

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE PLAN

Five-Year Implementation Update: Community Newsletter #9
 March 2014 – March 2019

DTES PLAN

The DTES Plan was approved by City Council in March 2014, along with a Rezoning Policy, Interim Liquor Policy, and Micro-dwelling Unit Policies and Guidelines

Providing a clear and flexible framework to guide change and development in the DTES over the next 30 years, the plan also sets out priorities for implementation of quick-start actions within the first five years.

To read the plan, visit our website at vancouver.ca/dtes

IMPLEMENTATION

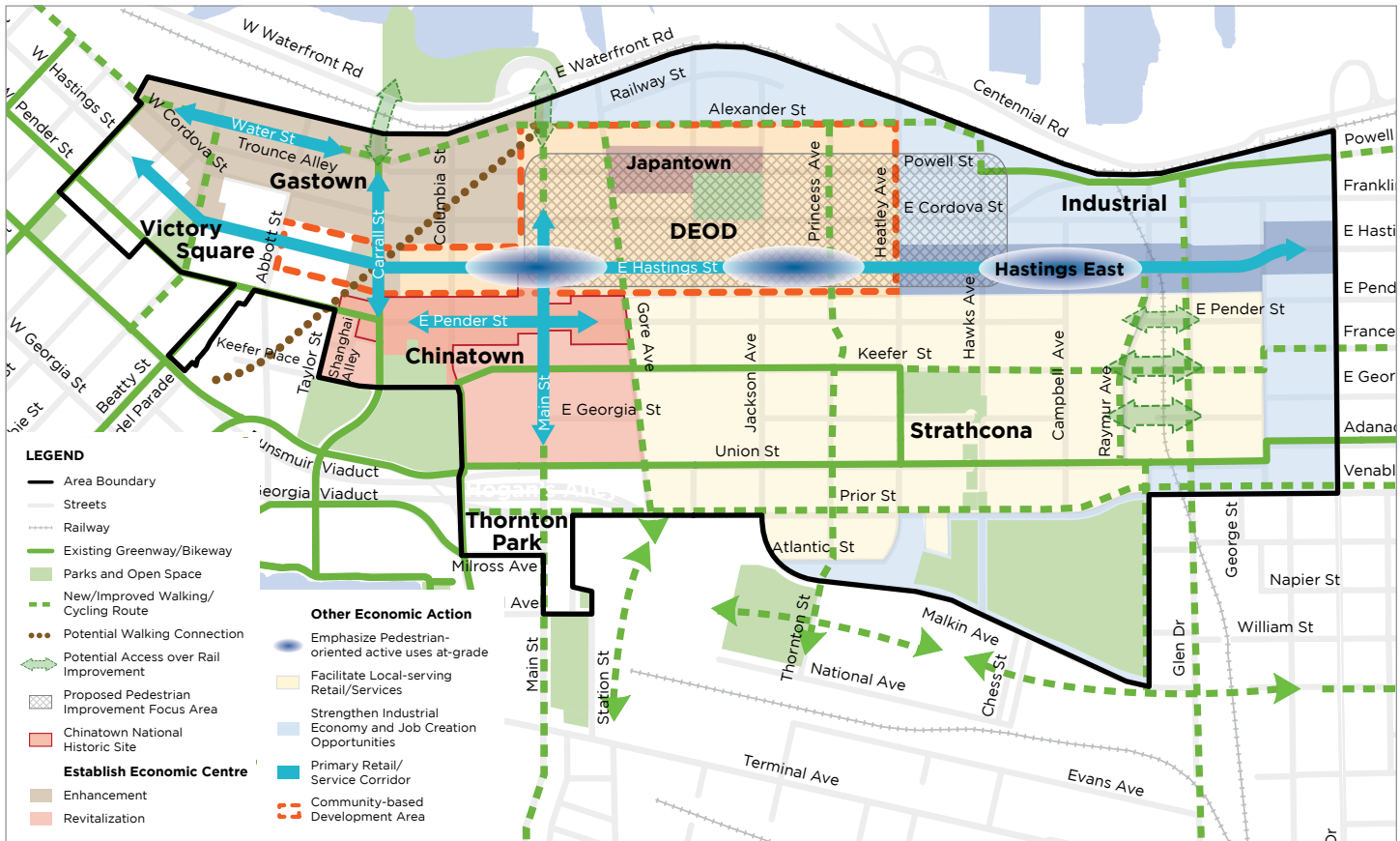
Implementing the plan involves partnerships and collaboration between residents, societies, funders and businesses.

