

# DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE PLAN

Community Newsletter #10: December 2019

## Welcome

This is the 10th edition of the community update for the Downtown Eastside (DTES) Plan. These newsletters will keep you informed about progress on implementing the plan, recent events, and other important information. Since the DTES Plan was approved in 2014, we have been moving forward on many quick-start and short-term projects:

### DTES Plan Community Fair

#### Public Event - June 2019

The Downtown Eastside (DTES) Plan Community Fair was held at the Japanese Language School and Japanese Hall on June 20, 2019 from 10:00 am to 5:30 pm. The fair gave the City of Vancouver and the DTES community a chance to take stock of the Plan's impact to date and have conversations about priorities moving forward.



The fair included display boards outlining the progress of Plan implementation, space for DTES groups to showcase their work, themed discussion sessions, and a questionnaire that was made available online for over a month. The questionnaire sought feedback on the Plan implementation to date, funding priorities for the next five years, and how they can be achieved to help inform future grants, initiatives, and projects.



## QUICK FAIR STATS

- 208 DTES Plan Community Fair attendees
- 31 community exhibitors (non-profit groups, local artists, and vendors)
- 4 discussion sessions
- 90 discussion session attendees
- 206 completed questionnaires

## Survey Result Highlights:

- About 50% thought implementation on transportation, heritage, and arts and culture in the DTES were mostly or somewhat on-track
- Desire for more support for public art, and artist spaces, as well as support for retaining heritage buildings.
- Over 60% feel community well-being and housing should be priority focus
- Areas of concern: homelessness; addiction and mental health; safety, security and crime; sanitation and public disorder
- Over 60% ranked community economic development as the most important priority for capital grants.

See complete Fair Summary at: [vancouver.ca/dtes](http://vancouver.ca/dtes)



### DTES Jobs & Economy Snapshot

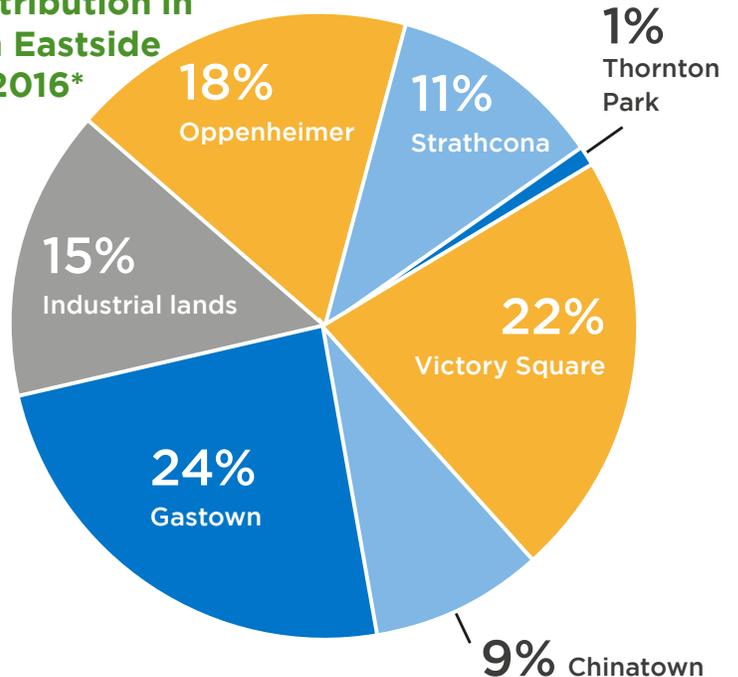
The City has compiled economic profiles of each sub-area of the DTES which provides a snapshot of the change and composition of employment in the DTES. The employment and demographic data used throughout report are based on the Canadian Census (2011, 2016). This data does not include the informal economy livelihoods, such as volunteering, binning, vending, etc. **See the complete snapshot at: [vancouver.ca/dtes](http://vancouver.ca/dtes).**

The DTES comprises seven distinct sub areas: Chinatown, Gastown, Oppenheimer District, Victory Square, Strathcona, Thornton Park and Industrial lands. Of the seven DTES sub-areas, Gastown and Victory Square had the largest workforce with 5,035 and 4,680 jobs respectively, and also the highest job densities. These two sub-areas comprise the western portion of the DTES. These areas have a significant stock of heritage buildings with a large amount of commercial space, primarily office, retail, and restaurant space.



