

**From:** "Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>  
**To:** "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"  
**Date:** 10/3/2023 5:06:05 PM  
**Subject:** Questions re: RTS 15940 - Recommended 2023 Grants: Responses to Council Qs  
**Attachments:** 2023 10 03 Atira 100 Day Update.pdf

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Dear afternoon Mayor and Council,

Please see below responses related to questions received regarding the 2023 Grants report presented for Council consideration on Wed, Oct 4: *Recommended 2023 Grants to Support Childcare, Indigenous Healing and Wellness Space Renovations, Intergenerational Mentorship Programming, and DTES Social Enterprise Space Renovations.*

- 1. On the Indigenous Healing and Wellness Centre – Social Infrastructure grant, I am understanding that this site is owned by Atira correct? What assurances would the City have with this substantive capital contribution of \$700,000 for TI's that the site will be run well? What assurances would the City have that the site would continue to operate for a reasonable period of time to get value from the investment? What other uses are current on this site? Is there any possibility that Atira will sell the site as they have divested others as noted in the report? Or that through the Provincially mandated review that the property could be sold?**

Response: 41 E Hastings (Olivia Skye Housing) is owned by Atira. BC Housing is reviewing operators at PHRC owned sites so their review should not impact this site. For the Indigenous Healing and Wellness Centre, the services will be funded by VCH, operated by a selected non-profit service provider and overseen by a committee of Indigenous matriarchs. Standard grant requirements would apply in terms of the operations being required to follow all relevant laws, etc. The City will build into the grant agreement certain requirements for the use of the site, securing the use as an IHWC for 15 years. Staff would identify those stipulations in the agreement and would secure the use for that period of time through a covenant on title. As we have stipulated in previous capital TI agreements, such as SRO grants, Atira would be required to return the pro-rated amount of the grant back to the City if they decide to discontinue the use of this space as an Indigenous Healing and Wellness Centre before the term ends.

- 2. On the Intergenerational Mentorship Program, the report notes that the Intergenerational Mentorship Program (IMP) connects women from neighbouring Atira housing programs. The report also notes that BCH has transferred operations from a number of gender specific housing programs away from Atira. Does this program draw from any of those housing sites? Would it draw from housing sites that have been taken away from Atira?**

Response: The Intergenerational Mentorship Program is a program between Oneesan Container Housing for Elders and the Imouto Housing for Young Women. Atira operates both of these projects. Imouto functions under a staffing and operating agreement between Atira and BCH. Oneesan affordable housing for Elders is owned and operated by Atira. The City's grant is the core funding for this mentorship program. It provides the Elders with resources to hold community kitchen, cultural programming and host weekend gatherings that allow for opportunities for young women who have been impacted by intergenerational trauma to learn life skills, empowerment and safe connection. The BC Housing RFP seeking housing operators is not expected to impact these programs.

Atira and BCH are working together on the transfer of the Patricia, which Atira gave notice to BC Housing on in August, as well as the additional SRO operating agreements that were either expired or not fully tenanted as a result of them being uninhabitable. These programs are the ones for which BC Housing will be soliciting prospective operators through an RFP process. BC Housing and Atira have expressed a commitment to ensure this process does not impact the tenants in the buildings. They are also working with the BCGEU to ensure the staff are also not impacted through a loss of employment.

- 3. For the East Van Roasters proposed grant, the report cites that the project cost is \$244k. If this grant is approved, the City would have contributed a total of \$110k getting close to half of the total cost and significantly more than other funding partners. Why is that?**

Response: The DTES Plan Implementation Grant Program uses a cost-sharing arrangement with the applicant in order to build capacity and leverage funding from other sources (i.e. government programs, the private sector, trusts, donations, cooperatives, applicant's own reserves and in-kind contributions). Typically, the City's contribution does not exceed 50% of the total project cost, from \$5,000 up to \$50,000.

The grant evaluators consider this initiative as a strategic project related to community economic development that aligns with the DTES Plan (Chapter 10), the Social Impact Objectives and the Quick Start Actions (Well-being and Economy). If Council approves this grant, the total COV contribution will be 45% of the total project cost.

As a matter of interest to Council, Atira just released this morning an information notice outlining work undertaken during their acting CEO's first 100 days. The notice was shared with staff and is attached here for your information.

We hope these responses aid in your deliberations. If there are any further questions regarding this report, please let us know.

