

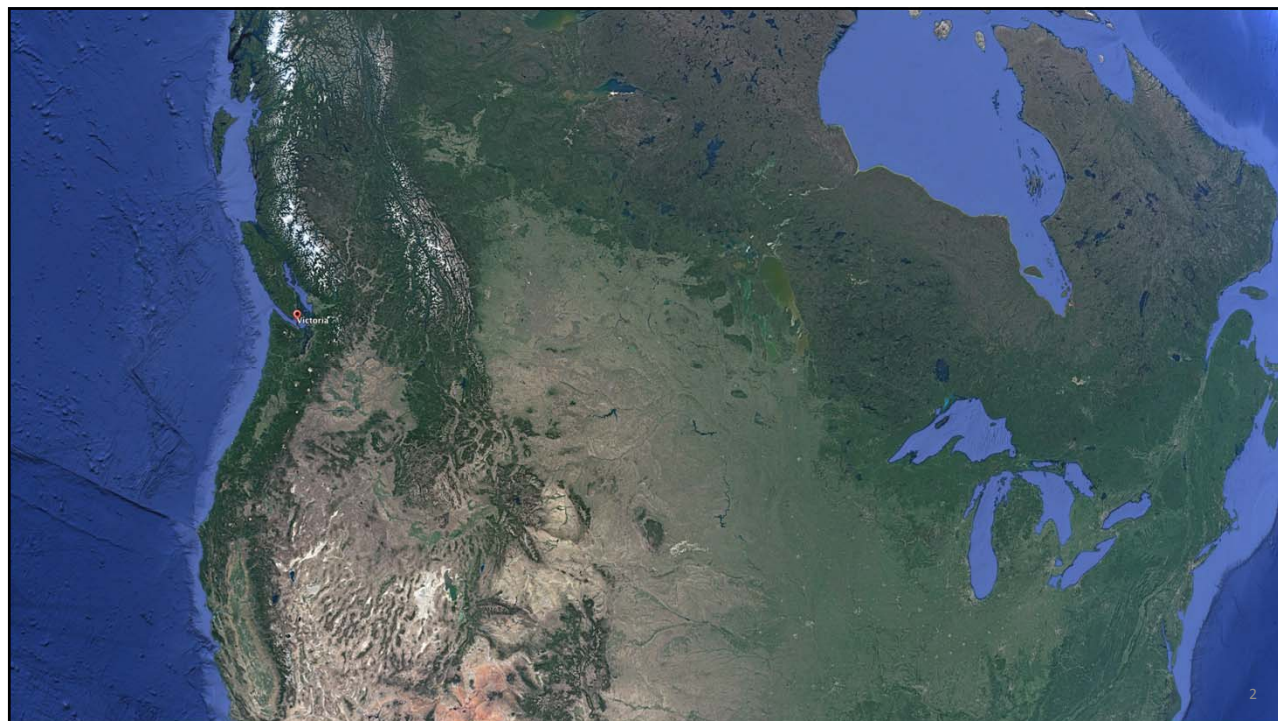
# Victoria Police Response to Tent City

Victoria Police Department

Presenters: Inspector Scott McGregor, Staff Sergeant Colin Brown,  
and Constable Dan O'Connor

