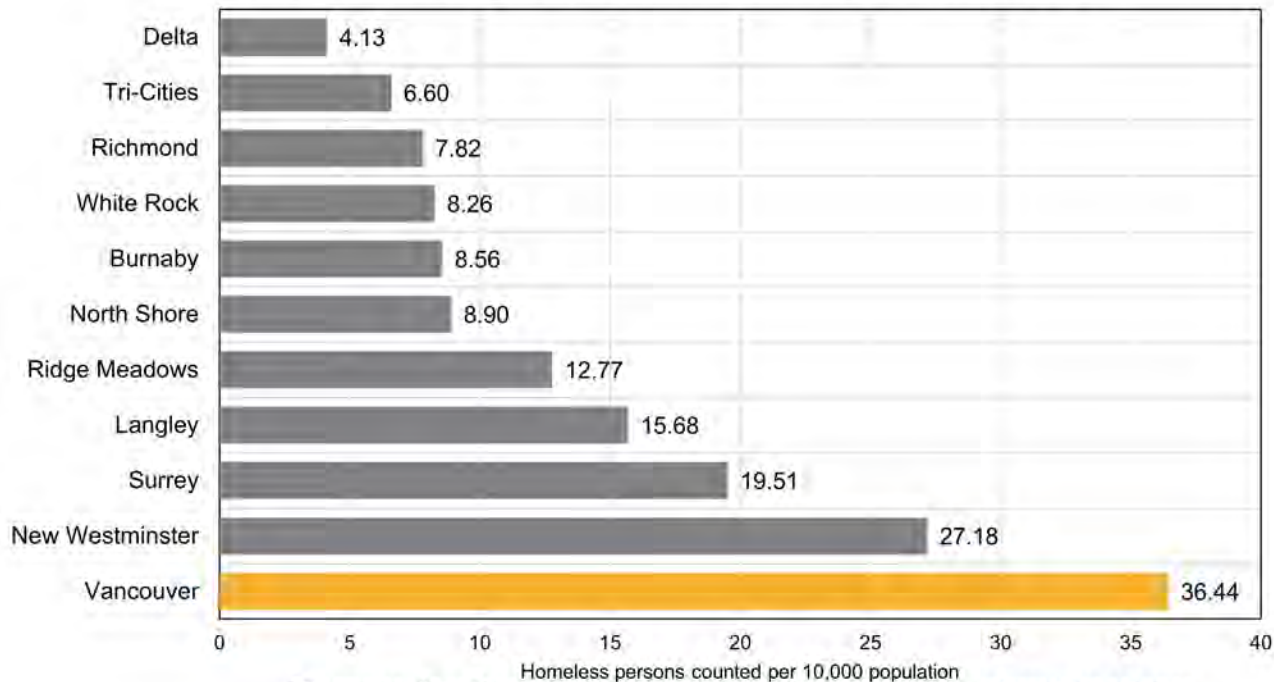




# Metro Vancouver: Per Capita Homelessness



## Homeless Population Per 10,000 Population - Metro Vancouver, 2023



Data sources: Metro Vancouver 2023 Homeless Count; BC Stats, 2022 municipal population estimates

- Recognize residents of homeless encampments as rights holders
- Meaningful engagement and effective participation of encampment residents
- Prohibition of forced evictions of encampments
- Explore all viable alternatives to eviction
- Ensure that any relocation is human rights compliant
- Ensure encampments meet basic needs of residents consistent with human rights
- Ensure human rights-based goals and outcomes, and the preservation of dignity for encampment residents
- Respect, protect, and fulfill the distinct rights of indigenous peoples in all engagements with encampments



# Scope of Work





## July 2020 a revision of the Parks Control By-Law around sheltering in the parks

- 11 A New section “person experiencing homelessness to take up temporary abode in a park” as long as the shelter complies with the provisions outlined in section 11B
- 11 B outlines where temporary shelters are prohibited, when they can be erected, what restrictions apply, and how the space can be used

# Current Statistics – NEEDS TO BE UPDATED

It should be noted that year to date compared to 2022 the following areas show increases overall:

- Homelessness –2023 - 1436 more cases compared to 2022, a 25.8% increase year over year
- Fires – 2023 – 182 more fires compared to 2022
- Nosie – 2023 – 784 more files compared to 2022
- Illegal Parking – 2023 – 341 more files compared to 2022

