

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE PLAN

Community Newsletter #4: January 2016



Welcome

to the fourth edition of the community update for the Downtown Eastside (DTES) Plan. These newsletters will keep you informed about the progress on implementing the plan, upcoming events, and other important information. Since the plan was approved, we have been moving forward on implementing many quick start and short-term projects:



Improved Well-being for All

2015 Gender Forum

This past year the Mayor's Task Force on Mental Health and Addictions held an in-depth community dialogue to share knowledge and experiences. The 2015 Gender Forum was held to examine and respond to issues related to mental health and addictions through an inclusive and multilateral gender lens.

2015 Peer Workforce Development Forum

Together with Vancouver Coastal Health, the 2015 Peer Workforce Development Forum was held to share knowledge and support the development of a peer workforce for transformative health and social outcomes.

Healthy Homes for All

SRA By-law Amendments

The long-term goal of the Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Strategy is to replace the SRO stock with self-contained social housing. In the short-term, the strategy calls for improvements to the condition of rooms while maintaining affordability and ensuring tenants have adequate access to supports.

In July 2015, Council approved SRA By-law amendments to increase amount of Council can require for a conversion or demolition permit from \$15,000 to \$125,000 per room. Building owners are also required have a SRA Permit for any work that requires tenants to be relocated.

For more information, visit vancouver.ca/srabylaw

Council also approved an \$180,000 grant to the Mah Society of Canada to assist with the renovation of 36 SRA-designated rooms at the Asia Hotel in Chinatown.



Vibrant & Inclusive Local Economy

Community Economic Development Strategy

We are working to finalise the Community Economic Development (CED) strategy. In this final phase, we will be seeking input from groups with specific areas of knowledge relevant to the DTES Plan, CED strategy goals, and representatives from the neighbourhoods served by them.

For more information, visit vancouver.ca/ced-strategy



“Lots of balance for mixed-retail and industrial businesses; opportunities for small businesses; green zone initiative – to be the greenest business district; partnering with social services; balance in housing; more green spaces; preservation of artistic community and heritage; use economic opportunities for people to develop as people and a community.”

— Local Area Planning Process committee (member vision statement)

Downtown Eastside Capital Grants Program

In addition to the \$955,814 in grants approved in 2014, \$460,422 was approved in 2015 for community economic development. Several of the capital grant projects have been funded and completed since our last community update, including:

Ecotrust Canada: Knack

Funding provided to Ecotrust Canada enabled Knack, an inclusive employment initiative by Potluck Café Society. Knack is a hiring strategy to achieve community impact by acknowledging the diverse range of skills and knowledge DTES residents and provides a path to meaningful work through skills-based training. The initiative also received City Innovation Funding.

East Van Roaster: new equipment and relocation

East Van Roaster received funding to purchase a winnowing machine and other equipment to increase the amount of chocolate they produce, and create more local jobs. The funds also enabled the production portion of the business to relocate to a larger space to accommodate the increase in business and staff.

Mission Possible Society: Aerial Work Platform

Grant funding to Mission Possible allowed them to buy an aerial work platform, eliminating the costs of renting one. This enables them to operate more efficiently, build their customer base and train more staff.



Street Market Relocation

To support low-income residents with safe vending spaces to generate an income, the City has purchased 501 Powell Street for a Community Economic Development Platform and future social housing. It will be home to the Sunday Street Market and an urban farm (run by the Portland Hotel Society). The site is currently being prepared, and another safe vending site at 62 East Hastings was also upgraded to welcome more vendors. The Sunday Market at Pigeon Park is expected to close operations and fully operate at the CED Platform as soon as the site preparation work is complete.

Improved Transportation

Street Improvements

Along with street improvement policies in the Transportation 2040 Plan, planning for Water Street and Maple Tree Square will begin later this year. Traffic data will be collected in early 2016 for select areas in Gastown and the Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District.



As part of the 5-year Cycling Network Plan, enhancements to Alexander Street are being planned to make the route more comfortable for walking and cycling. We will be seeking community input next year.

In December 2015, a pedestrian signal was installed at Jackson and Powell Streets to improve pedestrian access and safety. A study of the pedestrian crossing at Frances Street and Clark Drive has been completed, and this location may be considered for a pedestrian signal in the future.



