Increase Focus on Diversity and Critical Social Issues

Situated on the traditional and unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, Vancouver’s cultural landscape has been and continues to be enhanced through the rich cultural traditions of these Nations and those of the diversity of people who have made this city their home. While this diversity makes our city both distinct and exciting, significant social issues such as persistent and deepening poverty, increasing homelessness, a worsening mental health and addictions crisis, and systemic and overt racism are ongoing barriers to well-being for many of our residents, their families, and the community as a whole. While the City has limited influence on the underlying systems that create and could alleviate many of these situations, partnerships, advocacy, and targeted municipal investments remain our key tools to trying to make a difference.

Total Investments in 2020 Budget

In response to Council’s identification of their priorities for the 2020 Budget, every division and department reviewed their existing and planned initiatives in their operating budgets. City staff looked for opportunities to better align existing and ongoing activities and investments to these priority areas, and also made sure there was strong alignment for the proposed new initiatives. Capital plan investments shown here reflect the work and costs included in the 2020 Budget from the multi-year approved capital plan. The total dollar investment includes specific initiatives and their associated costs that have been included in the 2020 Budget and are directly aligned to this priority. It is important to recognize that there is ongoing, everyday work across the City’s entire operations that can be difficult to capture but that also reflects the increased focus on this priority.

- Existing and Ongoing Activities: $71 million
- New Investments: $2 million
- Capital Investments: $11 million

Total: $84 million
Existing and Ongoing Activities in 2020 Budget (examples) – Estimated $71 million

Training and development to **assist City staff in aligning with best practices, focusing on culturally appropriate responses and training** (e.g., for LGBTQ2+ communities, Indigenous communities), harm reduction practices and trauma-informed practices. (ACCS)

**New childcare spaces**, including in partnership with the Vancouver School Board, and by exploring potential partnerships with BC Housing. (ACCS)

**Connect individuals experiencing homelessness to housing, income, health and other support services** through the work of the Homelessness Services Outreach Team (also known as the Carnegie Outreach Team, who will continue to lead innovative pilots to address current unmet needs, such as the ID bank). (ACCS)

Implement an equity and accessibility lens on all communications work to **ensure greater understanding of City work** among people who are vulnerable or those residents who face barriers to engaging. (CMO)

**Ongoing support to the Mayor’s Overdose Emergency Task Force** including implementation of proactive programs such as the community outreach response team. (VFRS and ACCS)

**Implement a holistic, evidence-based, non-biased mental health program** with a mental health professional as part of the Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services (VFRS) mental health team that will provide VFRS the ability to proactively address the effects of occupational stress injuries, cancer, and other health and wellness challenges. (VFRS)

**Focus on talent and succession planning** across the organization, with an emphasis on diversity, to encourage employees and applicants who are representative of the diversity in our community. (HR)

Collaborate with front-line police officers and officials throughout Metro Vancouver to share best practices to **improve services for clients living with severe mental health and substance use issues**. (VPD)

**Enhance access to multilingual material at libraries** by consolidating specific language materials at designated branches, creating broader, deeper browsing collections in neighbourhoods where these languages are most prevalent. Continue to explore opportunities to expand the multilingual collection in digital format. (VPL)

Continue to offer programs that **highlight Indigenous and LGBTQ2+ authors along with authors from other equity-seeking groups**, including the annual Indigenous Storyteller in Residence and programs that aim to reduce discrimination and increase understanding of gender identity and gender expression. (VPL)

**Complete the City’s first poverty reduction plan.** (ACCS)

**Micro-cleaning grant** that provides for job support and life skills training opportunities for youth and adults with employment barriers and results in cleaner streets and lanes for communities where there is the greatest need. (ENG)
New Initiatives in 2020 Budget (examples) – $2 million

Implement multiple items under the Heritage Action Plan (PDS and ACCS) – $0.1 million, including:

- Vancouver Heritage Register (VHR) upgrade.
- Engage with Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and Indigenous consultants as well as the City’s Indigenous Planning and Reconciliation team for a meaningful integration of Indigenous Cultural Heritage, reconciliation and redress.
- Engage in identifying and supporting the heritage values of tangible and intangible assets and underrepresented community groups through the City’s heritage policy development and implementation.
- Integrate a broadened view of heritage (reflecting above work) with community planning on a number of ongoing initiatives (Broadway Plan, Gastown, Japantown, Granville Street, Jericho Land, City-wide Plan).
- Partner with the Park Board and City’s Facilities departments to develop strategies for stewardship of City-owned heritage properties.

