

**From:** ["Singh, Sandra" <Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca)  
**To:** ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)  
**Date:** 7/7/2025 5:43:02 PM  
**Subject:** Update: Balmoral - Interim Activation

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Hello Mayor and Council,

This email provides an update from Margaret Wittgens, GM of Arts, Culture and Community Services on the interim activation of the Balmoral redevelopment site.

### Background

- On October 22, 2024, Council approved the staff recommendation (RTS 16595) for the outdoor programming on the site of the former Balmoral hotel for approximately two years, ahead of the redevelopment of the site into affordable housing.
- Carnegie Community Center is the activation lead, working with community-based partners to provide culturally safe programming beginning in spring 2025.

### Status and Timeline

- Following Council approval, detailed design and costing was undertaken.
- As a result of current market conditions, contractor estimates came back higher than the budget.
- The scope was reduced while still retaining installation of essential elements required for programming.
- The need to revise the project scope has delayed implementation. Permitting is now underway with installations expected to begin in August.
- The site is expected to be ready for full community activation by the end of September 2025.
- Despite the delay, it is still anticipated that a full 2 years of programming will be offered post installation due to timelines for the housing development project.

### Near term Site Activation

#### *On-site Programming*

- In light of project delays and given the shortage of gathering spaces in the neighborhood, efforts

- are being made to activate the space with flexible programming over the summer in advance of construction.
- Carnegie Community Centre activated the site as a Vendor Village as part of the National Indigenous Peoples Day celebration on June 21, 2025.
- Beginning June 30, the Carnegie Community Centre team has mobilized staffing and supplies to deliver programming 5 days a week, 6 hours a day. Programming includes low barrier arts and crafts, and cultural teaching delivered in a safe and substance free environment.
- Carnegie staff are working with local non-profits to potentially supplement programming and support community wellbeing and development.

### *Community Mural*

- The OPS (Overdose Prevention Society) that runs programs in the building west of the site, is working with the DTES Artist Collective to propose a mural on the wall of the Maple Hotel, a BC Housing-owned building to the east of the site.
- They have consulted with the Carnegie Community Centre's Indigenous Elders Advisory Committee and other local artists on the design of the mural.
- The design will reflect local histories and honor individuals such as Angel Gates and Trey Helton in recognition of their important role in the community.
- Urban Indigenous artists will participate in the mural to honor this site of significance related to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.
- The mural is planned to be complete this summer, subject to design confirmation and permitting timelines.

### Summary and Next Steps

- Staff continue to work towards full activation of the Balmoral site by September 2025. In the meantime and in advance of construction, flexible programming is being implemented.
- An opening celebration will be scheduled for this fall to mark the formal launch of the interim site activation. Council will receive invitations closer to the date.

Should Council have any questions, please contact Margaret directly at [Margaret.Wittgens@vancouver.ca](mailto:Margaret.Wittgens@vancouver.ca) and she will ensure questions are addressed through the weekly Q&A.

Thank you,

Sandra

**Sandra Singh** | Deputy City Manager

City of Vancouver

E-mail: [sandra.singh@vancouver.ca](mailto:sandra.singh@vancouver.ca)

Pronouns: she/her

Assistant: Laura Holvor

Phone: 604.829.9602

E-mail: [laura.holvor@vancouver.ca](mailto:laura.holvor@vancouver.ca)

Pronouns: she/her

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