Pender Street Water Main Upgrades

Some of water mains in the DTES are over 100 years old. Critical infrastructure upgrades are currently underway along Pender Street to ensure reliable and high quality water continues to serve the neighbourhood. Work has been mostly completed from Carrall Street to Gore Avenue,



with intersection improvements proposed at Columbia Street. Water main replacement on the remaining blocks from Carrall to Seymour Streets will continue in 2016, and we anticipate work on Pender Street will be finished in the summer.

Arts & Culture Opportunities

Arts & Culture Grants

Over the past two years, we have been working with a multi-disciplinary advisory committee to better meet the needs of organisations. In June 2015, City

Council approved Community Arts grants to 14 DTES non-profits to produce a variety of special events and community-engaged, artist-led projects that celebrate and promote diverse, vibrant and creative communities.

In November 2015, Council approved 12 DTES cultural groups for the 2016 Annual Assistance grant program, which better supports groups between start-up and maturity. Of these, eight also received a grant to assist with operational infrastructure. Three DTES organisations were approved for the Operating Biennial grant stream in 2016, a pilot program that enables organisations highly ranked in all areas of performance to by-pass the application and review process for one year.

Celebrate Heritage

Heritage Action Plan Update

We have been working with consultants and stakeholders on the Heritage Conservation Program Review, and Heritage Register Upgrade. The Program encourages and fosters the retention and conservation of historic places, while supporting sustainable development. The Heritage Register Upgrade seeks to build on and strengthen the existing Register while identifying highest priority

places, a Historic Context Statement and historic themes to shape development of the city.

We will be seeking public input in the coming months. To learn more visit vancouver.ca/heritage-action-plan

2016 Chinese Society Buildings Matching Grants

In December 2015, following an update on the progress of the first and second round of matching grants, Council approved \$400,000 towards a third round, with priority consideration for eligible first-time applicants followed by societies that have previously received only one grant. Applications will be accepted from January 29 until the February 19, 2016 deadline.

For more information, visit vancouver.ca/chinatown



Chinese Society Legacy Program

Council also approved a new building rehabilitation program to protect and conserve the 12 society heritage buildings



in Chinatown, and committed \$3.6 million towards the total program budget of \$36 million. The City Manager will work with the Chinatown Society Heritage Buildings Association to explore strategic partnerships and funding opportunities, and will report back on the program funding strategy in March 2016.

Parks & Open Space

Neighbourhood Bulletin Boards

Street amenities contribute to vibrant, attractive streetscapes and public spaces and encourage walking, cycling, and social connection. Public realm improvements are being explored with the Business Improvement Associations and resident groups, including neighbourhood bulletin boards.

New bulletin boards are being installed at Strathcona Community Centre, McLean Park, Oppenheimer Park, Victory Square, and in Chinatown at



Keefe and Columbia Streets. These provide space for local businesses, organisations, and community members to post small notices and share news with their neighbours.

Community Place-making

Hastings Street and Kiwassa Urban Design Guidelines

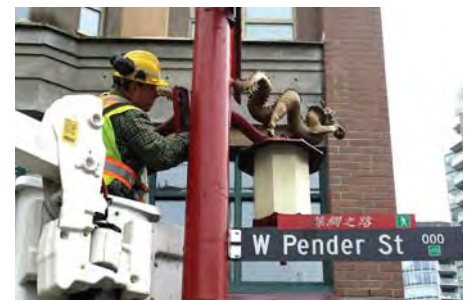
In summer 2015, we held a workshop with Strathcona residents and businesses to map and discuss opportunities for the Hastings Street and Kiwassa Urban Design Guidelines. This feedback will help us to develop and shape draft guidelines that will be brought out to the community for further comments. For more information, visit vancouver.ca/hastings-kiwassa



Dragon Light Refurbishment

In collaboration with the Vancouver Chinese Merchants Association, refurbishment of Chinatown's Dragon Lights has begun. As one of the Chinatown

revitalisation strategies, the restored fixtures will contribute to the vibrancy of the historic neighbourhood's public space. The fixtures are being repainted and fitted with new LED lamps, which are more energy efficient, easier to service, and can change colours. The refurbishment was jointly funded by the Planning and Engineering departments, and the Merchants Association.



Well-managed Built Form

Neighbourhood Fit

We have heard the concerns about the impact of development on low-income residents and the need for local-serving business. We are now testing a pilot Neighbourhood Fit evaluation tool as part of staff's review of new development applications.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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