A tremendous spirit of social collaboration has emerged after the planning process, with many people working together to achieve common goals.

This community newsletter is a summary to monitor how implementation is progressing five years after approval of the plan.

DTES VISION

“... a neighbourhood of communities providing sustainable, safe and healthy places for everyone to live and work. The neighbourhood will be made up of mixed-income communities with a range of affordable housing options (including social housing) for all residents, local serving commerce, social services and cultural activities where all feel welcome, valued and at home.”



Downtown Eastside Potential Development and Opportunities Policy Directions Map



OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

- 
IMPROVED WELL-BEING FOR ALL
- 
HEALTHY HOMES FOR ALL
- 
VIBRANT INCLUSIVE LOCAL ECONOMY
- 
IMPROVED TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND SAFETY
- 
ARTS & CULTURE OPPORTUNITIES
- 
CELEBRATION OF HERITAGE
- 
IMPROVED SAFE & ACCESSIBLE PARKS OPEN SPACE
- 
COMMUNITY PLACEMAKING
- 
WELL-MANAGED GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

FIVE-YEAR UPDATE

Well-Being

PRIORITIES

The Healthy City Strategy describes the City's goals, actions and targets towards a long-term vision for health, well-being and equity for all residents.

Achieving this in the DTES means addressing significant health and social inequities, strengthening community assets, and leveraging new ones. Ensuring that people have their basic needs (food, shelter, and clothing) met is a critical principle guiding the plan.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Increasing access to nutritious, affordable and culturally appropriate food

- Provided \$1 million in grants to DTES organizations to address community food priorities.
- Developed a Food Services Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment Framework, and assessed the City's three low-cost meal programs.
- Served an average of 1,567 low-cost meals per day, 365 days per year through Carnegie and Evelyne Saller community centres.

Strengthening and leveraging community assets

- Provided 19 organizational and capacity-building grants.
- Developing a Social Infrastructure Framework to improve the equitable distribution of social resources and amenities.

- Crosstown Elementary School opened in 2017, adding 30 new childcare spaces.
- Two 37-space childcare facilities at 150 Water Street and 151 Cordova are scheduled to open in 2020.

Enhancing inclusion, belonging and safety

- Secured funding to work with sex workers and community allies to develop a plan for sex worker safety for Hastings Corridor.
- Secured funding to undertake a safe public spaces scoping study as a part of the City of Vancouver's United Nations Safe Cities commitments.
- Moved forward on commitments to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry.
- Provided \$112,500 to the Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Centre Society to support the operations of the Sau'ust Centre, offering services and supports to families and survivors of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Increasing access to quality health, social and community services

- Completed the Aboriginal Health, Healing, and Wellness DTES Study (2017).
- Seeking a permanent site for a new Indigenous Healing and Wellness Centre.
- Invested \$1 million in the St. Paul's Hub, a one-stop-shop to provide people with integrated and specialized emergency mental health and substance use care.



- Provided 144 direct social service grants since 2014. Of these grants, the community has been able to leverage matching investments from other funders.
- Working in partnership with the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council and the newly formed Metro Vancouver Indigenous Services Society to provide cultural responses to the overdose crisis through the Urban Indigenous Overdose Task Force.
- Instituted a 0.5 per cent property tax in December 2016, resulting in a \$3.5 million investment in overdose response.
- Through the City’s grant investments, community organizations have leveraged an additional \$1.3 million to address the overdose emergency.

Housing

PRIORITIES

Achieving housing affordability is a key objective the DTES Plan. Securing housing for those with low incomes is a priority. The housing vision over the 30-year life of this plan is to revitalize and reinvest in a mix of housing in the DTES without displacing existing residents.

The first 10 years of the plan is focused on addressing immediate housing needs and the health crisis in the neighbourhood by mobilizing partnerships and innovation.

ACHIEVEMENTS

SRO Revitalization:

- Single Room Accommodation By-law amendments were adopted in 2015 to further discourage conversion or demolition of Single Room Occupancy units and prevent the loss of affordable SRO units.
- \$1.7 million provided by the City for SRO upgrade grants from 2015 to 2018.
- In 2017 and 2018, the Balmoral and Regent SRO hotels were closed after years of neglect by the private owners. Starting in the summer of 2018, the City began a process to expropriate these two buildings for the delivery of much-needed social housing.

