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To: ["City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"](#)
Date: 7/7/2025 7:48:00 AM
Subject: Granville Island Briefing Note - RTS 18065
Attachments: Memo to Mayor and Council - RTS 18065 - Granville Island Briefing Note.pdf

Sorry failed to cc the City Manager's Correspondence Group on this memo originally.

Karen

From: Levitt, Karen
Sent: Friday, July 4, 2025 5:09 PM
To: Direct to Mayor and Council - DL
Cc: Mochrie, Paul <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>; Wittgens, Margaret <Margaret.Wittgens@vancouver.ca>; Okell, Corrie <Corrie.Okell@vancouver.ca>; Connell, Francie <francie.connell@vancouver.ca>; LaClaire, Lon <lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca>; White, Josh <Josh.White@vancouver.ca>; Jackson, Steve <Steve.Jackson@vancouver.ca>; Knight, Colin <Colin.Knight@vancouver.ca>
Subject: Granville Island Briefing Note - RTS 18065

Dear Mayor and Council,

Attached is a briefing note responding to a request from Councillor Bligh in Council recently, for an update and information on the status of the City's ongoing work with the Granville Island topic that has been in the media lately, including the City's role in relationship to the province and federal government.

All the best,

Karen

Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
karen.levitt@vancouver.ca

The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm/Musqueam, Skwx̱wú7mesh/Squamish and səlilwətaɬ/Tsleil-Waututh nations

MEMORANDUM

July 4, 2025

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Maria Pontikis, Chief of External Relations
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office
Trevor Ford, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office

FROM: Karen Levitt
Deputy City Manager

SUBJECT: Granville Island Briefing Note

RTS #: 18065

Dear Mayor and Council,

This briefing note is provided in response to a recent question posed by Councillor Bligh in Council: *“Councillor Bligh requested an update and information on the status of the City’s ongoing work with the Granville Island topic that has been in the media lately. She noted there has been quite a few discussions and she is particularly interested in the City’s role in relationship to the province and federal government.”*

Granville Island ownership and operating model

- Granville Island is located on land owned by the Government of Canada, and is operated by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

Working relationship

- Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager, is the City’s executive liaison for Granville Island, and meets quarterly with Tom Lancaster, GM of Granville Island to address issues, opportunities, and areas of mutual interest. For several years before this structured relationship model was established in mid-2022, interaction between Granville Island and City management had

been ad hoc and issues-based. Over the past three years, a proactive, constructive working relationship has been established.

- The Granville Island Council, established in 2019, plays an advisory role to the GM, Granville Island; it does not have the mandate of a typical Board of Directors with respect to comprehensive governance and oversight. At the time the City's former Deputy General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services (Branislav Henselmann) left the City in January 2025, he was the City-appointed member of this Council. With the strengthened regular interactions between the City Manager's Office and the GM, Granville Island, it has been mutually agreed that the City will not at this time appoint someone to the Granville Island Council to replace Branislav.

Land use, development and building regulation

- The "Reference Document for Granville Island - False Creek Area 9" ("the Reference Document") was approved by Council in April 1978, and last amended in December 1999. This document lays out a process by which development on Granville Island is undertaken in accordance with the City's False Creek Official Development Plan (ODP). Further, the False Creek ODP directs that a development permit application to the City must be submitted for any development on Granville Island.
- With Granville Island sitting on federal land, the City's regulatory oversight of land use on Granville Island is more complex as compared to the rest of the City, due to various jurisdictional nuances. Granville Island management and City staff are currently in discussion concerning updating the process by which the City regulates land use and development on Granville Island, exploring the possibility of Granville Island assuming responsibility for licensing and land use permitting.

Business and general regulation

- City of Vancouver bylaws other than those related to land use, development, and building generally apply to Granville Island, e.g., bylaws related to health and safety, environmental matters, and nuisances such as the Noise Bylaw and the Animal Control Bylaw. These are collectively termed "bylaws of general application."
- Further, most businesses sited on Granville Island are subject to COV's business license regime and related bylaws.

Arts and culture financial support

The City provides a number of arts and culture grants to organisations that reside on Granville Island. In 2024, nine organisations received over \$975,000 in such grants, including the Arts Club Theatre, Arts Umbrella, the Axis Theatre, Ballet BC, Boca del Lupo, the Carousel Theatre, the Craft Council of BC, the Fringe Festival, and the Vancouver Writers Fest.

Civic assets and infrastructure

- The City's municipal utilities and roads stop at the boundary of Granville Island – all infrastructure related to roads and civic utilities are owned and managed by the Government of Canada/CMHC.
- The connection between the City's utilities and roads and Granville Island is the same as a connection to a private property, and Granville Island is subject to related bylaws for use of City services and utilities.
- The Board of Parks and Recreation has a number of amenities on Granville Island, including the False Creek Community Centre, some outdoor tennis courts, and the Alder Bay dock. Arrangements concerning financial agreements and roles/responsibilities for each of these have been developed over time on a one-off basis.
- Granville Island management and City staff are currently in the process of developing a set of modernised agreements to clarify roles, responsibilities and cost-sharing for areas of shared responsibility, such as matters pertaining to the Granville Bridge, and as well plan to work collaboratively to update the Reference Document.

Payments in lieu of taxes

- The CMHC directly manages approximately thirteen properties on Granville Island, with the remainder of properties held by tenants of Granville Island.
 - Properties that are held by tenants pay property taxes to the City, as they would in any other location.
 - Properties that are directly held by the Government of Canada/CMHC are not subject to property taxes, but are subject to the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILTs) Act, through which Granville Island is expected to pay the City payments in lieu of taxes.
- The CMHC has not paid the full amount of PILTs billed by the City for several years. The City sought just over \$4 million in PILTs payments for the years 2011 to 2022, and in May 2023, CMHC paid the City approximately \$400,000 of this amount (10%). Through the PILTs Act, there is a prescribed process through which non-payment issues are resolved, and the City and the CMHC have been engaged in this process for the past several years, concerning an amount of approximately \$3.6 million.

All the best,



Karen Levitt
Deputy City Manager

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