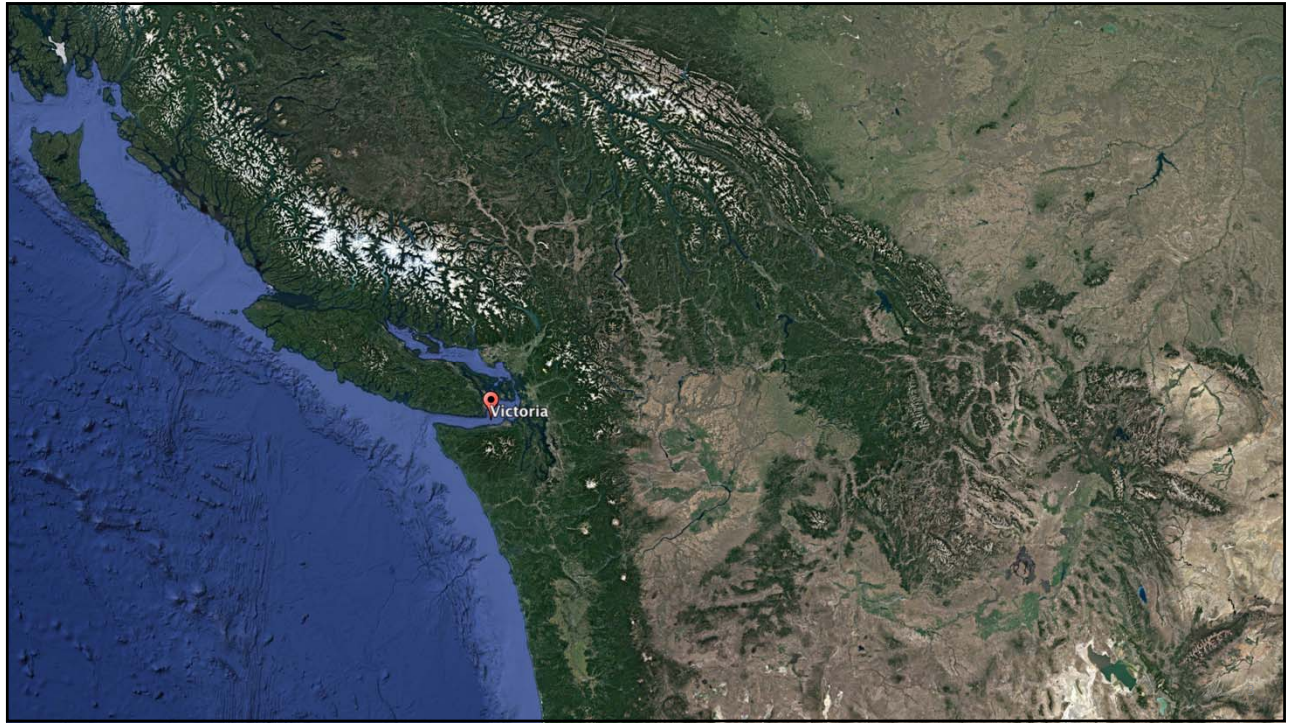


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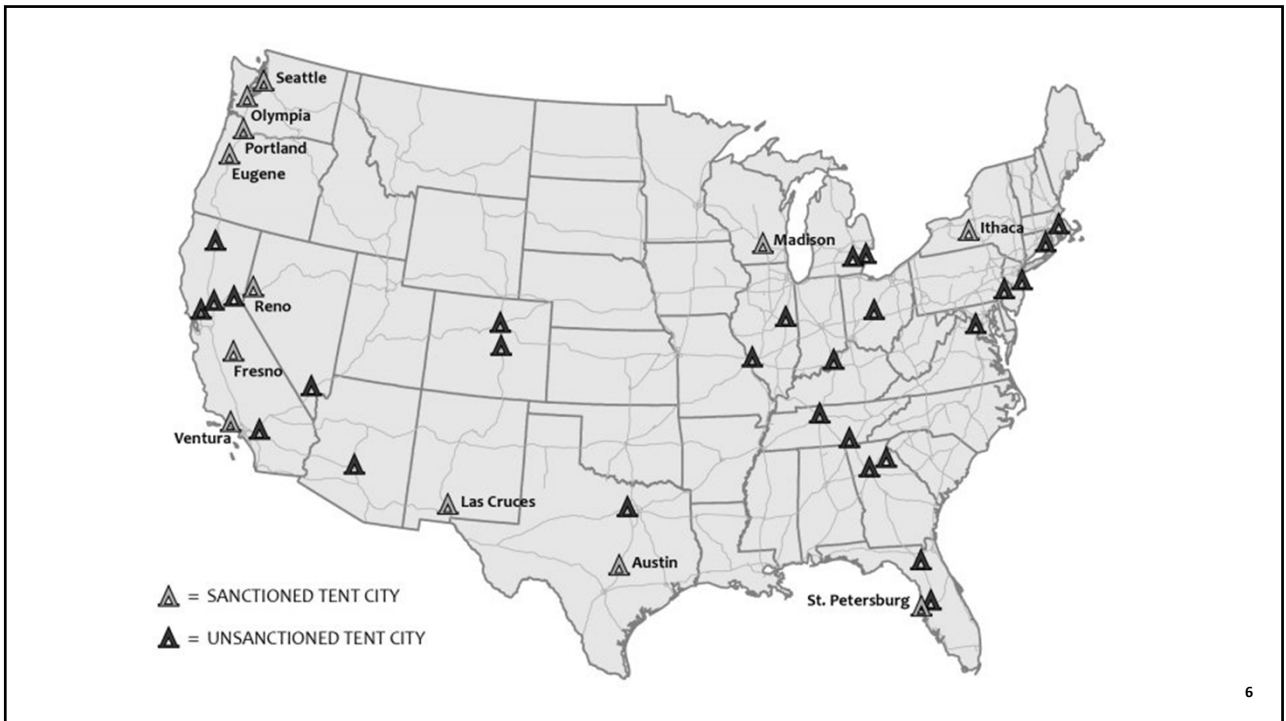


