

**From:** "Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>  
**To:** "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"  
**Date:** 3/7/2023 5:54:51 PM  
**Subject:** RE: Murray Hotel washroom trailer  
**Attachments:** Update on washroom trailer in DS .msg

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Apologies – I neglected to include the attachment with my previous message.

Paul

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**From:** Mochrie, Paul  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 07, 2023 5:46 PM  
**To:** Direct to Mayor and Council - DL  
**Cc:** City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL; Singh, Sandra <sandra.singh@vancouver.ca>  
**Subject:** Murray Hotel washroom trailer

Good afternoon Mayor and Council,

We understand that several Council members have heard concerns from some residents living in downtown south about the Washroom Trailer Program adjacent to the Murray Hotel (Murray Washroom Trailer). The concerns pertain to noise and frustration that the trailer operates overnight which is contrary to information provided when the trailer was announced. Please find below the background regarding this program and our public communication regarding hours of operation:

- ❑ The City designed and deployed Washroom Trailer programs in response to compounding life and gender safety impacts of a dual public health emergency (COVID pandemic and overdose crisis); background is below.
- ❑ In response to significant complaints from DVBI, businesses and residents in downtown south/GED related to lack of washroom access, high volumes of alley activity, and the impacts on the public realm, this area was prioritized for deployment of a washroom trailer.
- ❑ After further data assessment (feces, needle disposal, resident complaints), staff worked with community partners in the area and determined that the service and washroom gap for the neighbourhood was overnight access.
- ❑ The Murray Washroom Trailer site was identified for deployment and was expected to open in March 2021 (Note: there was a 6-8 week delay due to infrastructure delivery) with overnight operating hours of 8 pm to 8 am.
- ❑ The Community Dialogue Group that was already meeting regularly to discuss items arising from BC Housing hotel conversions in the neighbourhood was

emailed the attached letter on February 9, which described the program and the overnight service hours of 8pm to 8 am.

- Staff attended the following CDG meeting to discuss the program in person and respond to questions.
- Regrettably, we have recently discovered that the news release announcing the Washroom Trailer Programs and some of the public communications transposed the hours to generalize 8am to 8 pm for all washroom programs in error, despite the hours being customized to the locations. The review of the source material for these communication materials missed this inaccuracy. We can confirm that on-the-ground community conversations and direct staff communications to local stakeholders (i.e., attached letter) were accurate.
- Regarding the Murray washroom, staff met several times with adjacent strata buildings and in follow-up community meetings and discussed the rationale for the Washroom Trailer Programs (including mitigating current issues of noise, defecation, unsupervised drug use) and provided details of overnight hours.
- Non-Profit Operators have also received several positive support notifications from Three Bridges Community Health Centre and the immediately adjacent strata.
- As with all City-supported sites, staff are responsive to public complaints and follow-up as needed. At times, the response does not satisfy everyone, but complaints do receive review, action, and follow-up with the complainant. In this case, staff will follow-up regarding the most recent noise complaints.

Staff offer a number of observations in general:

- The Washroom Trailer Program has made a material difference to the public realm cleanliness.
- Location and hours of these services are determined given pre-existing issues, barriers to existing services and risk to life and gender safety of people in the area, technical assessment (e.g. water, electricity), site availability and adjacencies to other programs.
- In addition, given the number of people experiencing homelessness and who are under-housed in Vancouver (i.e., insufficient SRO rooms, shelters, etc.) people may gravitate to locations where they receive welcome, referrals and other services, and can socialize. As a result, the public realm impacts of social services do at times create difficulty for neighbours and staff do what they can to reasonably balance the need of all stakeholders when finding solutions, recognizing that the broader issues around homelessness and mental health in a neighbourhood are beyond the control or impact of any one service provider.

If you have any further questions or concerns regarding this matter, please email Sandra Singh and she will ensure a response through the weekly Q&A.

