

**From:** "Mochrie, Paul" <[Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca](mailto:Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca)>

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

**Date:** 8/14/2023 11:55:56 AM

**Subject:** Memo - City Archives

**Attachments:** CC - Memo to Mayor Council - Archives Tour Follow Up August 2023.pdf

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Dear Mayor and Council,

Attached is a memo from the Acting City Clerk, Rosemary Hagiwara, in response to some inquiries that came up during the Archives tour in June to commemorate its 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. The memo also provides background information on the current state of the Archives.

If you have any questions, please contact our City Archivist, Heather Gordon at [heather.gordon@vancouver.ca](mailto:heather.gordon@vancouver.ca)

Best,  
Paul

**Paul Mochrie** (he/him)  
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

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**MEMORANDUM**

August 9, 2023

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager  
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager  
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager  
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC  
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk  
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office  
Trevor Ford, Interim Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office

FROM: Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk

SUBJECT: City of Vancouver Archives Tour – Discussion Follow Up

RTS #: N/A

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During their tour of the City of Vancouver Archives on June 7, 2023, Councillors expressed interest in ways in which to further support the Archives' work. This memo provides background on the current state of the Archives and responses to the questions and suggestions put forward during the tour.

The Archives' most immediate need is continued support of the operation of its East Vancouver satellite site. This warehouse has been used as an interim storage solution since 2017, while design work to relocate the Archives to Level 7 of the Central Library was underway. As work progressed on that project, however, the project team determined that Level 7 would not offer sufficient long term growth space as a single site and in addition, a permanent satellite storage location would be required as well. The City's Real Estate and Facilities Management team undertook a review of over 15 City-owned sites that could potentially meet the Archives' requirements as either a single site or a hub-and-satellite option. In summer of 2021, the Central Library was ultimately removed from consideration as it was found to no longer be the most cost-effective solution. As a result, staff began planning for a future new home for the Archives in the 2023-2026 and future capital plan cycles.

In the interim, the Archives remains at Vanier Park and will continue to use the East Vancouver satellite site as a medium-term space management solution. With some HVAC and shelving upgrades currently underway, the site will be large enough and safe enough to accommodate the Archives' holdings for the next 10 to 15 years. Since 2017, the site's rent, minimal staffing (2

positions) and minor goods and services expenses have been funded through various capital project budgets related to the relocation to Central Library, but will be incorporated into the 2024 operating budget presented to Council in December.

On the capital budget side, the Archives will be seeking support in 2024 for part of its digital preservation program. Over the past 15 years, the Archives has developed its digital preservation capacity, and a key responsibility of its Digital Archives program is preserving records from City electronic business systems, including the City's records management, VanDocs. In principle, content exported from VanDocs can be processed through the Archives' digital preservation system, an open-source software application called [Archivematica](#), but Archivematica needs further development work to scale up to handling large volumes of transferred records. The work in 2024 will automate the various initial tasks involved in moving records through the system, as well as improve staff's ability to upload descriptive metadata from the VanDocs export to the Archives' public online database. Without this work, staff cannot process records from VanDocs and, as a result, the City is out of compliance with its Records Management by-law, transferred records cannot be deleted from expensive VanDocs storage, and the Archives cannot make these records available to the public. This work will also lay the foundation for efficiently processing records from other City business systems, fundamental to ultimately preserving and making accessible the results of digital recordkeeping transformation projects across the City for generations.

Over the longer term, a major goal is to stabilize the Archives' digitization program. Currently, digitization of analogue records in the Archives' holdings is undertaken by auxiliary staff funded through grants and donations, supplemented by the Archives' relatively small temporary staff operating budget allocation. The ad hoc nature of such funding does not allow for long-term project planning or the most efficient use of resources, so regularizing the staff involved in this work is key to streamlining the program and making it sustainable.

During the tour, there were comments of the potential of private philanthropic support on a larger scale than has been received in the past. Such support for targeted projects would be most welcome, either directly to the City or through the Friends of the Vancouver City Archives, a non profit organization that currently raises funds to support the Archives' digitization work.

Hopefully this summary is of assistance. Thank you for your interest in the Archives, and if you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or City Archivist Heather Gordon ([heather.gordon@vancouver.ca](mailto:heather.gordon@vancouver.ca)).



Rosemary Hagiwara  
Acting City Clerk

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