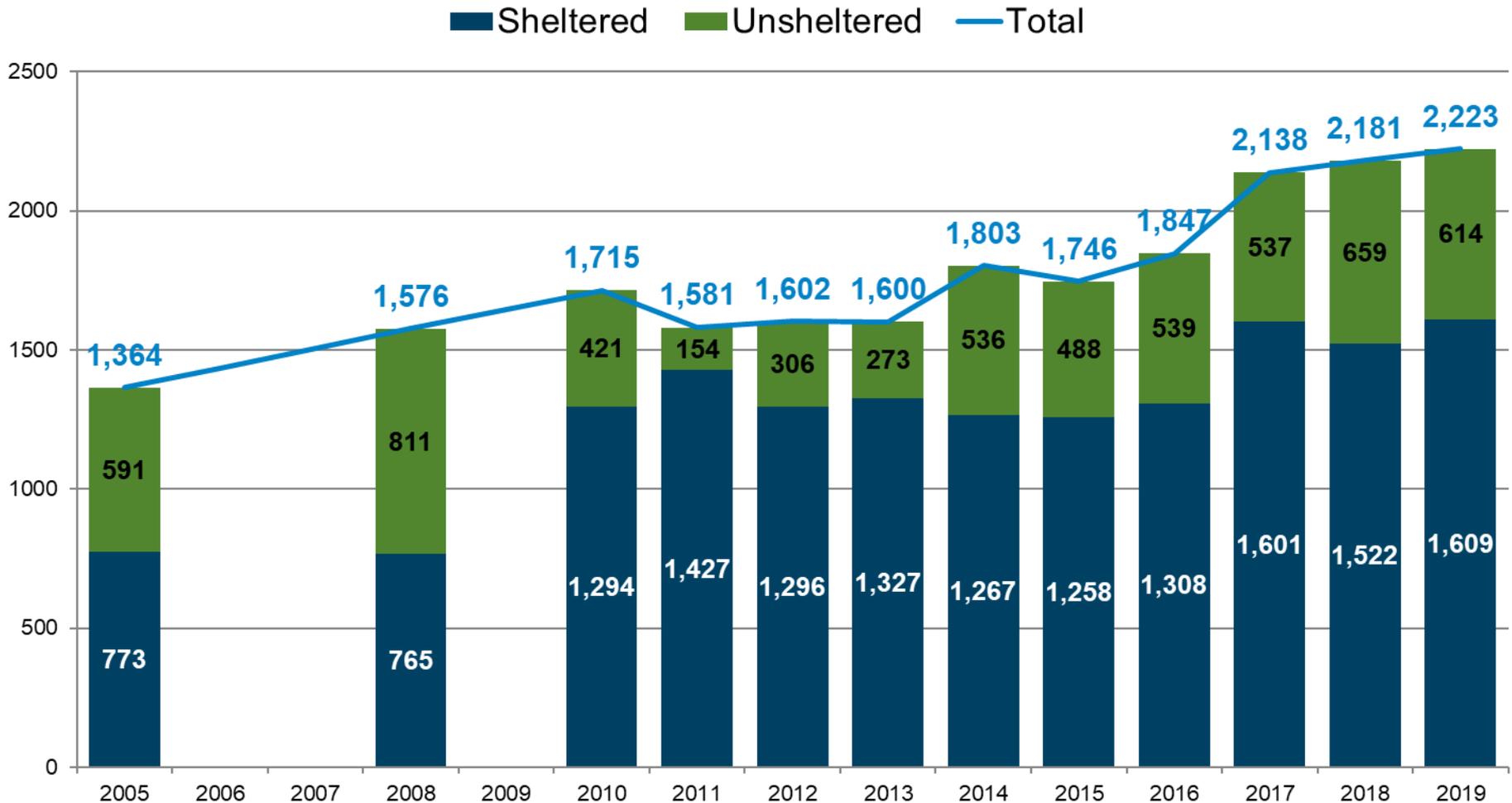


# Oppenheimer Park Encampment