New Social, Supportive and Shelter-Rate Housing in the DTES:

- Since adoption of the DTES Plan, over 600 units of new social housing have been approved in the DTES.
- Three temporary modular housing buildings totalling 130 units of shelter-rate housing were opened as part of a Rapid Response to Homelessness supported by BC Housing, the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health and non-profit housing partners.
 - Anecki House (39 units) - Atira
 - Chartrand Place (39 units) - PHS
 - Nora Hendrix Place (52 units) - PHS
- Since 2010, 1,071 shelter-rate units have been completed, approved, or are under construction in the DTES.
- Currently, 210 shelter-rate units in the DTES are under construction and 241 shelter-rate units have been approved.

Market Housing:

- A variety of market projects have been undertaken in the DTES since 2014, including a new secured market rental project in Strathcona.
- Through the Housing Vancouver Strategy (2017) implementation, the City is working with BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health, non-profit partners and CMHC to identify opportunities for coordinated government support for new housing and health-related developments to advance the DTES housing plan principles.



Olivia Skye - 41 East Hastings, a mix of social housing and market rental



Local Economy

PRIORITIES

The economic goal is for the DTES to create a competitive, resilient and sustainable economy that maintains a high quality of life for all.

Most importantly, all residents need to make a living to afford to meet their basic needs and create a better life for themselves, their children and their community.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Policies

- The DTES Community Economic Development Strategy (2016) involves dozens of community organizations co-implementing actions to improve economic inclusion and empowerment. The Community Benefits Agreement Policy (2018) requires that new development projects over 45,000 m² (484,375 sq. ft.) hire a minimum of 10 per cent of their labour from inner-city and equity-seeking neighbourhoods and source 10 per cent of materials and services from local businesses and social enterprises.
- Retail and Small Business Retention Research - the City has invested in a range of research looking into policy responses in other cities to retain independent small businesses. This included research in 2017 into legacy businesses which examined similar issues in San Francisco. Research is underway in 2019 to examine citywide retail trends in Vancouver.

Partnerships and programming groups include:

Exchange Inner City, DTES Locals Card, Social Innovation Hubs, EMBERS Eastside Works, 312 Main Centre for Social and Economic Innovation, Community Impact Real Estate Society (CIRES), Binners' Project, DTES Market, and DTES Women's Market.

Transportation

PRIORITIES

Implementation of the DTES Plan continues to promote walking, cycling and transit; make efficient use of the road network; and support the local economy. This will make it easier, safer and more comfortable for people of all ages and abilities to get around the community, city, and region.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Planning and Studies:

- Gastown Complete Streets planning is underway to explore the possibility of a pedestrian priority district, enhanced cycling and transit connections, public space improvements, and heritage assessment work.
- The Mobility Advocacy Plan was completed with the Strathcona Business Improvement Association.

Transit:

- Bus priority lane times were extended on Hastings Street to increase bus reliability for the 95 B-Line, and Routes 3, 8, 14, 16, 20.

Walking and Cycling:

- Improvements were made in Maple Tree Square and along the Alexander Street Bikeway to create better cycling connections between Strathcona and Gastown.
- New protected bike lanes were created, such as on Beatty and Cambie streets.
- Additional public bike share stations were added to the Downtown Eastside.
- Improved the Adanac Bikeway with additional corner bulges and traffic calming for pedestrian safety and comfort.
- New pedestrian signals at three locations on Jackson and Hawks Avenues with two additional locations in progress on Powell Street.
- Installed LED lighting, countdown timers and added pedestrian crossing time at signals at various locations within the DTES.
- Worked with Admiral Seymour Elementary to improve walking and cycling infrastructure.





Arts and Culture

PRIORITIES

The DTES is home to a significant number of artists in Vancouver and a plethora of arts and culture non-profit organizations and businesses.

The DTES also hosts a number of arts and culture events and festivals throughout the year including Aboriginal Day celebrations, the Powell Street Festival, the Vancouver Chinatown Spring Festival and Parade and the Heart of the City Festival

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Since 2014, the City has supported 30+ DTES cultural capital planning and infrastructure projects with over \$1.2 million in matching funds for projects such as: the Chinatown Storytelling Centre, Vancouver Japanese Language School, and Hogan's Alley planning, etc.
- Erica Stocking's public artwork *All My Favorite People Are Animals* was inaugurated in 2017 at the new néc'amat ct Strathcona Branch Library. Several temporary murals were created in the community, including Shadae Johnson and Larissa Healy's *Bringing Light to Darkness* near Army and Navy, and *Healing Quilt* by Jerry Whitehead, Sharifah Marsden, and Corey Larocque at 20 West Hastings.