Best,  
Paul

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## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

- A key part of the City's emergency response to COVID-19 pandemic was addressing the immediate and compounding impacts for people experiencing multiple vulnerability factors. These include but are not limited to: 1) a lack of safe access to hygiene and washrooms with public and private facilities reduced/closed; 2) an increase in toxicity of the illicit drug supply and increasing number of overdose deaths in 2020 and 2021; and 3) an increase in levels of gendered-violence.
- To address the lack of access to washrooms and hygiene, with the support of \$5M from Reaching Home in 2020 and 2021, the City was able to implement its Washroom Access Program which had two components: (1) extend hours at community centre and Parks Board indoor locations and (2) place Washroom Trailer Programs (WTPs) adjacent to high need areas in partnership with non-profit operators. These emergency interventions have contributed to overall public safety and ensured dignity for people who need it most.
- In the first phase of Washroom Trailer Program deployment, the City placed trailers at the following locations:
  - 62 E Hastings/2020; 99 W Pender/2021 – Operator: Overdose Prevention Society  
Hours: 9am to 7pm  
Status: Decommissioned. Note: Confirmation of Indoor Operation pending.
  - 334 Alexander Street (WISH Drop-In)/2020-2021 – Operator: WISH Drop-In Society  
Hours: 24/7  
Status: Decommissioned
  - 763 Kingsway (Church of the Nazarene)/2020; John Howard Society (indoors)/2021 – Operator: Raincity Housing and Support Society  
Hours: 8 pm- 6 am  
Status: Decommissioned. *Note: Interim Drop-In Initiated 2022*
- In response to significant public complaints regarding impacts of lack of washrooms in the downtown south and West End, as well as significant challenges related to the Astoria Hotel and surrounding area, with additional funding for 2021, the City added two additional trailers:
  - 1115 Hornby (Murray Hotel)/2021 – Operator: Atira Women's Resource Society  
Hours: 8 pm to 8 am  
Status: In Operation

- 369 Hawks (Astoria Hotel)/2021 – Operator: WISH Drop-In Society/2021; Raincity Housing & Support /2022

Hours: Daytime 8 am – 4 pm; 12 am –6 am (6 days/week)

Status: In Operation

- In addition to providing safe access to basic human needs, the Washroom Trailer Program have also created over 20 jobs for people who are experiencing homelessness or poverty and provided other multiplier benefits such as housing stability, access to health, housing and employment referrals, and harm reduction and gender-based violence reporting.
- The City also used senior government funding to extend hours at the following City and Park Board locations:
  - Gathering Place, 998 E 19th Ave (9:00am – 11:45pm)\u8239
  - David Lam Park, 1300 Pacific Boulevard (6:00am – 11:00pm)
  - English Bay Beach Park, 1790 Beach Ave (6:00am – 11:00pm)
  - Sunset Beach, 1204 Beach Ave (6:00am – 11:00pm)
- Safe washrooms are part of the City’s basic human needs infrastructure delivery and inform the citywide Access to Water and Washrooms strategy. UBCM provided an initial grant of \$2.5M, and a subsequent grant of \$4M (\$1.2M for safe access to washrooms) to enhance community infrastructure and safety, including the Washroom Trailer Program and expanding safe access at multiple existing City sites in partnership with NPOs.
- The following have been extended until the end of December 2023:
  - 1115 Hornby (Murray Hotel) Washroom Trailer Program/Atira Women’s Resource Society
  - 369 Hawks (Astoria) Washroom Trailer Program/Raincity Housing & Support Society
  - Main/Hastings Comfort Station Hour Extension/Private Contract
  - Pigeon Park – Automated Public Toilet (APT) Washroom Attendant Program/Overdose Prevention Society
  - Replacement of 99 W Pender Washroom Trailer Program/Overdose Prevention Society – To be confirmed (144 E Hastings; TBC)
  - Oppenheimer Fieldhouse Washroom Attendant Program/Atira Women’s Resource Society
- In addition, UBCM funding will cover seasonal demand for washrooms and priority areas and locations, including 100 Parklet/NPO Washroom Attendant Programs; City community centre facilities; Crab Park encampment.

**Paul Mochrie** (he/him)  
City Manager  
City of Vancouver  
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

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**Date:**

**Subject:** Update on washroom trailer in DS

**Attachments:** Letter to Community regarding Washroom Trailer in DS.pdf

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Hello everyone ~

In advance of the news release being issued, I wanted to share the letter that is being circulated to community stakeholders.

Regards,  
Celine

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Celine Mauboules RPP, MCIP  
Acting Managing Director, Homelessness Services and Affordable Housing Programs  
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.



February 9, 2021

Dear Community Dialogue Members,

We are writing to let you know about the upcoming installation of a new five-stall washroom trailer on the vacant parking lot at 1115 Hornby St, in the parking lot adjacent to the Murray Hotel. The trailer, which will be managed and staffed full-time by an experienced non-profit operator, is being installed in response to the lack of access to washrooms in the area and the impact that this has had on both individuals needing washroom access and in the local community.

