



June 2, 2021

Dear Lenny,

Thanks so much for your letter outlining the challenges facing VicPD officers who are working so hard in very challenging circumstances. No one could have anticipated what this past year in particular has brought to all of those working in front line positions as we navigate through an unprecedented global health pandemic.

In addition to all of the regular and important police work our officers do, I know they are also going above and beyond to address issues like homelessness, mental health and addictions. These are housing and health issues that need to be adequately resourced by federal and provincial governments so that our already over-burdened officers do not have to continuously pinch hit in areas that are not properly policing matters. Police are needed to address violent crime, drug trafficking, weapons and other issues that compromise community safety and put our whole community at risk.

Having said that, while there is a need for civilian-led and health-led response for mental health and other non-criminal related calls, I think VicPD has an important role to play through the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams. I have supported the funding for this program each time it came forward and was very disappointed not to see the Province reverse Victoria Council's decision with respect to funding the ACT officers.

Community safety and providing adequate resources to VicPD is very important to me as is evidenced by my vote – and my advocacy – each year when it comes to the police budget. I am struck by this in your letter: “I am certain that a collaborative commitment to find solutions and resources to make our community feel safe is a wise investment for all those who live, work and visit our city and our region.” I agree that a collaborative commitment and thoughtful approach is necessary, including a commitment to shared dialogue and building understanding among all sectors in the community. I thank you for your leadership in this regard. And I look forward to continuing the conversation and our important work together.

With thanks to all the dedicated members of VicPD for their service to our community.

Sincerely,

Lisa Helps  
Victoria Mayor