(1120)	Type of Call	December 2023	November	Same Period 2022	YEAR TO DATE 2022	YEAR TO DATE 2023
1	Homeless	541	705	269	7628	9255
2	Bylaw/Noise	19	51	27	1643	2498
3	Smoking	7	14	5	323	549
4	Film	0	0	0	2	6
5	Assist Public	10	17	13	583	356
6	Inspect Hazard	25	24	25	748	532
7	Outdoor facility	8	6	4	225	165
8	Lost Child	2	0	0	29	50
9	Unlock Facility	26	28	15	227	487
10	Wildlife	10	12	13	450	386
11	Special Events	1	0	0	37	17
12	Property Damage	5	5	13	117	101
13	Patrol	627	433	202	4983	5296
14	Unsecure facility	0	1	1	31	41
15	First Aid	4	3	3	46	100
16	Needle	2	8	8	76	114
17	Crime	35	77	6	241	622
18	Aggressive Person	6	6	6	93	102
19	Dog Off Leash	8	9	19	346	512
20	Illegal parking	15	11	9	210	573
21	Vending	0	1	2	83	76
22	Permit	3	2	0	43	51
23	COVID	0	0	0	4	0
24	Fire	32	19	11	365	566
25	Assist Internal Dept.	8	6	6	156	184
		<b>1394</b>	<b>1438</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>19,218</b>	<b>22,639</b>

YEAR TO DATE COMPARISON 2023

	CURRENT	PREVIOUS	2023 YTD	2022 YTD
TOTALS	<b>1394</b>	<b>1438</b>	<b>22,639</b>	<b>19,218</b>

- Park board employees spending their days not trimming golf greens but grappling with homelessness and mental illness
- Municipal employees in Vancouver, and other cities, are spending far more time and effort than in previous years on the front lines of some of society's thorniest problems
- In many cases, it takes an emotional and physical toll.





# Engagement



## Trauma-informed, harm reduction approach within a framework of reconciliation

### Communication

- Direct interaction
- Active listening
- Actioning requests

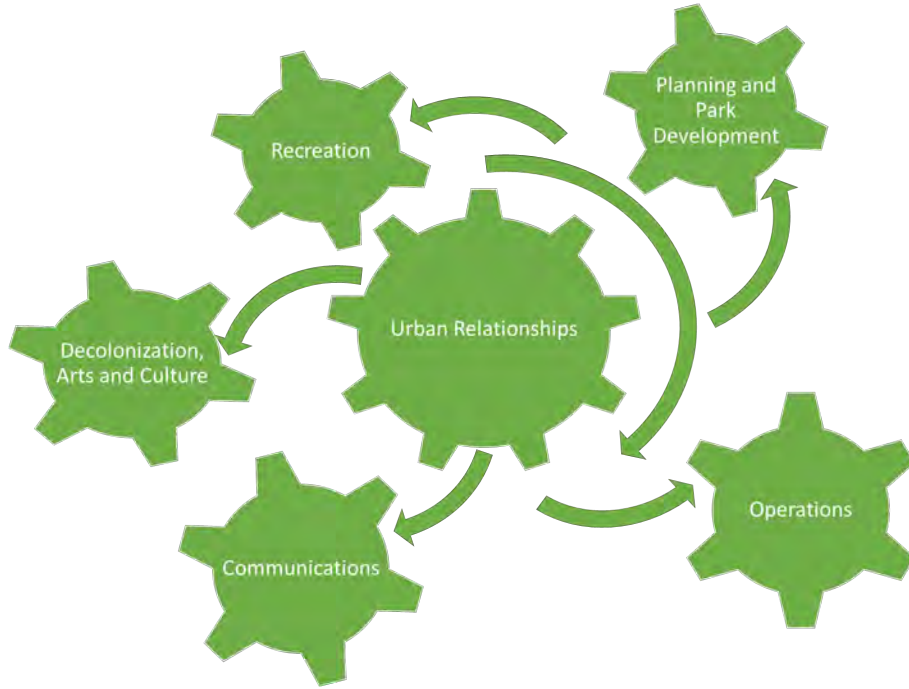
### Building Trust

## Purpose

Bringing the lenses of equity and rights

- Consultation
- Community engagement
- User meetings







# Closing Remarks





# Questions

