



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

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May 10, 2021

Mayor & Council
City of Victoria

Via Email

Dear Mayor Helps and Council:

RE: Continuation of VicPD Special Duty Funding to Assist Bylaw Services

VicPD has been providing two police officers on special duty assignment to support City of Victoria Bylaw officers since September 2020. When the original funding ended on December 31, 2020, Council approved continued special duty deployment funding from Jan 1, 2021 to March 31, 2021 when it was anticipated that overnight sheltering in parks would end. My last request to Council was to continue the special duty deployment for the month of April 2021 in anticipation there would be no further need for VicPD to accompany Bylaw officers.

Unfortunately, the situation in many of the parks has remained extremely volatile and unsafe for Bylaw officers and our Patrol Division and Community Services Division resources continue to be short-staffed resulting in on-duty resources not being a viable option. As a result, I am respectfully requesting that Victoria City Council approve continued funding of \$25,000 per month, back-dated to May 1, 2021, so I am able to continue to deploy two VicPD officers for four-hour shifts/seven days a week to support City of Victoria Bylaw officers and allow them to safely carry out their duties at the various encampments within the City of Victoria. Since it is very difficult to predict when our need to support Bylaw officers will end, I would like to keep my request open-ended until such time as the City Manager, in consultation with the Manager, Bylaw and Licensing Services, indicates that police support is no longer required.

As Council is aware, Bylaw officers are routinely intimidated, harassed, threatened and targeted and placed in unsafe situations where their personal safety is compromised while they carry out their duties in many public parks. Bylaw officers require the support and assistance of VicPD officers to keep them safe and allow them to be effective in their duties. Although efforts are being made to

house people experiencing homelessness indoors and the number of people sheltering in parks is slowly decreasing, the Bylaw officer safety concerns regarding violence, aggression, threats and intimidation have not diminished and VicPD continues to be required to support Bylaw officers in many of the parks.

In addition to keeping Bylaw officers safe while they carry out their duties, having VicPD officers present also allows VicPD to be proactive in preventing crime, engaging with those experiencing homelessness and taking action when crime is observed. From all accounts, this partnership has worked very well and received positive community support.

Ensuring the safety, security and well-being of those sheltering in parks, residents and City of Victoria Bylaw officers and other City of Victoria staff remains an on-going priority for the Victoria Police Department. Thank you for considering my request.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Del Manak', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Del Manak
Chief Constable

c. Mayor Barbara Desjardins