

From: "Johnston, Sadhu" <Sadhu.Johnston@vancouver.ca>
To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"
"Singh, Sandra" <Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca>
Date: 4/3/2020 8:19:39 AM
Subject: Mt. View Cemetery

Dear Mayor and Council,

In recent weeks Mountain View Cemetery has seen a sharp increase in the number of people using the Cemetery grounds for leisure and recreational activities. This is likely due to the recent closure of many green spaces, including playgrounds and dog parks, across the city.

Activities that have been observed by Cemetery staff include:

- Children climbing on monuments and on the soil refuse pile
- Increased numbers of people and families walking, jogging, rollerblading and cycling, including over graves, turf and on roads used by cemetery vehicles use, as well as near the high-traffic operations yard
- Increased dog walking and off-leash dog activity
- People congregating and talking on cellphones while services are going on nearby
- Cemetery vehicles and staff being impeded from doing their work by cars and pedestrians

The increase in leisure use is interfering with funeral services and disrupting what is meant to be a sacred and special atmosphere of commemoration and remembrance at Vancouver's only Cemetery. The increased numbers of people present in the Cemetery can also make it difficult for staff and families to adhere to physical distancing guidelines while performing their work or grieving the loss of a loved one.

Staff recognize that many outdoor spaces are currently closed due to COVID-19 and that many people, particularly families, do not have access to other green spaces. However, utilizing the grounds of an active cemetery for leisure and recreational purposes is not only disrespectful to the people who are at the cemetery commemorating and grieving their loved ones, it is also disruptive to staff and can be dangerous for them and the public.

In order to address this issue, the City will be installing additional signage at Mountain View reiterating that it is a working cemetery, and that people should be respectful and not use it as a leisure space. Glen Hodges, the Manager of the Cemetery, will be doing media interviews to highlight the issues associated with people using the cemetery in this way, and Civic Engagement and Communications will share messages on social media encouraging people not to visit the cemetery unless they are going to honour their loved ones.

To note, it is also the Ching Ming Festival this weekend and Mountain View Cemetery will be busier than normal as members of the Chinese community honour their ancestors. Staff will be closing road access to the Chinese Pavilion to reduce the crowds in this area and are installing signage in both Simplified and Traditional Chinese reminding people to stay two metres apart. Staff have also sent a translated information bulletin to Chinese-language media and shared translated messages regarding the need to maintain distance and not take part in large gatherings with several community groups for them to share with their members.

The Cemetery also continues to display signage in English regarding the need to keep your distance, cough and sneeze into your elbow, and wash your hands.

If you have any questions, please feel free to follow up with Sandra Singh directly – Sandra.singh@vancouver.ca

Many thanks,

Sadhu

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Pronouns: he, him, his



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.