

Incomes and [Affordability] Working Group Notes

June 16, 2016

In Attendance: Gabby Korcheva (Binners' Project), Sharon Belli (Carnegie/Urban Core), Elizabeth Ballantyne, (DTES Neighbourhood House), Hendrik Buene (Village Vancouver, resident), Sean Condan (Megaphone), Matt Smedley (Mission Possible), Johanna Li (EMBERS), Wes Regan (City of Vancouver), Kiri Bird (CEDSAC/LEDlab)

Regrets: Davin Boutang (Binners' Project)

1. Intro and Check In

Who are you, who are you representing, and what do you think the purpose of this committee is?

Purpose of Incomes and [Affordability] Working Group

- Come up with new and emergent strategies to increase incomes for DTES residents.
- I am interested in strategies/avenues for increasing income generation. This includes projects that we could implement in the short or long term or short term strategies to improve outcomes. May also include legislative change.
- Involves income generation, carts and bikes, non carbon using bikes, green jobs, artists that are on the street, supporting the vending activities
- Self employment, other ways for people to generate some income, putting plans into action
- What's possible, what kind of impact can we collectively have in the City of Vancouver, and broader impact.
- It's challenging for City to address these issues, but I think there's some things the city can do to increase incomes, and remove barriers to income generation.
- Relates to LEDlab work supporting social enterprise cluster, as well as legislative change piece.
- Since April 8th CED Planner has researched suggestions coming from the group. Wes has brought background info on some of the conversations that have happened around incomes, and particularly people at the city's interest in supporting legislative change, and infrastructure for the informal economy.
- Sharon add, this is connected to the work of Urban Core, particularly the Employment Resource Hub group

A question about the word 'affordability' in the working group title. Does that fit into this working group?

Affordability might fit better into the Retail Gentrification group.

Consider renaming committee in the future, Incomes and Livelihoods, or another option.

2. Timelines and Outcomes

Report going to council in October, recommendation from CEDSA Committee must be approved at August 17th meeting.

That means draft recommendations are to be discussed at the July 25th CEDSA Committee Meeting. Wes suggests 2-3 key recommendations per working group.

Between now and July 25th this working group will need to refine the project and policy ideas discussed at the April 8th meeting (and any others). This subcommittee will need to submit a report to the co-chairs (supported by CED Coordinator and myself) by July 18th. Same thing in August: submit report to co-chairs no later than 7 days in advance of CEDSAC meeting.

Goal of July 25th meeting – review draft recommendations and discuss as full committee.

Goal of August 17th meeting – finalize recommendations for Wes' council report.

Given short timelines, participants asked: can we spend some time today talking about ideas? [yes]

Request to provide feedback in writing in advance of future meetings (many people will be on holidays this summer) [yes]

3. Review of April 8th Meeting Work

Policy

- Raise social assistance rates, welfare reform, other advocacy
- Informal economy policy needs
 - Change vending bylaws, new licenses for the self-employed

Projects

- Informal economy infrastructure needs: binner/vendor carts, bikes, and safe storage
- Social enterprise idea: neighbourhood composting and food scrap recycling program

4. CED Planner Report Back and Discussion

Informal Economy Infrastructure

Carts:

- Binnings' Project, Carnegie vendor carts, Tradeworks produced vendor carts
- Groundswell is developing folding carts, Carnegie is also working on developing small lightweight vending carts, Carnegie has also gotten funding to hire a coordinator. Carnegie project is outside of Oppenheimer Park.
- Seems there are at least four groups with existing work done @ United We Can, Tradeworks, Carnegie, Groundswell, Farmers Market.
- Carts need to be lightweight (urban binning carts from United We Can were kind of heavy)

- Folding carts could be brought up and down stairs

Action Item: Sharon Belli to convene vendor cart Meeting at Carnegie to ensure no duplication of efforts.

Storage:

- The current site at 501 Powell St. will eventually be built up with social housing. The ground floor will be intended for the street market.
- There's an opportunity for storage on this site, washing, assembly, etc.
- Concerns from Bidders Project: 501 Powell St. is quite far from the Depot. Not ideal for storage. Need to consider who will be using and choose appropriate location.
- Washing and assembly happens at the bottle depot, not necessary at 501 Powell?
- City parquades have storage (Wesley Joe said)

Service Delivery Innovation

Lux Space (see Wes' slides 6-11 for context)

- City of Vancouver wants to make federal asks for The Lux, MH & A and Early Childhood Development
- Connected to potential Urban-Federal agreement with Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- What we bring to council in October could have a really big influence on the federal urban funding across Canada.

Lux Space [Wes]:

City Staff who were involved in Vancouver Agreement have been asked for input related to Urban-Federal agreement. The previous strategy overlooked the informal economy. We want to see a strategy that sees a broader spectrum of opportunity to engage in income generation.

Let's put the Lux to use as a site where we meet people where they're at, and fill the gaps that Open Door Groups aren't necessarily filling. The City is trying to find money need to find funding so this isn't a white elephant, so that it is properly resourced. We need to use this as a demonstration project.

RFP is sitting on staffs desk in part because we've had to make a case inside and in part because it's part of a bigger ask to the feds.

Can this type of hub concept be a place to be a drop in centre that can connect people to resources from volunteering to formal employment?

Lux Space [Discussion]

Urban Core has been meeting for more than 8 months faithfully working on this idea of an Employment Resource Hub, which recognizes that people don't need

to be working 9-5, but enables people to gain better access to opportunities across a spectrum from volunteering to formal employment.

We have had many conversations now to dig into the current service delivery model of connecting folks to income support – and employment. We all know, including Open Door, that the current model isn't meeting the needs in this area. We have asked what are they doing, what are they doing well, what aren't they doing well, and we have come up with a good sense of what an alternative service delivery model looks like. This is collaborative, where different partners come together to offer a range of opportunities across the employment continuum, it is place-based.

What we haven't talked about though, is dealing with the policy / legislative change through the Lux. Also, we do NOT want it to be a drop in centre offering mental health and addictions services. It's not cheap and we need to know that there will be adequate funding.

MaryClare and Wes are looking for 5 years of funding. [nods around the room]

EMBERS perspective the idea presented back to the group through Wes' slides has become really broad. It takes a lot of resources to connect with those housing and mental health groups. One space can't do it all, it can't work. Narrower scope on connecting people to income generating opportunities would support the mental health and addictions issues anyway given neighbourhood demographic.

We need to draw work into the CEDSAC working groups that is already happening in the community – the CED Strategy should be a resource to enhance the work that is already happening, and address systemic gaps where they exists.

Is the money that was approved for Poverty Reduction at council this week connected to the CED Strategy? Who's doing what, are there all these cooks in the kitchen, are we supporting each other, are we competing each other? How does this all fit?

If all these other things are hung on it (mental health and addictions supports, etc.): for EMBERS, not going to go ahead. Not a threat, just the reality.

Why is 312 Main on this map [in Wes' slides]? Are we duplicating efforts with the Lux? 312 Main St. will serve a bit of a higher clientele.

The CED Strategy is trying to be community driven, and this group is trying to be community driven. But the ideas that are coming back to this committee are very top down. This is a concern.

Action Item: Wes to schedule Lux Group meeting with Mary Clare and Incomes and Affordability Work Group/Urban Core Employment Resource Hub representatives to discuss further

5. Set Next Working Group Meeting for July 4th – July 13th

Kiri to send Doodle Poll