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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)
Date: 12/7/2021 2:16:16 PM
Subject: [Upcoming NR: Social Infrastructure Strategy \(Dec 8, 2021\)](#)

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to inform you that the City will be issuing the below news release on Wednesday, December 8th pending Council approval of *Spaces to Thrive: Vancouver Social Infrastructure Strategy*. The release speaks to the significant impact social infrastructure has on community wellbeing and actions the City can take now to meet the objectives of the strategy.

Best,
Paul

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

News Release
City of Vancouver
December 8, 2021

City makes 10-year commitment to supporting the social sector with newly adopted Social Infrastructure Strategy

Today, Vancouver City Council took a significant step towards improving social connection and meeting the needs of all Vancouver residents by adopting the 10-year *Spaces to Thrive: Vancouver Social Infrastructure Strategy*.

Vancouver's first social infrastructure strategy aligns to the City's Reconciliation, equity and resilience priorities. It is grounded in partnerships with Indigenous and non-profit organizations, other levels of government, and the private sector.

Over the next decade, Vancouver will need to increase efforts in several areas to adapt to the impacts of climate crises and rising social and economic inequities. Through the Strategy, the City aims to provide disproportionately impacted communities with resources needed to improve well-being and access to basic human needs.

"Making sure people in need have access to spaces and services that help them thrive is critical to building back better from COVID-19," said Mayor Kennedy Stewart. "By working in partnership with senior governments, non-profits and the private sector, we can find existing spaces, as well as build new ones, that create stronger connections between neighbours and build healthier communities."

Social infrastructure spaces have far reaching and impactful benefits. For example, [Saa-ust centre](#) is an Indigenous healing and wellness centre operating out of a City-owned building. Saa-ust functions as a hub where organizations like [Indian Residential School Survivors Services](#) and [Pacific Association of First Nations Women](#) work together to support family and loved ones of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and provide services to Indigenous community members.

“We try to provide clients with a safe space where they can come and access culture, they can access Elders and they can access medicine they need so they can get through the traumatic experience of having a family member go missing or murdered,” said Eric Blesch, Saa-ust Office Manager. “There has never been a space like this before, there has never been a service like this before, so our program here is very new. We use culture as our backbone for all our programming.”

What is social infrastructure?

Social infrastructure refers to physical spaces, services, programs and the networks across and within these spaces where people come together and enhance overall well-being. Social service centres, including neighbourhood houses, Indigenous wellness and culture centres, social enterprises and informal gathering spaces are all examples of social infrastructure.

There are many ways the City invests in social infrastructure including building, operating and renovating social facilities; building and leasing social facilities to non-profit organizations; providing funding to non-profit organizations to build, renovate, and renew their facilities and providing grants for service delivery and operations.

Upcoming actions

While the implementation plan for the *Spaces to Thrive* is being developed, the City has identified actions it can take now to meet the objectives of the strategy.

Examples of these actions include:

- **Creating an urban Indigenous service delivery and resilience strategy**
In partnership with [Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council \(MVAEC\)](#), the City will develop a strategy to meet the social and cultural space-related needs of Urban Indigenous communities.
- **Developing a space matching database**
The City will develop a database to quickly match available spaces with a non-profit organizations to meet community needs.
- **Collaborating with the private sector**
The City will engage the private sector and the [United Way of the Lower Mainland’s Social Purpose Institute](#) to create space for community-serving agencies in privately owned buildings.
- **Develop space redevelopment/retrofit program for non-profits**
The City will develop a program to support non-profit and community groups in redevelopment or retrofits with programmatic elements, city process information, and opportunities for grants, including funding for accessible design upgrades.

To read [Spaces to Thrive: Vancouver Social Infrastructure Strategy](#) in its entirety visit our website.

The City engaged more than 285 organizations for the development of the strategy and is grateful for the time and generosity of the organizations and groups who shared their insights and experiences. The [full list of participating organizations](#) is available online.