

Royal Columbian Hospital Redevelopment

Special Bulletin: Heliport Relocation

November 2016



Helicopters have been a regular sight and sound at Royal Columbian Hospital since the 1980s. Back then, air ambulances landed in Sapperton Park across the street from the hospital. Then in 2002, a heliport was built on hospital grounds near the Main Entrance. Now our heliport is on the move again, back to the hospital's west side, next to East Columbia Street.

"Helicopters and construction cranes don't mix," says Brett Crawley, the Redevelopment's heliport Project Leader. "Our current heliport will be too close to the construction cranes we'll bring on site to build both Phase One's mental health centre and the acute care tower proposed for Phase Two. And part of the new mental health centre will be built where our heliport is today."

"To keep people safe, we're moving the heliport to the roof of the hospital's Columbia Tower," noted Brett. "We initially suspected Columbia Tower was too close to the future acute care tower's construction cranes, so we'd chosen a location at the bottom of Keary Street, across from Sapperton Skytrain. But in February of 2016, when we finished preliminary designs for Phase Two, we saw the acute care tower's footprint had moved further east. This allowed us to reconsider Columbia Tower — and it turned out to be our BEST option."

At seven storeys high, Columbia Tower is the hospital's tallest building, making it ideal for pilots. "Transport Canada, BC Emergency Health Services, and pilots all agree Columbia Tower's much greater height, compared to our current heliport, increases the opportunity for successful landings and gives us more options for flight paths. Plus it's closer to Emergency too — and that's good for trauma patients," says Brett.

Starting in early 2017, we'll begin building the new heliport. Once it's finished helicopters will start landing on it, and then the current helipad will be dismantled.

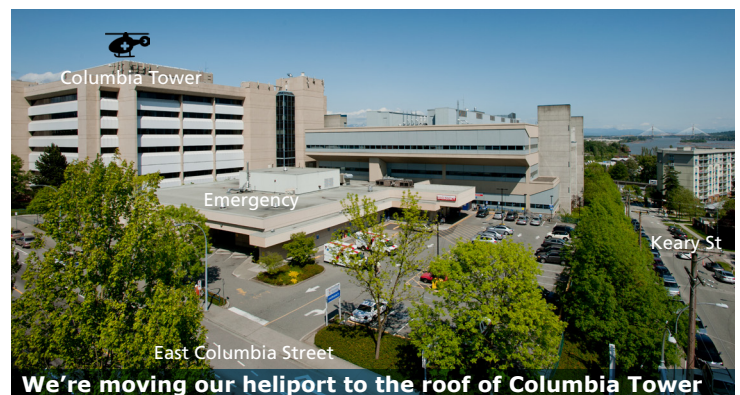


"Landing and takeoff paths will change, and that's something new for the neighbourhood," emphasizes Brett. "Today helicopters tend to approach from the east, over the river. With the new heliport they'll approach mostly from the north or south over East Columbia Street, and for now will also use an east flight path."

"Columbia Tower's height should minimize the noise, fumes and disruption for our neighbours, especially those east of the hospital," says Brett.

The long-term plan is to have a heliport on the roof of the future acute care tower proposed for Phase Two. This would become the hospital's highest building when it opens in 2024. "Since Phase Two isn't approved yet, and would be quite a few years away, in the interim BC air ambulances will start touching down on the roof of Columbia Tower around the middle of 2017," says Brett.

Royal Columbian is one of only two Level 1 adult trauma centres in BC and one of the busiest trauma centres in Canada. Each year the traumatically injured treated by our team include over 200 patients who are flown here by air ambulance.



Royal Columbian's Heliport is on the Move

Part of Phase One in 2017

Safer for everyone

Moving our heliport will keep air ambulances safely away from future construction cranes used during the hospital's redevelopment

Best for neighbours

Having a heliport on the roof of the hospital's tallest building means less noise, fumes and disruption in the neighbourhood

Good for patients

The route from the roof of Columbia Tower to Emergency is short and that's good for patients and air ambulance attendants

Better for pilots

A heliport atop Columbia Tower allows for more flight paths which increases the opportunity for successful landings

WHAT TO EXPECT during heliport construction

- Construction will run from early to mid 2017.
- Most of the work will occur on the roof and sixth floor of the hospital's Columbia Tower. Construction will be done to minimize disruption to neighbours, staff and patients.
- At times, areas near the Main Entrance may be temporarily closed or used for construction crane installation and materials storage. The Main Entrance will remain open.
- If there is any disruption to East Columbia Street it will be kept to a minimum and will be authorized by the City of New Westminster.
- Our construction partner will be expected to follow the City of New Westminster's Good Neighbour Protocol guidelines.

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