2









## Situation in Victoria

**Table 1: Point In Time Count – Capital Region District – February 2016**

Enumeration results

Individuals enumerated on the night count

A total of 1,387 individuals were enumerated (unsheltered, emergency sheltered, provisionally accommodated, and turned away) on the night count.

Table 1 Overall number of people experiencing homelessness on February 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2016	
Facility Count (1,077 sheltered and 65 turned away)	1,142
Surveyed individuals – unsheltered (vacant building, makeshift shelter, tent, or shack, other unsheltered location unfit for human habitation, public spaces, or a vehicle)	192
Provisionally Accommodated: Surveyed individuals staying at someone else's place	53
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,387</b>

Source: <https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/housing-pdf/pitcount-report26apr2016.pdf>

7

## Situation in Victoria

**Overnight sheltering in municipal parks is permitted from court case Victoria (City) v. Adams 2009 BCCA.**

**Court Document 1: Victoria(City) v Adams, 2009 BCCA 563;2008 BCSC1363**

[145] IN the present case, I conclude that the ability to provide oneself with adequate shelter is a necessity of life that falls within the ambit of the s. 7 provision "life". The uncontradicted expert evidence establishes that exposure to the elements without adequate shelter, and in particular without overhead protection, can result in a number of serious in a number of serious and life threatening conditions, most notably hypothermia. The Bylaws and the operational policy prohibit the erection of the overhead protection that is necessary to protect the individual from this risk. I conclude that the Bylaws and the operational policy of the City engages the right to life.

Source: <https://www.canlii.org/en/bc/bcsc/doc/2008/2008bcsc1363/2008bcsc1363.pdf>

8









Scanning

## Tent City Population

- Population of Tent City increased to 120 people living in 80-100 structures.
- People living there were the most marginalized individuals in the region. Most suffering from severe mental health and addiction issues. Some had been living on the streets for over a decade.

VICTORIA POLICE

12





## Significant Events and Impact



13



## Police Approach and Conditions

- Neutral Peacekeeping Approach
- Ownership for Tent City was lacking
- Conditions deteriorated rapidly



14



Analysis

## Friction in the Neighbourhood

**MAD AS HELL**  
VICTORIA

**We're mad as hell, and we're not going to take this anymore!**

Come to a community meeting  
Harbour Towers Hotel, 345 Quebec Street (West of Oswego)  
**Thursday, April 7, 2016 • 7 to 9 p.m.**

VICTORIA  
POLICE

16





## Gathering more Information

VICTORIA POLICE DEPARTMENT - TENT CITY SITE VISITS

DATE:

VISIT 1: TIME ON SITE:  HRS TIME OFF SITE:  HRS  
MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

VISIT 2: TIME ON SITE:  HRS TIME OFF SITE:  HRS  
MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

HEALTH CONCERNS OF CAMPERS:

HAZARDS TO PUBLIC:

OFFICER SAFETY:

FIRE HAZARDS:

YOUTH NOTED AND CONVERSED WITH:

BEHAVIOR OF CAMPERS:

CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY CAMPERS:

CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY NEIGHBOURHOOD:

EMERGENCY SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY:

INTELLIGENCE GATHERED:

OTHER INFORMATION NOTED:

