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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council"](#)
Date: 5/9/2025 5:47:46 PM
Subject: Emerging issues note: Feces in public spaces (ENG)

Dear Mayor & Council,

Questions around feces observed in public spaces and access to public washrooms in the DTES is gaining interest in the media following an article published by CTV this week. In response, staff have prepared a brief package with key messages, key facts and relevant Q&As that may be helpful to you in media interviews or conversations with stakeholders and constituents.

Issue in brief

Businesses have expressed concern about feces in public spaces. While there has been neighbourhood recognition that many dog owners do not collect their dog's pet feces, the need for more public washrooms has also been identified. To ensure clean, safer and accessible public washroom facilities in the DTES, two new public washrooms are planned for later this year. These facilities are in addition to existing washroom facilities in the area. The City has established a feces removal program to address businesses' immediate concerns about feces in public areas, alongside regular street cleaning and micro-cleaning services.

Communications approach in brief

Public washroom information including location and operating hours is available on the City's website. We also encourage businesses/residents to report any feces to the City via 311 or Van311 and we will respond as quickly as we can. Pet owners are also reminded about their responsibility to remove pet waste immediately. Failure to do so could result in a minimum fine of \$250.

Key Messages

Public washrooms

- To ensure clean, safer and accessible public washroom facilities in the DTES, two new public washrooms are planned for later this year.
- These accessible facilities will provide essential amenities for everyone, helping to maintain public health, dignity and cleanliness.
- By providing these accessible facilities, the City aims to enhance local and visitor experience, support public life, reduce pressure on local businesses and keep streets and laneways clean.
- Many of the City's public washrooms are in locations such as recreation centres, libraries and parks.
- The City also operates two comfort stations (underground washrooms), one at Main & E. Hastings (open 24 hours) and the other at Victory Square (open 6am-12am).
- Eleven (11) APTs (Automated Public Toilets) are currently operated through the City's contract with Astral Decaux. Here are the locations/hours of operation:
 - Main/Terminal – 6am to 11pm daily
 - Richards/Davie – 24 hours
 - Nelson/Howe – 24 hours
 - Powell/Main – *closed for upgrades until Fall 2025*
 - Robson/Richards – 24 hours
 - E. Hastings/Carrall – 9am to 9pm
 - Robson/Granville – 6am to 10pm
 - Bute/Davie (small unit) – 24 hours
 - Nelson Park – 24 hours
 - Vancouver Art Gallery – 6am to 10pm
 - Bute/Davie (large unit) – 24 hours

Public realm cleanliness

- Keeping our streets, sidewalks, and green spaces safe and clean for everyone to enjoy, is a City priority.
- Our sanitation operations branch and local non-profit organizations working under our Street Cleaning Grant Program, play an integral role in keeping our city clean, vibrant and thriving.
- Our crews provide services 365 days a year, with the majority of work performed at night to reduce interrupting traffic and pedestrians.
- Street cleaning activities occur throughout our city with some streets and lanes in the Downtown Eastside, Gastown, Chinatown and the Granville Mall receiving daily cleaning and/or flushing.

Feces removal

- The Feces Removal Program was launched in March 2021 to respond to feces complaints submitted via 311/Van311, and to proactively patrol and collect feces from areas of the Downtown and DTES
- The program is operated by Mission Possible (MP) through the City's Street Cleaning Grant Program
- MP collect feces for disposal and the affected areas are sanitized using a disinfectant spray
- Collection takes place on weekdays across five BIA areas (Chinatown, Downtown east of Burrard, Strathcona, Gastown and Hastings Crossing)
- MP staff patrol these neighbourhoods and the vast majority (around 98%) of feces collected are found through regular patrols (prior to the City receiving a complaint)
- Residents or businesses can report feces through 311 or Van311; if the feces are within the response area (Burrard to Clark, north of Union/Drake) they will be collected.
- Feces related statistics:

Year	Total complaints via 311/Van311	Total Feces collected
2022	1,311	20,800
2023	753	19,900
2024	761	17,670

Street Cleaning Grant Program

- City Council has approved annual street cleaning grants since 1999 to non-profit agencies that have the capacity to:
 - Provide micro-cleaning services
 - Supplement our street cleaning services
 - Micro-cleaning involves daily collection of debris, which can include litter, needles and feces, on foot using brooms, shovels, and wheeled garbage carts – work that's outside the scope of City services.
 - Micro-cleaning grants complement other street cleaning services, such as programs coordinated by business improvement associations, as well as providing supported employment opportunities for youth and adults with barriers to traditional employment.
- Impacts of the 2024 program:
 - Micro-cleaning in an area covering 7 km² within 22 BIAs
 - Micro-cleaning of 26 permanent and pop-up plazas and 18 parklets
 - 73,100 micro-cleaning work hours to individuals with barriers to traditional employment
 - 39,800 bags of litter collected
 - 64,400 needles collected
 - 17,670 cumulative feces removals in the downtown area

For more information about the Street Cleaning Grant Program visit <https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/clean-streets-program.aspx>

Questions & Answers

When will the two new bathrooms in the DTES be accessible to the public?

We expect them to be operational by the end of 2025.

Why are BIAs paying for feces removal programs when the city already has a similar program?

The Feces Removal Program has proven to be very effective in reducing feces on streets, lanes and sidewalks with over 17,670 feces removed last year (2024) within the response area (Burrard to Clark, north of Union /Drake).

Some BIAs, like Hastings Xing and Gastown, have chosen to supplement this work with their own feces collection program using a private contractor.

Related links

- CTV News Article: [Frustrations rise over human waste on Vancouver streets](#)
- Public washroom locations: <https://opendata.vancouver.ca/explore/dataset/public-washrooms/map/?location=11,49.25912,-123.12338>
- Street cleaning grants: <https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/clean-streets-program.aspxLink>

We will provide a follow-up note if context or messaging requires updates. If you have any questions about the foregoing, please reach out to Maria at maria.pontikis@vancouver.ca. You are welcome to direct any media inquiries to media@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Paul

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x m k y m (Musqueam), S wxwú7mesh (Squamish), and s lilw ta (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.