- In 2018, City Council approved operating and annual assistance cultural grants to 36 DTES-based organizations totalling \$830,500, and in 2019, the City supported 56 organizations in the DTES with \$1,134,750.
- In anticipation of the new Creative City Strategy, 16 DTES projects were supported in 2018 by a one-time citywide grant program that aligned with key themes of reconciliation, equity and access, investment and visibility, capacity and collaboration.
- In the summer of 2018, the Chinatown Transformation Team (CTT) was formed to support community actions that help achieve the vision of a vibrant Chinatown with a thriving economy, reinvigorated culture and heritage, and to explore the possibility of UNESCO World Heritage status for Chinatown. The CTT's work is rooted in Chinatown's history and identity, and focuses on tangible culture (such as buildings) and intangible culture (such as festivals, food).



Snapshots of History by Arthur Cheng



All My Favourite People are Animals by Erica Stocking



Heritage

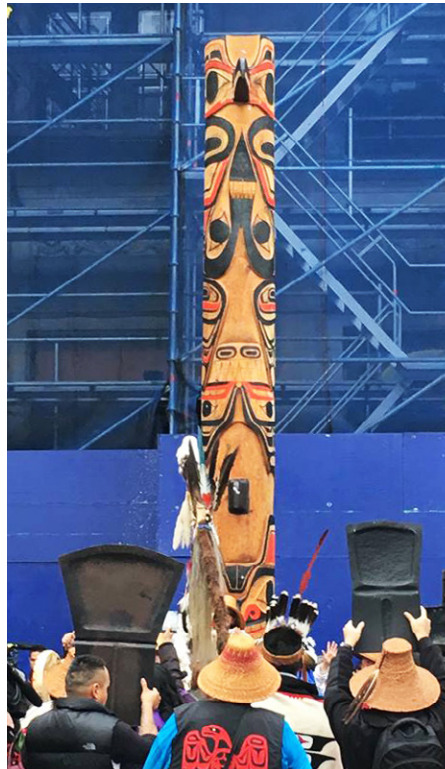
PRIORITIES

The DTES Plan's focus is to support community-based initiatives that conserve and sustain heritage assets to enhance social, economic and human development. Central to this approach is addressing the colonial roots of Vancouver through reconciliation efforts with communities who experienced historical discrimination, including the Indigenous, Japanese Canadian, Black Canadian and Chinese Canadian communities.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Chinatown: Two buildings were awarded heritage façade grants to upgrade exteriors; 33 Chinese Society Buildings Matching Grants were provided for Society building improvements; amendments to zoning policies were approved to better protect Chinatown's heritage and character.
- Hogan's Alley: Housing and placemaking projects are underway to acknowledge and redress the discrimination against the Black Canadian community who lived between Union and Prior Streets and Main Street.
- Pigeon Park: the 27-foot Survivors' Totem Pole was raised.
- Historic Powell Street Area: several DTES Capital Grants were approved to upgrade the Vancouver Japanese Buddhist Temple and Vancouver Japanese Language School and Hall.

- The Heritage Action Plan is reviewing the policies and tools used to conserve and celebrate heritage resources.
- In March 2019, Council approved three grant programs to support heritage conservation which can include buildings in the DTES: Heritage Incentive Program, Heritage Façade Rehabilitation Program, and the Heritage House Conservation Program.



Survivor's Pole in Victory Square

Parks and Open Space

PRIORITIES

As the DTES grows and evolves over the next 30 years, maintaining, improving and expanding our parks and open spaces, as well as ensuring they are easily accessible to everyone, will become increasingly important.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Survivors' Totem Pole in Pigeon Park allows newcomers to reflect on the beauty and poignancy of survival in both the Indigenous and local DTES communities. The initiative was endorsed by the Urban Aboriginal Advisory Committee with the leadership of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. It meets the objectives of Park Board's Reconciliation Strategies. It was installed in coordination with the Heart of the City Festival in 2016.
- The Vancouver Park Board is developing Vancouver's Playbook, the Master Plan for the city's parks.
- Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley will undergo a redesign.
- Neighbourhood bulletin boards were installed at Strathcona Community Centre, McLean Park, Oppenheimer Park, Victory Square, and in Chinatown.
- Trillium Park revitalization and playground resurfacing included: a new interpretive sign through collaboration with EarthHand Gleaners Society, improved park maintenance and grass surface, and a new playground surface.
- An initiative to double the number of street trees by 2030 will include trees for areas in the DTES that are hard to plant.