17



## Challenges Related to Tent City



18



Analysis

## Identifying Areas of Concern and Focus

1. To improve the health and safety of tent city residents
2. To decrease the number of violent incidents on site
3. To decrease the calls for service in surrounding area and improve community feeling of safety
4. To work toward a peaceful resolution while advocating for long term solutions and change



Response

## Improving the Health and Safety of Tent City Residents

### Establishing Safety Committee

- Opioid Crisis
- Water/Washroom Facilities
- Fire Prevention

Meeting Minutes 1: Sample Safety Committee Minutes (2 pages)

Tent City Safety Committee Meeting – April 26, 2016

Present: Andy Bond (PHS), Dan O'Connor (VicPD), Simon Goodspeed (PHS), Gino Neville (PHS), Irish Patterson (MCPD), Colin Brown (VicPD), Bob Cooper (Provincial Fire Commissioner's Office), Megan Sabell (Victoria Fire), Susie (PHS), [REDACTED] (Tent City), Christine Brett (Tent City), and Jade Yehia (Island Health)

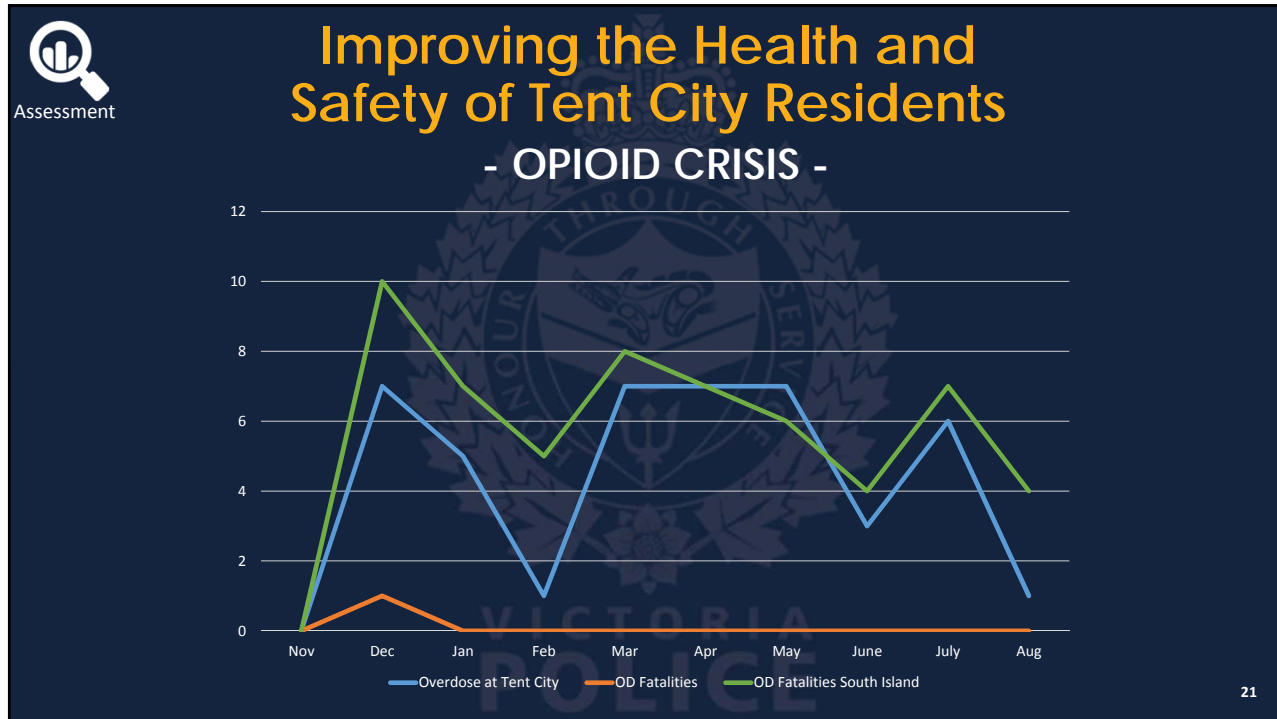
1. Follow-Up from past meeting  
 a) Island Health Update: Street Nurses are available at the Pandora Health Clinic on Tues-Friday between 1pm-4pm. A street nurse will be attending tent city tonight (April 26) to drop off harm reduction supplies. Heat stress information has been provided to the camp. Other than the water jugs which are filled at the church another water source has not been identified. (feed in sink are not from island health but a round table group discussion) Discussion around water and cooling with the group: spoke about gastro-intestinal issues (potentially related to water), spoke about need for another water source, and talked about tarps overhead to keep cool (this option was discussed as a fire hazard and another solution needs to be found). PHS to follow up about alternative water source.  
 b) Site Visit by Fire: Fire site visit was met with opposition from a portion of the camp and was not completed. Fire visit has been rescheduled for Thursday at 2pm. Police will be present to ensure things go smoothly. Discussion around fire safety on site. Christine said that the ceremonial fire is no longer on site. Spoke about propane sources being safer than open fire. Suggested that barbecues be used as cooking source. PHS to follow-up regarding BBQs.  
 c) Leaking Toilet: Police have contacted the site management company about the leaking porta-potty. PHS is looking at another solution in relation to washroom facilities.