Increase funding for Community Policing Centers, to continue to provide various initiatives for crime prevention and address neighbourhood crime issues. (VPD) – $0.2 million

Implementation of the Equity Framework, including the development of departmental action plans related to using the framework to apply an intersectional lens including gender on City business. (ACCS) – $0.3 million

Support for low barrier employment and community economic development initiatives, including the Downtown Eastside Community Economic Development Strategy. (ACCS) – $0.1 million

Delivery of two projects to support racial redress i.e. Apology for historic discrimination against the South Asian community and Anti-black Racism Policy and strategy work. (ACCS) – $0.4 million

Develop a business case for Housing and the Homeless, undertake a service review and develop a service plan for the three Social Operations (Carnegie, Gathering Place, and Evelyne Saller Centre). (ACCS) – $0.1 million

Work with community partners (MVAEC) to develop an Indigenous Healing and Wellness Strategy, along with priorities for implementation. (ACCS) – $0.3 million

Ongoing operational budget to provide City support and services related to the Oppenheimer Park encampment. (Multiple divisions) – $0.5 million
Major Capital Initiatives in 2020 Budget
– $11 million*

Capital Grant program to match grant allocations to Downtown Eastside (DTES) non-profit organizations in order to strategically advance the social, economic and environmental objectives of the approved DTES Plan. (PDS) – $1 million

Improvements to Downtown Eastside neighbourhood places and spaces for community well-being, safety and walkability. (PDS) – $0.6 million

Indigenous Social Enterprise project to provide space for use by a non-profit organization to hire and support people with barriers to employment. (ACCS and REFM) – $2 million

Social Policy Capital Grants program providing capital grants to non-profit organizations to support critical community services. (ACCS) – $0.5 million

Chinese Society Legacy program to build capacity for the rehabilitation of important heritage and cultural assets in Chinatown. (PDS) – $0.9 million

Cultural Infrastructure Grants program to support Vancouver-based cultural non-profits, charities and First Nations with planning, renovating, expanding and acquiring cultural facilities including preservation of existing, and creation of new, spaces. (ACCS) – $0.4 million

Improvements to a variety of public realm activations and public space improvements such as public space pilots and innovations that will contribute to a vibrant and connected city; for example, parklets, pilot plazas, and curbside seating. (ENG) – $0.7 million

Renewal of public spaces to contribute to a vibrant and connected city; for example, horticulture renewal, wayfinding renewal, street use and street furniture planning and policy, and bike racks. (ENG) – $0.5 million

Construction of a permanent public plaza at 800 Robson Street, filling a vital public space need to accommodate important social, cultural, and civic functions. (ENG) – $3 million

City-wide program to improve accessibility in civic facilities, particularly for high-traffic public venues. (REFM) – $0.5 million

Feasibility research and planning studies for social facilities. (ACCS and REFM) – $0.4 million

Renovations program to keep social facilities functional and efficient. (REFM and ACCS) – $0.4 million

Ongoing capital maintenance for social facilities including items such as roof, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, etc. (REFM) – $0.5 million

* This list represents the major projects and does not include all capital investments included in the budget.

For more details about the City’s work supporting this priority, please refer to the associated Service Plans in the Budget Book.

Legend:

ACCS – Arts, Culture and Community Services
PDS – Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability
REFM – Real Estate and Facilities Management
CMO – City Manager’s Office
VFRS – Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services
VPD – Vancouver Police Department
VPL – Vancouver Public Library
HR – Human Resources
ENG – Engineering