

**From:** "Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>

**To:** "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

**CC:** "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"

"Kassam, Nick" <Nick.Kassam@vancouver.ca>

"Prescott, Lisa" <Lisa.Prescott@vancouver.ca>

"Djurkovic, Danica" <Danica.Djurkovic@vancouver.ca>

**Date:** 6/26/2019 1:06:11 PM

**Subject:** Memo - Safety Railing on South Steps of City Hall - RTS 13271

**Attachments:** REFM - Memo to Mayor Council - City Hall Railing.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

The enclosed memo from Nick Kassam, General Manager of Real Estate and Facilities Manager, provides a response to the June 11<sup>th</sup> request from Councillor Dominato as to the feasibility of installing a safety railing in the middle of the stairs on the south side of City Hall in order to provide increased mobility (RTS #013271). In summary,

- The City has an Accessibility Program for all City-owned facilities that is dedicated to planning for Accessibility upgrades and which has a \$2M budget in the 2019-2023 Capital Plan.
- To ensure the City achieves the greatest impact for accessibility outcomes, the City prioritizes work to improve accessibility and provide universal and inclusive design in consultation with PWDAC and SAC as well as the Transgender community, and staff from other departments who are working on various aspects of accessibility across the City.
- There are no significant operational, building code, or heritage concerns with installing a central railing; the estimated total cost to install the central railing and replace the two side railings with brass railings to match the look of City Hall would be approximately \$50,000.
- Staff recommend reviewing the request for a centre handrail, and other recommended upgrades, at the south entrance stair to City Hall in the context of all accessibility projects being considered through the Capital Plan's \$2M Accessibility Program.

Should you have any questions, please contact Nick Kassam at 604.871.6859 or [Nick.Kassam@vancouver.ca](mailto:Nick.Kassam@vancouver.ca).

Thank you,  
Paul

**Paul Mochrie** | Deputy City Manager  
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604.873.7666



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

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## MEMORANDUM

June 26, 2019

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager  
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager  
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Rena Kendall-Craden, Civic Engagement and Communications Director  
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk  
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office  
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Lisa Prescott, Director, Strategic Operations Planning & Program Management  
Danica Djurkovic, Director, Facilities Planning & Development

FROM: Nick Kassam  
General Manager, Real Estate and Facilities Management

SUBJECT: Safety Railing on South Steps of City Hall RTS # 013271

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This memo provides an update to the recent request from Council Meeting June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019:

***Councillor Dominato requested the feasibility of installing a safety railing in the middle of the stairs on the south side of City Hall in order to provide increased mobility.***

### **Accessibility Program for all City-owned facilities**

REFM Facilities Planning team currently has a holistic portfolio-based accessibility program that is dedicated to the planning for Accessibility Upgrades to all City-owned buildings and has a budget of \$2 million in the 2019-2022 Capital Plan.

Special consideration must be given to ensure civic facilities are barrier-free as well as be open and welcoming to all citizens. Universal and inclusive design involves everything from handicapped accessibility, to an understanding of the multicultural citizen base, and the LGBTQ2+ community. The City has taken significant steps forward on inclusive-focused recommendations, continuing to move towards equality for all.

To ensure the City achieves the greatest impact for accessibility outcomes and future planning within the \$2M Capital Plan fund, the City first undertakes a Feasibility Study, which is currently underway. The scope of this study involves reviewing existing Accessibility Audits of 30 City-owned facilities, including City Hall, to **identify** and **prioritize** work required to renovate, upgrade and remove barriers and to improve accessibility and provide universal and inclusive design.

As part of this work, the City and its consultant, HCMA, are currently engaging representatives from PWDAC and SAC as well as the Transgender community, and staff from other departments (who are working on various aspects of accessibility across the City), to develop a 'prioritization matrix'. The

suggested recommendations and improvements coming from the Feasibility Study are then prioritized through this matrix with the top priority projects then executed under the \$2M Accessibility program.

### **Installation of a Middle Railing on the South Stair to City Hall**

#### **City Hall Audit Reports:**

Findings as per City Hall audit reports performed in 2008 by the Canadian Barrier Free Design Inc. & 2015 by the Social Planning & Research Council of BC (SPARC BC):

- City Hall was originally constructed in 1936, well before architects took into account access for people with disabilities; thus, the original building design did not have a wheelchair accessible entrance;
- In the 1970's, the City created a wheelchair accessible entrance which provides access to City Hall. Currently, it does not meet the accessible ramp guidelines;
- The existing handrail & stairs have inconsistent visual presentation that is problematic to visually challenged people; *[note: these handrails are black in colour and located on either side of the south entrance stairs to City Hall]*
- The diameter of the existing handrails are too large and not effective for universal use;
- There are no tactile warning strips at stair nosings and at the top of the staircase to warn people with low vision.

#### **Building Code (VBBL)**

The current code for 'new' buildings requires handrails regularly spaced on any outdoor stairs like the south stairs outside City Hall. Any additional handrails would be considered as a voluntary upgrade and not required by the VBBL.

#### **Heritage**

Installation of a middle railing, if it proceeds, would be acceptable from a Heritage perspective but should be consistent with the side railings. Design development of any railing proposal is to be reviewed in further detail with the Heritage planning department.

#### **Impact to Security Operations**

Installation of a middle railing would not pose any immediate issues from an operational security perspective; however, railings placed adjacent to a door opening may impede egress and would need to be reviewed from a code perspective.

#### **Cost & Maintenance**

The installation of brass-plated railings, including a middle railing, to match the existing brass on City Hall main entrance doors must be cemented into the stairs. The estimated costs to install an additional centre handrail and replace the non-conforming side rails with brass ones would be in the range of \$50,000. The handrails would also require a protective coating similar to the ones used on the brass doors to prevent oxidation.

#### **Recommendation**

Staff recommend reviewing the request for a centre handrail, and other recommended upgrades, at the south entrance stair to City Hall in the context of all accessibility projects being considered through the

Capital Plan's \$2M Accessibility Program - in consultation with Council committee's PDAC, LGBTQ2+ and Seniors Committee – and prioritizing the work according to the prioritization matrix developed within that program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Kassam". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Nick Kassam  
General Manager, Real Estate and Facilities Management

604.871.6859 | [nick.kassam@vancouver.ca](mailto:nick.kassam@vancouver.ca)