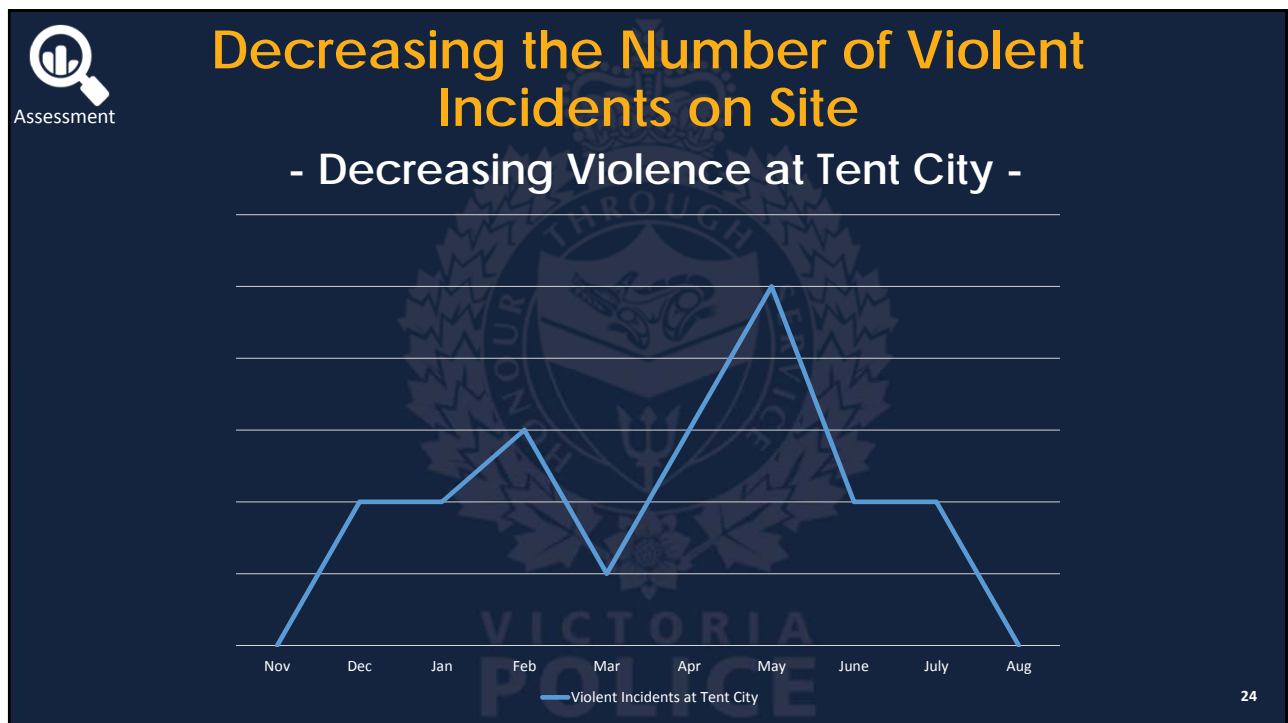
2. Roundtable to voice safety concerns  
 a) Anna (Tent City): Smoke situation and access to regular handwashing stations. Follow up item created for camp/PHS for handwashing stations.  
 b) Susie (PHS): none  
 c) Andy (PHS): Discussed rodents on site and that traps will be set up (PHS). The need for a site map and communal access to fire extinguishers (Victoria Fire/Camp/PHS) to work on site map.