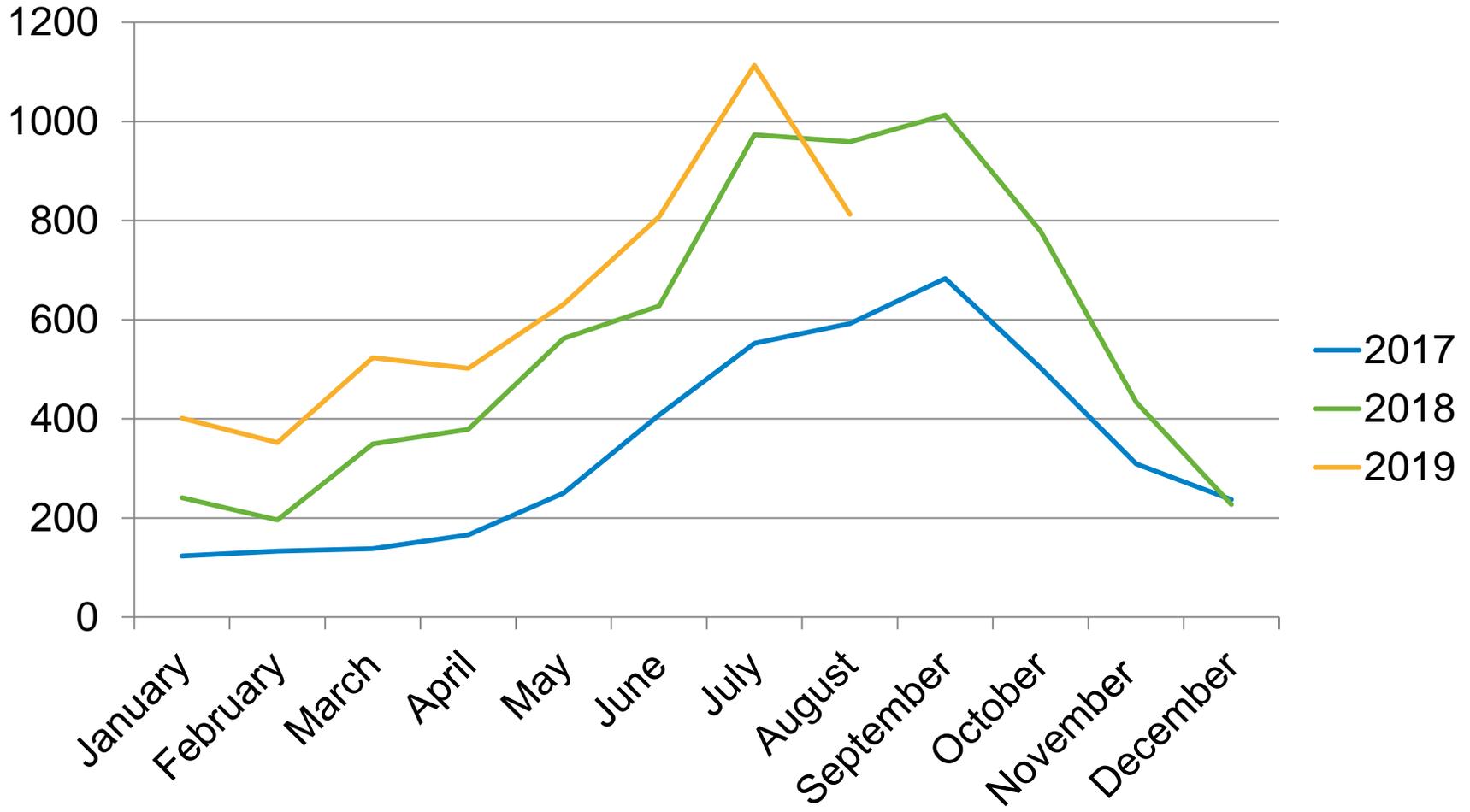
Update to Park Board  
September 26, 2019



