

**2015-02-26:**

## **President Tom Stamatakis responds to Province Property Crime Editorial**

I couldn't agree with you more about the importance of a police force targeting property crime. There are many good reasons for that including ensuring our citizen's feel safe in their homes. Further, property crimes can typically lead to identifying suspects in more serious crimes and also allow the police to gather intelligence around crime patterns and offenders among other things.

Unfortunately my members are just as frustrated as you are at the lack of resources dedicated to the investigation of this type of crime. Our scenes of crime unit just got disbanded, patrol squads are chronically understaffed, and our general investigation unit (the unit that typically investigates property crime) has recently had their resources budget cut and they rarely have access to surveillance units so that they can keep an eye on offenders that commit these types of crimes. Of course the response you will typically get from the VPD is that it's a question of competing resources and making tough decisions. However this year we will carry about 68 actual vacancies which put us well below the authorized strength you quoted in your editorial piece. On top of that we carry even more vacancies because in some cases resources are allocated to projects and other high priority issues or officers are absent due to injury or illness.

In the meantime both the VPD and City came up with \$6 million dollars to run a Community Safety Program that has proven to be ineffective and a further drain on limited VPD resources (it was independently evaluated). Had those funds instead been used to address even part of our vacancy challenges, I can say with some certainty that we could be making greater gains when it comes to property crime in Vancouver.

The vacancies we do carry are part of a Council and City Administration strategy to reduce overall expenses. There are of course competing demands for City services and I think everyone understands that. However, cuts to funding do have an impact.

The main point in writing is to encourage you and the media in general to keep raising these issues and keep asking questions about what the VPD is doing - it's the only way to try and get someone to pay attention to what remains a serious crime problem in our City.

[Link to Gordon Clark: Is Vancouver police disinterest behind property-crime hike?](#)