

From: "Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>
To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
Date: 8/31/2023 3:26:04 PM
Subject: Update on Downtown East Side Women's Centre Women's Market

Good afternoon Mayor and Council,

I am writing to inform you of recent developments related to the Downtown East Side Women's Centre (DEWC) Women's Market. Please note that the Women's Market is distinct and separate from the DTES Market and, despite the coincidental timing of the closing of the DTES Market, this issue is entirely unrelated.

Background

The Women's Market is a street market and community celebration, that has been hosted and operated by the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre since 2016. The City provided funding for the Women's Markets from 2016-2021 inclusive (with the exception of 2020, due to COVID) to the tune of \$30,000 - \$60,000; the Markets were typically held over 10-16 days, annually.

Each funding year, the City of Vancouver entered into a contribution agreement outlining terms and responsibilities for the operation of the Women's Market; as part of ongoing reporting requirements and as requested in each contribution agreement, DEWC, in turn, provided an annual report back.

In 2021 the Market was moved online and a contribution agreement and request for reports was signed off by DEWC and the City. At that time, staff informed DEWC that the City would not be able to provide the same level of financial support for future years and indicated hope that the online market would continue to support women's economic income for future years. A report on the outcomes of the online market was never provided to the City.

In 2022, DEWC reached out to staff to inquire about annual funding for that year. ACCS staff indicated that funding was available, pending the 2021 report and an application and budget for the 2022 funds; none of these was received. Accordingly, the organization and the City had no further conversations related to a contribution agreement. DEWC proceeded with holding the Market and did not request funds from the City of Vancouver in 2022. It is important to note that, despite the City not providing funds and DEWC holding the market, DEWC did not have a deficit in FY2022, as per DEWC [audited financial statements](#).

2023 Negotiations

DEWC reached out to staff in May 2023 indicating they would like to confirm funding for 2023. In line with general funding practices, staff asked for a budget and information to create a contribution agreement. DEWC also requested retroactive funding for 2022; in turn, staff indicated this was not possible. DEWC further indicated that they plan to run the Market for only 7 days.

Although DEWC has the autonomy to reduce the number of days of operation, in the conversation with staff, the organization indicated that they will be expecting the same level of funding contribution as in previous years, when the Market was operated for 10-16 days. In addition, compared to the DTES Market costs, the budget provided by DEWC was significantly higher, even if staff account for fixed costs of road closures. Staff's assessment related to financial accountability and responsibility led to a request to reduce the cost of the Women's Market and prorate the funding amount in line with the newly suggested, shorter duration (to be more aligned with the costs of operating the DTES Market).

Most recently, DEWC indicated that they intend to proceed with the Women's Market, starting Saturday, September 2, without an agreement, and have requested tables and chairs from the City. In the absence of the agreement, staff have had to decline this request. The agreement negotiations are ongoing.

Key Messages

Given the recent sensitivity related to the DTES Market, as well as the ongoing negotiations for the Women's Market contribution agreement, we recommend any media requests be directed to media@vancouver. However, should Council wish to comment on the matter, the following are some key messages to consider:

- The Women's Market has been a vital part of the community, providing opportunities for income generation and skills development for women of the DTES.
- The City continues to be supportive of the Women's Market and recognizes its cultural significance in the community as well as its importance in providing income for vendors.
- City staff have been in discussion with the organizers of the Market, Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, related to a contribution agreement to fund the Women's Market and are actively working on a resolution of this issue.

In Sandra's absence, please do not hesitate to contact me or Branislav directly with any queries you may have, and we will make sure to respond to them through the weekly Q&A.

Best,
Paul

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sn̓wəx̓ʷú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.