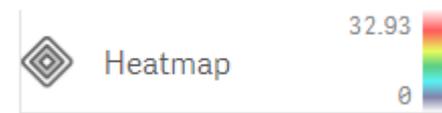
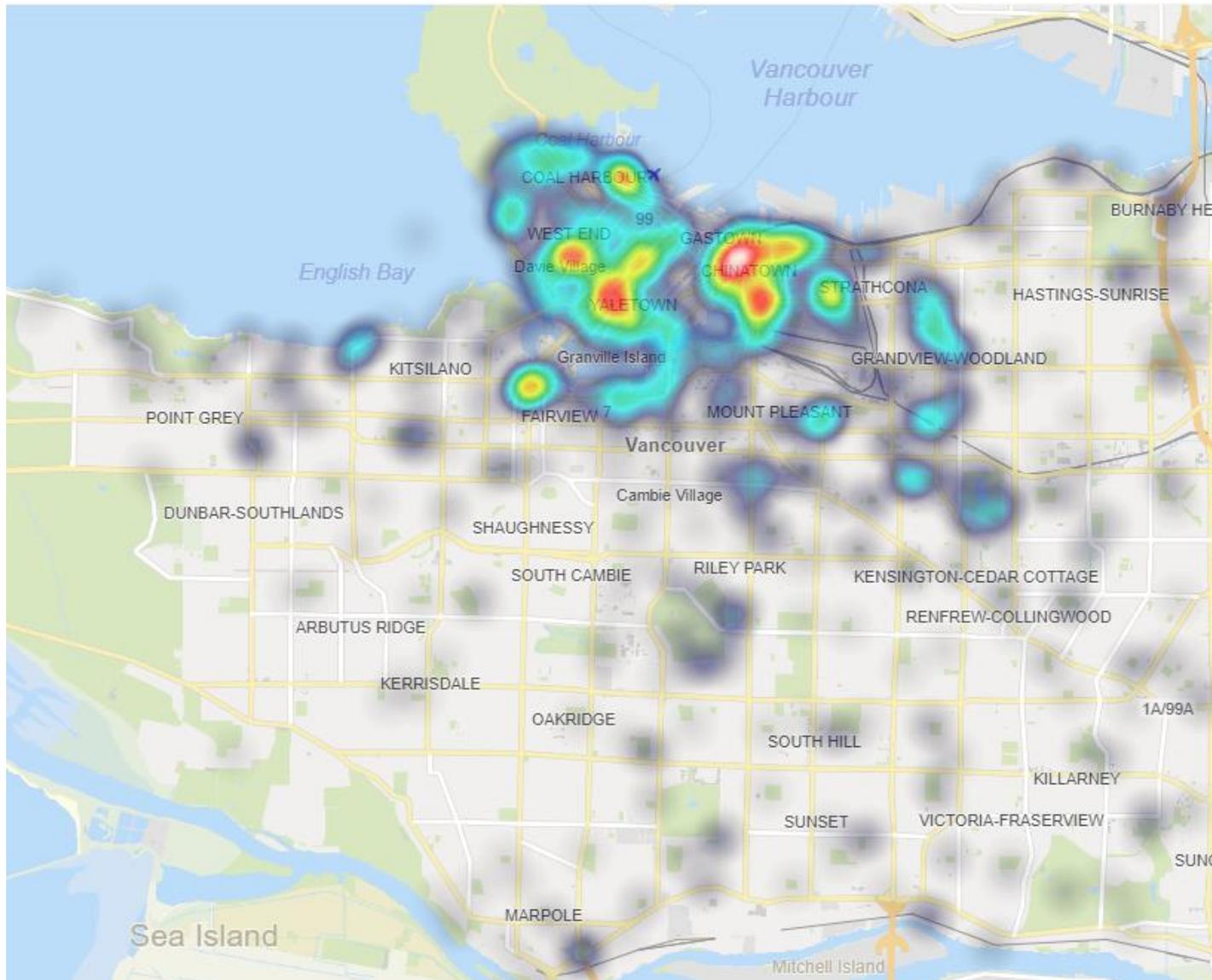
# Homelessness Crisis



