Welcome to the sixth 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 many quick-start and short-term projects:

Access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food

The availability of healthy and affordable food has a direct impact on one's mental and physical well-being. A number of grants have been provided to support community organizations to improve the procurement and distribution of healthy food in the DTES, as well as to support the Chinese community in connecting with sustainable food choices. This includes grants to the Potluck Cafe, Strathcona Community Association, Hua Foundation, and Hastings Urban Farm.

Healthy Homes for All

Housing affordability remains a concern citywide, especially in the DTES where the median income is much lower than the rest of the city. A key priority of the DTES plan is to upgrade rooms in Single Room Occupancy hotels to self-contained social housing units, while maintaining affordability.

One way to achieve this is through grants to non-profit housing providers. For example, in 2016 Council approved a grant of $355,000 to the Community Builders Benevolent Foundation to upgrade 71 Single Room Accommodation-designated rooms at the Dodson Rooms.

Community Newsletter #6: March 2017

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and undertake renovations to accommodate their growing service delivery needs. These tenant improvements include the creation of three new offices and a workshop room. The PACE society is now able to provide more services to their community and continue to offer a safe and comfortable drop-in space at their new location. Visit vancouver.ca/dtes to learn more, and for the DTES Capital Grant application package.

**Community Economic Development Strategy**
Projects are now underway to implement the CED Strategy. Urban Core Community Workers Group and EMBERS will be assisting DTES residents at the Lux Hotel Employment and Income Generating Hub. The 312 Main Street Centre for Social and Economic Innovation will open in June 2017. On April 21-22, 2017, we will be hosting a CED Summit in partnership with SFU.

To learn more, visit: www.hopefuleconomics.ca

**Downtown Eastside Capital Grants Program**
This spring, the DTES Capital Grants Program will be accepting applications from non-profit organization to help support projects in the DTES that implement the social, economic and environmental objectives in the DTES Plan. The program partners with local non-profits and provides matching grants to upgrade or improve their facilities and equipment. The PACE society was under threat of losing their previous space and with a DTES Capital Grant, they were able to secure a new space on Hastings Street and undertake renovations to

**Street Improvements**
Upgrading streets and sidewalks helps make it more enjoyable when you walk and cycle. Recent improvements to enhance accessibility include new sidewalk ramps, audible pedestrian crossing tones, countdown timers, and adjusted crossing times along Prior/ Venable Streets.

New protected bike lanes, such as on Beatty and Cambie streets, and additional public bike share stations make it more comfortable and convenient when you cycle in and to the Downtown Eastside.

**Water Street Rehabilitation**
Transportation planning is beginning for the entire Gastown area to inform the future rehabilitation of Water Street, one of Vancouver’s earliest streets. The brick pavers, granite, cluster-globe lamps and bollards added in the 1970s Gastown beautification project have become a part of the area’s much-cherished character and need repairs. We will also be asking you later in 2017 how we can make it more comfortable to walk and cycle along Water Street, as well as enhance road safety and move goods efficiently.

**Improved Transportation**

**Arts & Culture Opportunities**
Public Art in the new néc’aʔmat ct Strathcona Branch Library
Strathcona artist Erica Stocking has been commissioned to create a public art piece for Vancouver Public Library’s newest branch. Stocking’s art piece, “All my favourite people are animals’ will highlight the library’s entrance, and is described as an “innovative and sculptural approach...considering imagery for multiple audiences”.

**Celebrate Heritage**
Chinese Society Legacy Program
In June 2016, we provided an update to Council on the overall implementation and funding strategy for the Chinese Society Legacy Program, and requested initial funding for first phase of the program.

Since then, the Chinatown Society Heritage Buildings Association (CSHBA) has hired program champions Karen Wan-Gauthier and Leslie Shieh to undertake program coordination and advocacy, including supporting the Societies participating in the first phase of the program.

JTW Consulting has been hired to complete business plans for these initial program participants. Beth Gauthier, a professional fundraiser has also been hired to explore funding opportunities and develop a fund raising plan for the program.

To learn more, visit: vancouver.ca/chinatown

**Recognizing Tangible and Intangible Aboriginal Heritage**
Research is currently underway to support community efforts to identify, conserve and celebrate tangible and intangible Aboriginal heritage, and is expected to be finished in October.

Aboriginal heritage values are also being identified through the Heritage Register upgrade consultation process. We will be bringing a report to Council in winter 2017 or spring 2018. Together with the Vancouver Park Board, we are working with the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and the wider city, and provide the traditional names for those locations.

To learn more, visit: vancouver.ca/aboriginal