Best,  
Paul

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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.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **ATIRA PROVIDES 100-DAY UPDATE ON CONTINUED PROGRESS OF THE RESET AND RENEWAL PROGRAM**

*Interim CEO and management team continue to build a change program, renew public trust and deliver governance and operational excellence while supporting some of the most vulnerable in the DTES and greater Metro Vancouver region.*

**Vancouver, B.C. | Unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations |**

The Atira Women's Resource Society continues to provide 3,150 units of housing and shelter along with wrap-around support programs across Metro Vancouver and Vancouver Island, even as it strengthens its own practices.

"As someone who comes from outside the social services sector, I am truly inspired by what I have seen in the dedication and deeply thoughtful approach of Atira employees and its leadership," said Catherine Roome, Interim CEO. "Through these months of increased attention, I know we are proud of the progress we have made to reset and renew the organization, and Atira remains committed to delivering *Housing to Hope* to the most marginalized citizens in BC."

When announced as Interim CEO, Catherine Roome laid out a program of change designed to build public trust, stabilize the organization's financial health and achieve governance and operational excellence. To date, those commitments, as well as new ones, have been completed. The organization has:

- Introduced a code of conduct into Atira's existing daily practice policies and procedures, emphasizing that conflicts of interest would not be tolerated.
- Actively pursued dialogues with various partners, funders and donors, including their primary funder, BC Housing, to articulate Atira's new direction and the continued unwavering commitment to making a positive impact.
- Introduced a whistleblower line through IntegrityCounts to foster a speak-up culture.
- Focused on improving the employees' experience of an occupationally healthy, safe and secure working environment.
- Conducted Atira's first risk assessment through a participatory and inclusive process that actively engaged staff members from every level of the organization, including the Board of Directors. The resulting risk assessment will ensure Atira's operations continue to run with a continually evolving and clear understanding of risks, supported by effective mitigation measures.
- Reviewed compliance with all applicable statutes and regulations.
- Reviewed all existing operating contracts with BC Housing.

- Reviewed all existing real estate assets, resulting in a decision to list a surplus 1,500 sq ft work/live space for sale.
- Worked in partnership with the Provincial Government's imposed operational review to determine gaps in the organization's business processes.
- Introduced a board governance review with an independent third party to modernize all oversight practices.
- Welcomed a BC Government independent representative to attend Board meetings.
- Widened the senior management team with both interim and permanent talent for Atira's future success.
- Initiated recruitment of a permanent CEO. This included a consultative process that engaged all Atira staff over several days in shaping the profile of the future leadership to align seamlessly with Atira's values and new objectives.

The thought leadership that Atira brings to housing and support services never wavered. While organizational and governance changes were underway, Atira's employees continued to provide support to women, children, gender-diverse individuals and mixed-gender tenants across many exceptional and innovative programs:

- During the past 100 days, Atira received funding from Infrastructure Canada to open a First Nations, Métis and Inuit Wellness Centre in the Lower Mainland.
- The organization was awarded continuing funding for numerous overdose prevention sites by Vancouver Coastal Health.
- Corrections Canada renewed its contract with Atira to provide supports, services and interventions for women to meet the challenging needs of women offenders in their safe transition and community reintegration.
- BC Housing continued its partnership with Atira in funding and supporting low-barrier/no-barrier housing units that eliminate the intersectional barriers that often prevent BC's most vulnerable citizens from seeking support.
- The Vancouver Infectious Disease Centre continued its ground-breaking research collaboration with Atira.

Given the emphasis on improving employee health, safety and security and removing unacceptable tenant safety and financial risk exposure, Atira notified BC Housing on August 11, 2023, that it is withdrawing from its operating agreement for The Patricia Hotel. It is owned by BC Housing and is one of several SROs Atira currently operates on behalf of the provincial government. The agreement with BC Housing does not cover all costs, and the building requires structural and mechanical repairs to make it a safe place to live and work.

Atira conducted asset risk assessments using the seven standards that define "Adequate Housing" as recognized in international human rights law and enshrined in the 2019 National Housing Strategy Act (see Federal Housing Advocate's Observational Report – BC 2022). Atira's asset risk assessment on SROs was developed in cooperation with Vancouver Fire and Rescue based on data they collected and on critical incident data from Atira. Those assessments have been shared with BC Housing.

"We are grateful for the expertise and change leadership Catherine has brought during this time as we refocus the Atira organization on mission-driven operational excellence," said Elva Kim, Board Chair. "Atira's work is more essential than ever as a result of the overlapping crises we

face in British Columbia, including housing, the poison drug supply, and a deteriorating security situation. With Catherine and our senior executives leading the way, we are much better positioned to provide safe housing for the women, children and gender-diverse individuals and safe work environments for our employees.”

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Atira operates 3,150 housing units for women, children, and all gender individuals in the Lower Mainland. More information is available on our website here: [atira.bc.ca](http://atira.bc.ca).

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