# Tents/structures reported to 311/VanConnect



# Tents/Structures Heat Map Jan-Aug 2019



- The City's Outreach team conducts early morning/late evening rounds to areas where people are sleeping outside to offer income, housing, health supports.
  - Note: Provincial Homeless Outreach Program funds 7 additional teams in neighbourhoods across the city.
- Outreach works in coordination with Engineering, Parks, VPD, VFRS to identify people sleeping outdoors who may be willing to be connected with necessary services.
- In accordance with BC jurisprudence, Engineering and Park Rangers engage with campers (from 8/9am onwards) asking that tents/structures be taken down during the day. VPD assists to keep the peace and protect staff safety as required.
- Crews clean up abandoned items as well as articles people voluntarily leave behind when asked by staff to take down their tent.
- Engineering authorized to manage structures in 6 DTES parks: Strathcona ; Victory Square; Pioneer Place (Pigeon Park); Wendy Poole; CRAB; Oppenheimer

# Encampments – Recent History

- Oppenheimer Park – 2014
  - Encampment established as a protest
  - Injunction granted
  - Occupants who were homeless were supported to transition to shelter. Most subsequently moved to the Quality Inn which was leased on a short term by CoV.
- 58 West Hastings – 2016
  - Encampment established as a protest in July
  - Injunction granted in November
  - Occupants who were homeless were supported to transition to shelter
- 950 Main Street – 2017
  - Encampment established as a protest in April; City property leased to Lu'Ma Native Housing for affordable housing development
  - Injunction granted to Lu'Ma in June
  - Occupants who were homeless were offered option to transition to shelter
- 1100 Franklin Street - 2017
  - Encampment established in June as a protest following order to vacate 950 Main
  - Occupants voluntarily relocated to shelter in December; no injunction sought
  - Site subsequently deployed for temporary modular housing

- Began in October 2018 with a small number of people experiencing homelessness and sleeping in park
- Tent count steadily increased ~20 (Feb) to ~200 (Aug)
- Individuals sleeping in the park also increased ~25 (Feb) to ~137 (Aug)
- Outreach staff attended the park daily; additional evening visits to provide information on shelter and nearby warming centre options over the winter months
- ~ 45 people sleeping in park were housed, many more provided with income and other support (eg., ID).
- February: Fire Chief's Order issued to address safety risks in encampment
- March: Council and Park Board motions re camping in Oppenheimer
- Steady deterioration in safety conditions and increasing risk for campers and neighbourhood; field house closed due to staff safety issues
- Engineering removed equivalent to 807 cubic yards of material (approx. 135 dumpsters) between January and July

# Order to Remove Structures

- August 19, 9:00am - Park Board GM issued Order that all tents/structures must be removed from the park by 6:00pm on August 21, 2019.
- At the time the order was issued, BC Housing confirmed the following options available for people camping in the park and who required housing:
  - BC Housing - 123 units
  - COV - 11 units
  - 60 shelter spaces also made available
- At that time, the available housing and shelter capacity was sufficient to accommodate everyone who was staying in the park
- BC Housing, VCH and CoV Outreach staff established a process of assessment; housing offers were prioritized for people who had been sleeping in the park for the longest period of time.
- August 19-23 - concerted effort by Parks, City VFRS, VPD, BC Housing, VCH and housing providers to transition individuals to available housing/shelter, including moving assistance and storage of belongings

- 130 people accepted housing offers in August
  - 44 (34%) women
  - 66 (51%) who identify as Indigenous
- Approximately 120 tents remain on site; many unoccupied or used for storage
- Outreach is working with 55 people experiencing homelessness who are staying in the park
  - 40 identify as male; 14 identify as female; 1 identifies as trans
- A small number of people have declined to identify themselves or are not interested in Outreach's assistance.
- Outreach staff continue working with people in the park but have scaled back 7am visits to 2 days per week
  - Encampments elsewhere in city need support
  - Challenges working with people in the current environment
- Staff continue to invite park sleepers to seek further assistance by visiting the Outreach office (390 Powell).