more established and marked (PHS/Camp).  
 r more garbage and recycling pickup and  
 i. Will assist the residents in making their own fire the responsibility of the residents to take the Fire will provide them guidance and assist in the  
 i around propane tanks at tent city and using a ice inside individual's tents. Ideally there would ooking area. Need to have cigarette disposal would work. The camp needs to continue to work vrnstructures around egress and site pathway  
 f Rain Shelter has reopened until the end of May  
 Needs to hand over court support and top of 10-12 people that she is currently iudicals agree she would hand over S or other members of the camp.  
 id for lighting, pathways and a defined kitchen  
 Lighting options were brainstormed.  
 sed the need for everyone on site to feel onal safety.  
 ed the importance of accessibility on site in order es to access all tent city residents in their  
 ip and PHS will look into the following: providing ure, washroom facilities, and barbecues as a bishment of pathways and accessibility.  
 i, setting up rodent traps, and improving garbage ygrams.  
 Develop a Fire Safety Plan for the site. Camp to Fire providing guidance.  
 issioners Office/Police: Site Visit on Thursday

4. Next Meeting: May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 at 11:30pm at YMCA Cafe











Response

## Decreasing Calls for Service in surrounding area and Improving Feeling of Safety

- Visible Presence in the Area -



25



Response

## Decreasing Calls for Service in surrounding area and Improving Feeling of Safety

- Visible Presence in the Area -



26



Assessment

## Decreasing Calls for Service in surrounding area and Improving Feeling of Safety

- Effectiveness of Beat Deployment -



27



Response

## Working toward a peaceful resolution while advocating for long term solutions and change

- Relationship Building -



28





Assessment

## Working toward a peaceful resolution while advocating for long term solutions and change

### - Policing Approach -

**Chrissy Brett** added 37 new photos — with Chrissy B and Lisa Helps at Victoria Police Department.  
January 19 · Victoria ·

I know this post might NOT b popular with all my #fuckthepolice #nocopsonoutreach people...but how about #noassholesonoutreach #fuckhate #fuckthemachine #fuckthegovernment or #fuckthelackoffundingformentalhealthtreatment or #fuckthelackoftreatmentoptions or #fuckassholesnomatterwhatwearorbadgeucarry & most importantly #fuckassholesonoutreach n #fuckthehaters

I am sick of watching the "fuck the police", shit coming out of ppl I respects mouths. I have never been pro police anything.....but I have to give VicPD a huge thank u for taking a different approach to Super InTent City Victoria and homelessness in a way no other tent city's police have taken. We had community policing unlike some of more militarized ways other tent cities have been shut dwn.

MOST officers choose not to b on the "dick squads" as I referred to them as at the beginning and choose to be humane. I saw officers who worked hard with a bit of brow beating to change their way of seeing the community I became a part of over the 9 months I was there.


VicPD were the ones with the idea to found the "safety committee" Vic pd, Vic FD, McFd and ViHA and eventually the fire commissioners. It included members of tent city including our youth. If ppl forget one of the reasons tent city won the first crt hearing was the proof the community had a working relationship and communication with authorities unlike any other tent city.

I watched officers transform & see people as people not problems. I watched as officers worked with the community to keep ALL ppl safe. I had community cops who would work above and beyond to connect ppl with the mental health outreach team. I watched them connect and listen to Parents, Aunties and friends worried about their family, sometimes with solutions, sometimes not, but at least they listened and we would brainstorm other avenues for support.

When I complained about one set of dick squads, 2 beat cops came in and took over the rest of the shifts as they respected my no dicks allowed rule.....they were finished for the day and choose to come in so I didn't have

29

*"I watched officers transform & see people as people not problems. I watched as officers worked with the community to keep ALL ppl safe. I had community cops who would work above and beyond to connect ppl with the mental health outreach team."*



Assessment

## Working toward a peaceful resolution while advocating for long term solutions and change

### - Closure of Tent City -