The safety and well-being of residents is a top priority for the City of Vancouver and we recognize that the closure of public facilities during COVID-19 has led to many people lacking safe access to washroom and hygiene facilities and access to important services and supports, as well as a loss of dignity as many people are forced to use alleys and public spaces to relieve themselves. The City has also received an increased number of sanitation complaints from residents in the neighbourhood about needles and human excrement in the Downtown South area and the provision of safe and hygienic washrooms will help address this issue.

The installation of the washroom trailers has been made possible by funding from the Federal government through their Reaching Home initiative which supports projects that address the impacts of the COVID-19 among people experiencing, or at risk of homelessness.

The washroom trailer will be installed in mid-February and will be open everyday from 8pm-8am. The trailer will be staffed and managed by Atira Property Management Inc and monitored by staff and peers to improve the safety of people using them, ensure that COVID-19 protocols are followed and to minimize any impact to the local community.

This trailer will be the fourth washroom trailer that the City has installed. Last summer, the City installed three temporary non-profit staffed and peer-monitored washroom trailers on Kingsway, East Hasting and Alexander Street. These trailers have been a success with users and operators reporting increased access to basic needs such as water, hygiene and food, access to services such as overdose prevention, and improved social connections. There has also been a positive impact on the local neighbourhoods including a reduction in sanitation issues, and we anticipate a similar outcome with this trailer.

On the back page, you will find some frequently asked questions that can help you with any inquiries you may receive from concerned residents and points on what the City is doing to mitigate risks associated with operating this trailer. We welcome your support, and if you have any questions or concerns you can email [homelessness@vancouver.ca](mailto:homelessness@vancouver.ca)

Kind regards,  
Sandra Singh  
General Manager of Arts, Culture and Community Services - City of Vancouver.

## Frequently asked questions

### **Why is the washroom trailer operating being installed at this location?**

Based on feedback from residents in the neighbourhood and people experiencing homelessness, the City and non-profit partners identified a critical gap in washroom access in the Downtown South. Since the start of the pandemic, the City has seen an increase in sanitation complaints from residents in the area about needles and human excrement. A community survey conducted with people who are disproportionately impacted by washroom closures also indicated a lack of access to safe, convenient and hygienic washrooms in the neighbourhood.

After conducting a thorough review of 12 locations in the Downtown core, the Murray Hotel site was chosen as the site because of its central location, limited impact to traffic and streets, proximity to non-profit partners and ease of connection to utility connections. We are grateful to our non-profit and operational partners that are helping support safe and hygienic access for all residents to visit washrooms overnight and reach the support services they need.

### **When will the trailer operate?**

The trailer will be installed in mid-February and will operate everyday from 8pm-8am in the Murray Hotel parking lot at 1115 Hornby Street. The trailer will be staffed and monitored by Atira Property Management Inc, an experienced non-profit operator, and also supported by peers. The integration of other trailers has successfully added support and facilities needed where they are at, and the City will provide additional resources in the area to mitigate any potential impacts.

### **Why are you activating a trailer and not opening permanent facilities?**

The trailer, which has been funded by the Federal government, can be opened quickly and allows us to provide a rapid response to an immediate issue. This will be the fourth washroom trailer that the City has opened and the other three, which are located on Kingsway, East Hastings and Alexander Street, have all been a success. Residents in the areas surrounding the trailers have reported a reduction in sanitation issues, noise complaints and overdose risk in their neighbourhood and residents in need have welcomed the increased access to basic needs such as water, hygiene and staff connection.

In addition to the trailer, the City is also extending access to several City-owned public washroom sites in the Downtown South and English Bay area. The City continues to explore ways to improve public access to washroom facilities across Vancouver, including advocating for universally accessible washroom facilities in transit hubs and high-foot traffic areas, and improved wayfinding signage and digital mapping.

### **What other steps is the City taking to address washroom access, hygiene and cleanliness in the Downtown core?**

Throughout the pandemic, we have increased sanitation services in the downtown core and along with daily street sweeping, disposing of litter cans and street and lane flushing that takes place, an extra crew is doing litter collection and needle collection on Granville Street during the day between 10am and noon and around the Gathering Place. The City continues to provide micro-cleaning grants to community organizations to carry out extra needle pick-up and street cleaning services in hot-spot areas, including around Granville Street.

### **What should I do if I have concerns?**

Please report any service issues via the Vanconnect app or by calling 3-1-1. You can also email [homelessness@vancouver.ca](mailto:homelessness@vancouver.ca) or [jose\\_velazquez@atira.ca](mailto:jose_velazquez@atira.ca) if you have any questions.