# Life Safety Risks

- Fire Chief's order issued in February 2019
- Sets out a number of conditions to reduce the fire hazard for people living in the park
- Continued non-compliance with the order
- Regular inspections indicate an elevated risk to life, injury and fire, due to the constant use of restricted fuels, propane appliances, BBQ's, heating devices, and candles used in tents.
- Anticipate fire/life safety risks to accelerate as weather gets colder
- Since Jan 2019, VFRS has responded to:
  - 20 tent fires
  - 62 medical calls
  - 93 other miscellaneous responses



# Financial Implications (estimated)

## January 1 – July 31, 2019

Department	Description	Cost
Engineering (Street Ops and Sanitation)	Varied service levels including daily weekday cleanups (Jan-Apr), expanded 7 day clean up (May) and current service of Wed, Thurs and Sat	\$95,000
Park Board	Ranger visits, janitorial costs for cleaning of Fieldhouse and port-a-potties as well as regular park maintenance	\$200,000
ACCS	Additional staff for Fieldhouse (6 days to 7 days a week) and additional staffing costs for Outreach	\$60,000
VF&RS	Fire Prevention staff enforcing Fire Chief's Order	\$240,000
VPD	On-duty resources and call-out incremental resources	\$222,000
<b>Total*</b>		<b>\$817,000</b>

\*Excludes VPD/VFRS patrol and emergency response

## August 19-23, 2019

- Total City/Park Board cost = \$117,500
- Includes wages, supplies and other incidentals for Outreach, Engineering, VFRS, VPD, and Parks staff
- Excludes costs incurred by BCH and VCH

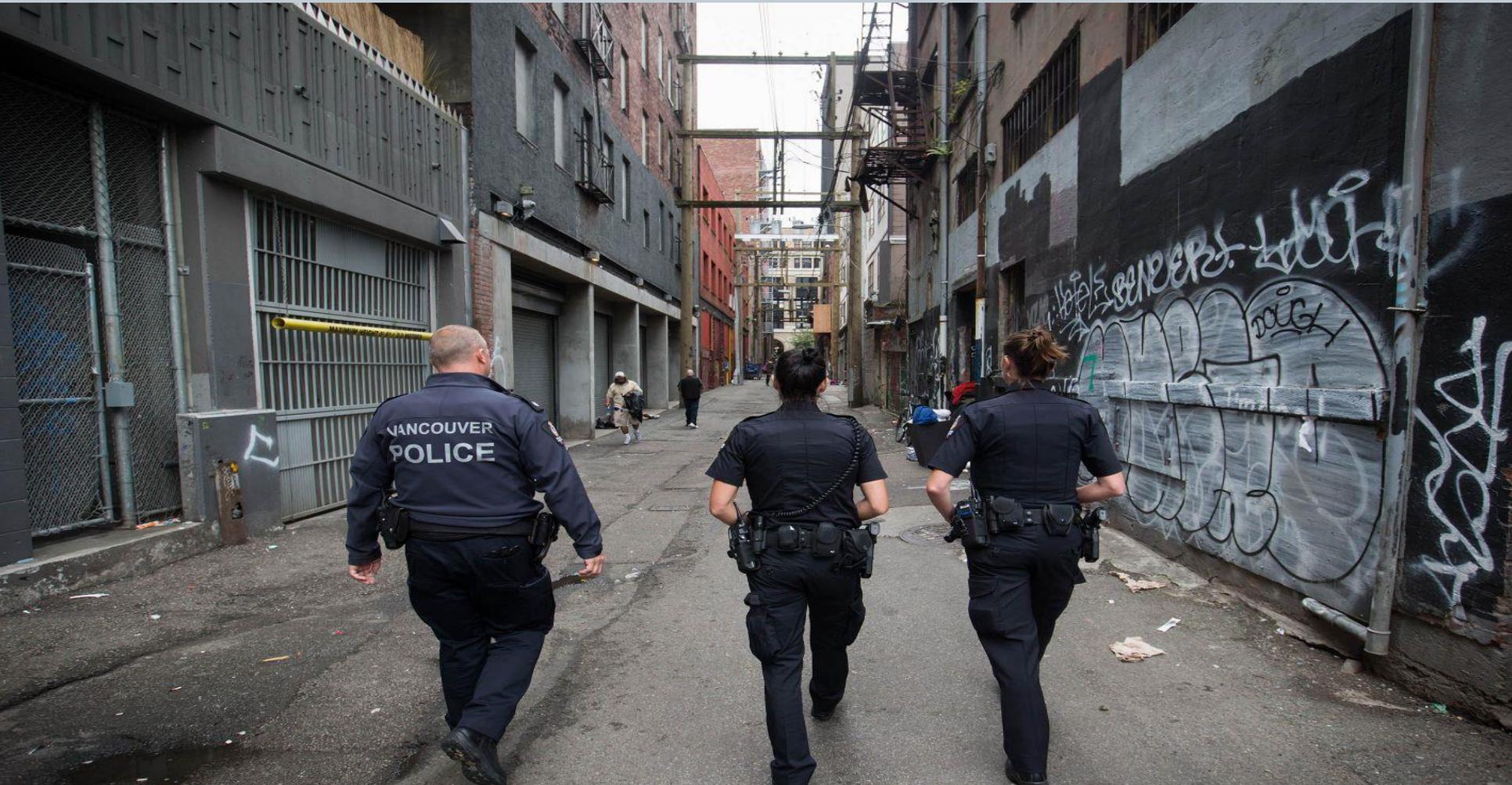
- City staff do not support sanctioned or managed encampments as a response to the homelessness crisis
  - Significant health and life safety risks to individuals sleeping outside; sub-optimal setting to engage with individuals experiencing homelessness
  - Not possible to manage an uncontrolled outdoor site safely and effectively; controls necessary to provide a safe and secure site would exclude many campers
  - Very limited site options in Vancouver's dense urban core
  - Significant operational challenges; costs \$1M - 2M per year
  - No provincial funding or support to operate sanctioned encampments
  - Experience in other cities has not demonstrated effectiveness in supporting transition to housing or mitigating growth of street homelessness
- City staff are focused on supporting people to transition to indoor spaces, including shelters and other longer term housing options as they become available

