

Subject: Metro Vancouver Update – November 13, 2020

Dear Staff,

I hope you and your loved ones are all doing as well as possible under the circumstances. It's certainly been quite the year. I took some time with my family to observe Remembrance Day on November 11th. While it wasn't quite the same as the in-person ceremonies, I think this year has helped remind us, more than ever, of what's important and what we are thankful for.

It's also been just over a year now since I started at Metro Vancouver. I know it hasn't exactly been the 12 months any of us had anticipated. (I was so looking forward to meeting with so many of you in person, and I'm genuinely disappointed we've had to postpone much of this.) I can tell you that I'm sincerely so thankful and grateful I joined Metro. Someone mentioned the 'anniversary' the other day, and I decided I also wanted to share with you how I responded. In short, joining Metro Vancouver was one of the best decisions I've ever made. This organization has wonderful people. It has very interesting, and most importantly, meaningful work. It's an absolute pleasure working with you!

I hope you are all continuing to take care of yourselves. I'm continuing my health kick, and am still riding my bike to and from work most days, which has been just as good for my mental health as my physical health, with everything that has happened in the last 8 months. Though I admit that it's definitely starting to get a bit frosty! I don't think the GMs are enjoying my bike rides though ... I figured out the tech side of my ride and got some decent earbuds and hands-free Bluetooth, so now I use the time on my rides to and from the office to call the GMs and get a whole bunch of work done over the phone. I think they're starting to avoid my early morning and early evening calls – it seems less and less of them are picking up the phone!!

Here are a few important updates:

COVID-19 Update

I've been clear from the start of this pandemic that we are taking our direction and guidance from Dr. Bonnie Henry, our Provincial Health Officer, and will follow her lead and advice. A few days ago, our PHO advised of new restrictions and asked that staff, who are able to, work from home whenever possible. Thus, we are asking staff who do not need to be in the office, at a work site, for the nature of their work, to please work from home wherever possible, for the next several weeks. We recognize that several departments and functions need to be physically present to effectively deliver support and services. All expectations, including supervisor approval to work from home, and availability during work hours, remain the same.

We're also requesting staff to **please ensure accurate time reporting**. We review how many staff are on site each day, and we have noticed some discrepancies on PeopleSoft online reporting versus how many staff seem to be physically present. We understand staff may fill in the time report for the week and that plans may also change, but please **adjust your time reports** as required so we can know how many are at MV work sites versus working from home. We continue to strongly encourage the use of masks, especially in shared spaces such as elevators, washrooms, reception areas, lunchrooms, etc. We'd also like to remind all staff to review and follow all the [Safety Protocols](#) and request that you all stay vigilant. Your safety and health are so critical, and we do not want any of our staff, or their loved ones, severely impacted by this illness.

Diversity and Inclusion: Forums on Systemic Racism

Recent events in Canada and the United States have brought the issue of systemic racism to the forefront, and as part of our commitment to support diversity and inclusion, both internally in our organization and also throughout our region, Metro Vancouver is responding. Events have prompted all orders of government and many organizations, to take a new, deeper look at racial discrimination and develop strategies to address this long standing, systemic issue.

Metro Vancouver has launched a series of Sub-Regional Forums on Systemic Racism. These are being attended by elected officials throughout the region. The first one took place last Saturday, and there are three more upcoming, with elected officials across the region all participating. Staff are welcome and invited to view the livestream on our website for any of the future 3 events.

Featuring a keynote address by Dr. Handel Wright (UBC professor and Director of the Centre for Culture, Identity and Education), a panel of storytellers includes Dr. Yabome Gilpin-Jackson, social scientist and founder of SLD Consulting with a PHD in Human and Organizational Systems, Dallas Yellowfly, comedian and musician, Tammy Hu, financial analyst turned yoga instructor who does stand-up comedy, Dr. Neila Miled, a member of the UBC Migration Cluster and the Centre for Culture, Identity and Education at UBC, with a PHD in Educational Studies whose research explores the socio-cultural and policy contexts of education in relation to Muslim/immigrant and refugee youth, and Gurpreet Singh, newscaster and talk show host with Spice Radio, who will share first-hand experiences, and who has covered violence against Indian religious minorities. The forums will be presented in a dynamic, interactive environment moderated by Kathryn Gretsinger, an award-winning CBC broadcaster. Please join us and watch!

[Livestream can be accessed here](#), and Forum dates are below.

- **November 7, 9:00 am - 12:30 pm (Last Weekend)**
(Northeast: Anmore, Belcarra, Coquitlam, Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody)
- **November 14, 12:00 pm - 3:30 pm**
(South of the Fraser: Delta, Langley, Richmond, Surrey, Tsawwassen First Nation, White Rock)
- **November 21, 9:00 am - 12:30 pm**
(Northwest: West Vancouver, City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, Lions Bay, Bowen Island)
- **November 28, 9:00 am - 12:30 pm**
(Central: Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster, Electoral Area A)

Thanks everyone, until next time, please take care of yourselves, and each other.

Together we make our region strong.

Jerry

Jerry W. Dobrovolsky, P.Eng., MBA
Commissioner/Chief Administrative Officer