Built Form

PRIORITIES

The DTES Plan sets out policies to guide the form of development of buildings in the Downtown Eastside, and ensure they reflect the distinct character and role of each neighbourhood.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Neighbourhood Fit Tool (NFT) (2016) is designed to help new development and businesses fit better into the neighbourhood. Based on residents’ feedback during the development of the Plan, the NFT applies to the “Community-Based Development Area”, which has the highest concentration of low-income assets.
- Zoning amendments to the Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District Official Development Plan provide options for projects on certain sites that deliver affordable housing in conjunction with DEOD priority uses: community health and well-being, local economic development, and social housing.
- The Rezoning Policy for Chinatown South (HA-1A) was revoked to address community concerns and about the changing character of pace of development in the area.
- Amendments were made to Chinatown District Schedules, Design Guidelines and Policies (2018) and the HA-1 and HA-1A District Schedules and Design Guidelines to enable developments that help conserve the special qualities of Chinatown.

Placemaking

PRIORITIES

Placemaking is the term used to describe the process and philosophy of creating interesting, welcoming and engaging public spaces, like parks, plazas, streets and lanes.

The DTES is an area of diverse neighbourhoods and communities, each with its own unique character and places with special meaning to the community. The DTES Plan provides the directions for key placemaking opportunities throughout the neighbourhoods.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Staff are studying local-serving small business and the effects of development change on their operations.
- Gastown Complete Streets project is focusing on the role of Water Street as a place and opportunities for pedestrian spaces.
- Blood Alley Square redesign involves opportunities for community stewardship, diverse programming and a solid waste management strategy.
- The Dragon Lights in Chinatown have been refurbished with contributions from local businesses and City capital funds.



Climate Change

PRIORITIES

Current emissions levels in the DTES could be reduced despite population increases.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- All new buildings will be compliant with the Zero Emissions Building Plan to ensure they are energy efficient with low emissions and energy costs.

Utilities and Services

PRIORITIES

Priorities for utilities and services include: improving access to drinking water by creating opportunities for water filling stations, expansion of a dedicated Fire Protection System, drinking water conservation, access to public washrooms, and future sewer upgrades.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- The City is working on an Integrated Storm Water Management Plan.
- Hawks Street and Hornby Street includes 28 metres of combined sewers separated to protect the environment and 86 metres of storm mains replaced to reduce flooding.
- Pender, Carrall and Gore water mains were upgraded.
- Powell Street Overpass project includes 793 metres of storm mains replaced/installed.



DTES Capital Grants

WHAT IS THIS FUND?

The Planning Department operates a unique dedicated neighbourhood grant fund which supports projects that help implement the DTES Plan. The aim is to encourage partnerships with grant recipients sourcing at least 50 per cent of their funding from other organisations or through their own work.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Registered non-profit societies, business improvement associations, community service co-ops, charities registered with Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), social enterprises wholly owned by a non-profit society, and faith-based organizations.

PREVIOUS GRANT PROJECT EXAMPLES:

- New planters for Sole Food Farms
- Space renovations for Co-Op Radio
- East Van Roasters renovated space and equipment
- Atira Enterprising Women Making Art space improvements
- Raven Spirit Dance Society office improvements
- Strathcona BIA-Hastings Urban Tree project
- New equipment for Mission Possible
- DTES Women’s Street Market



East Van Roasters space and equipment



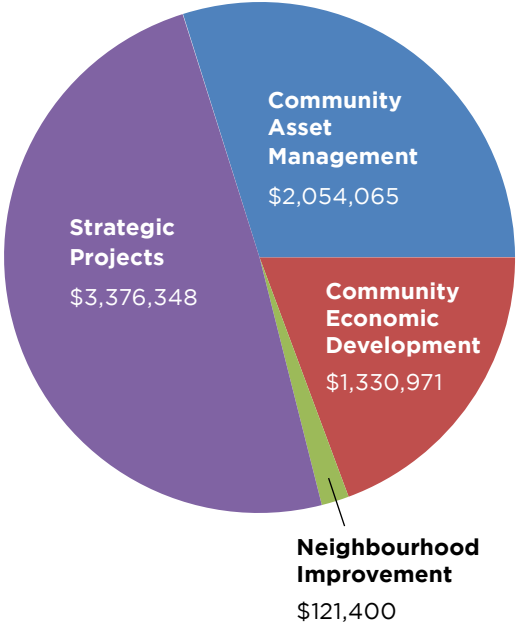
Renovated space for Co-op Radio



New planters for Sole Food Farms

5-YEAR DTES GRANT DISTRIBUTION

TOTAL AMOUNT:
\$6,882,784



CONTACT US:
Tell us how we can work together to achieve better outcomes.
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