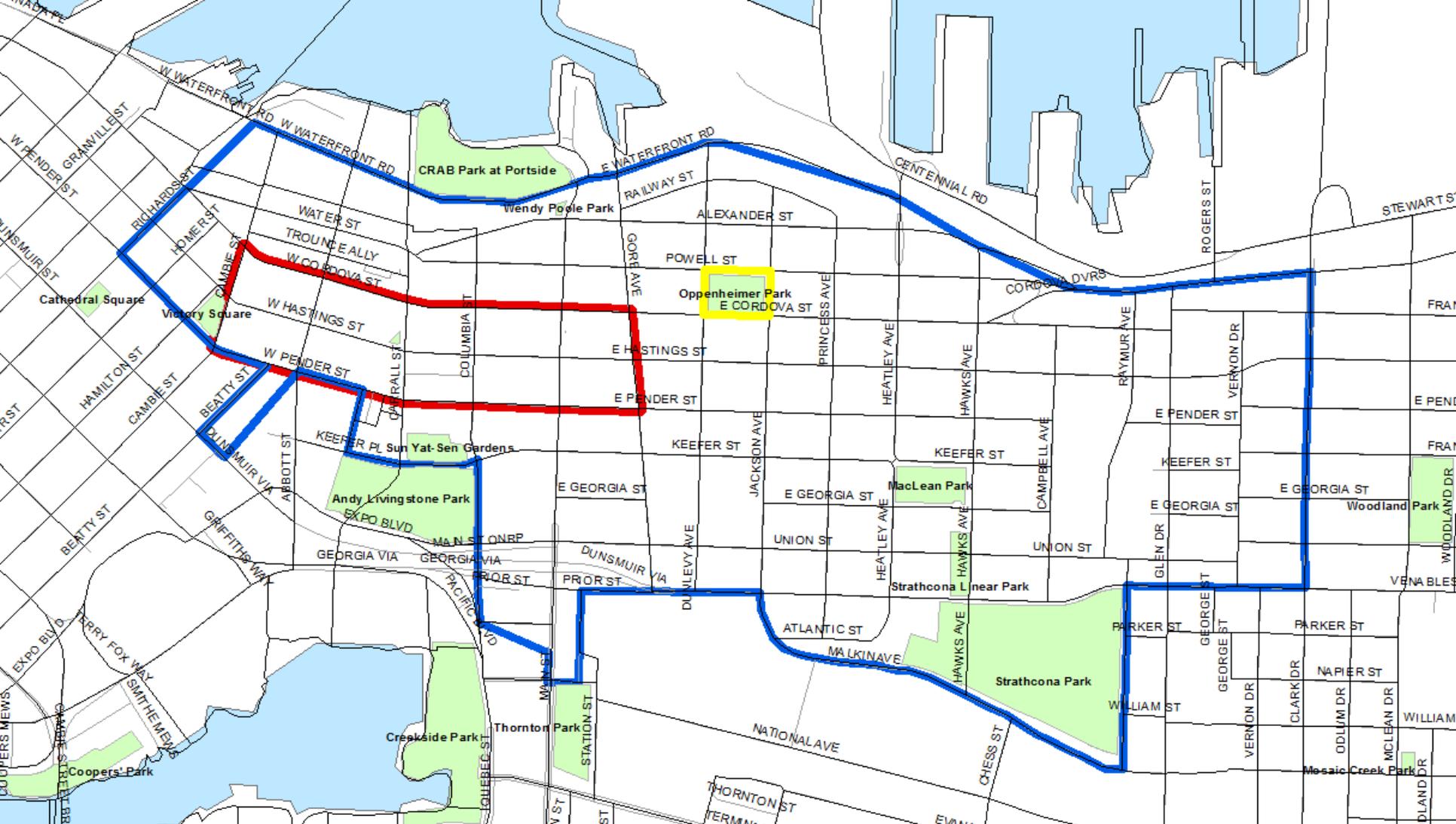
- Ongoing engagement with Province/BCH re: shelter capacity
  - Temporary Winter Shelters (operated November-April)
    - CoV provides space or pays lease costs and all tenant improvements; BCH contributes operating funding; non-profits operate
    - Approx. 200 of 300 temporary winter shelter beds funded to operate through March 2020
    - Working with BCH to secure 100 beds for this winter
  - Extreme Weather Shelters (activated when temp “feels like 0°C” )
    - Evelyn Saller Centre - 40 beds; BCH contributes operating funding.
- CoV Warming Centres (activated when “feels like -5°C)
  - Entirely CoV funded – approx. 200 spaces in 2018/19
  - Working to secure sites for upcoming winter
- Temporary Modular Housing program
  - CoV provides land or lease costs and regulatory process/approvals; BCH provides capital and operating; non-profits operate and provide services
  - 600 homes on 10 sites now tenanted, 58 units on Vanness Ave pending approval
  - All units targeted to those experiencing or at risk of homelessness
  - Identification of potential sites and funding opportunities for additional projects in process

# Questions

# Rising Violence in the Downtown Eastside

Deputy Chief Constable Howard Chow

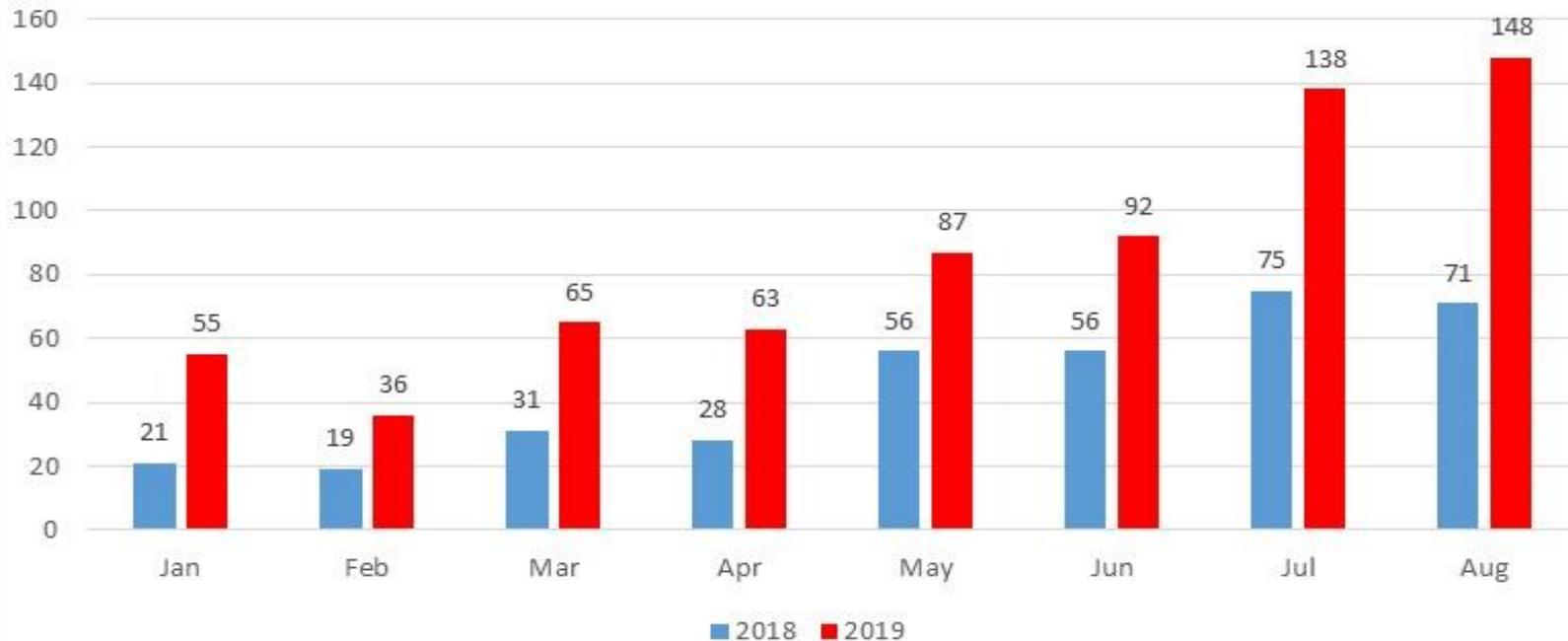




# DTES and Oppenheimer Park



## OPPENHEIMER PARK CALLS FOR SERVICE January to August 2018 / 2019



- **704** total CFS (2019)
- **383** total CFS (2018)



# Increase in Violence: *At a Glance*

## Firearms

- 453 guns removed in Vancouver
- 223 guns seized from District 2

## Other Weapons

- 476 located in DTES

## DTES Violent Crime

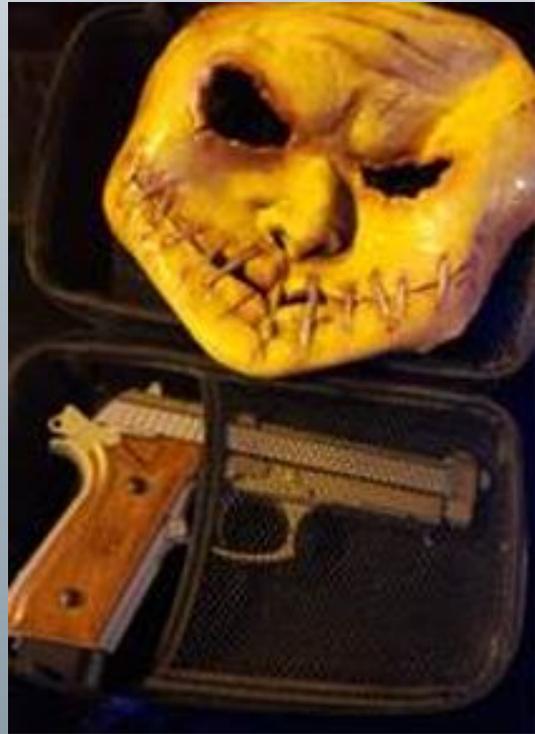
- 30% increase



# Assaults Against Police Officers

- 49% increase in Vancouver
- 68% increase in District 2





# Questions?