The Chinatown and Strathcona sub-areas had the smallest workforce of 1,955 and 2,300. Chinatown had a similar job density to the Oppenheimer District and the Industrial lands; however, Strathcona had the lowest job density 26 jobs per hectare. The lower jobs density in Strathcona was largely due to the significant proportion of lower density housing, such as one- and two-family dwellings, and townhouses.

### Workforce Distribution in the Downtown Eastside by Sub-Area, 2016\*



\*Does not include jobs with 'no fixed workplace address'.

Source: Statistics Canada. 2018. Special tabulation, based on Census of Canada 2016.



There are 20 employment sectors in Vancouver, as defined by Statistics Canada using the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS).

In the DTES, the largest sectors were: professional, scientific and technical services; accommodation and food services; health care and social assistance; and retail. Together, these four sectors accounted for 10,855 jobs or 51% of all jobs in the DTES. These same sectors were also the largest employment sectors in the city.

Employment in the DTES's accommodation and food services sector increased 38% between 2011 to 2016, amounting to an additional 785 workers. The largest increases were in the Victory Square, Industrial lands, and Gastown sub-areas.

Professional, scientific and technical services sector experienced the largest increase in job numbers over this period, with an additional 795 jobs added to the workforce (29% increase in employment). The largest increases in job numbers for this sector were in the Gastown and Victory Square sub-areas.

## DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

**TOTAL NUMBER OF JOBS<sup>5</sup>**  
**21,105**

up 5.3% from 2011 to 2016

**JOBS PER HECTARE**  
**105**

compared to 33 city-wide

**MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME**  
**\$23,359**

compared to \$65,423 city-wide

**UNEMPLOYMENT RATE**  
**9.2%**

down from 12.6% in 2011

JOBS BY EMPLOYMENT SECTOR <sup>5</sup>	2011	2016	# Change	0	1,000	2,000	3,000	4,000
Professional, scientific, technical	2,720	3,515	+795					
Accommodation and food services	2,085	2,870	+785					
Health care and social assistance	2,015	2,455	+440					
Retail trade	1,600	2,015	+415					
Information and cultural industries	1,555	1,965	+410					
Other services (except public administration)	1,375	1,195	-180					
Public administration	1,860	1,165	-695					
Manufacturing	1,195	1,105	-90					
Educational services	1,010	900	-110					
Transportation and warehousing	670	770	+100					
Administrative support, waste management	970	645	-325					
Wholesale trade	800	635	-165					
Arts, entertainment and recreation	385	505	+120					
Real estate, rental and leasing	460	475	+15					
Finance and insurance	755	415	-340					
Construction	400	310	-90					
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	60	100	+40					
Management of companies and enterprises	15	35	+20					
Mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction	70	30	-40					
Utilities	40	0	-40					

EMPLOYMENT	2011	2016	% Change
Employed	6,000	7,410	+24%
Unemployed	865	755	-13%
Unemployment rate	12.6%	9.2%	--
Participation rate	55.3%	57.2%	--

WORK ACTIVITY	2011	2016	% Change
Full-time	16,020	16,795	+5%
Part-time	3,385	3,560	+5%



**Other Engagement Activities**

In addition to the broad engagement undertaken at the DTES Plan Community Fair and through the online survey, City staff have met with and will continue to meet with several groups and organizations in the community to have in-depth discussions on Plan implementation progress and priorities. These include Chinese seniors, Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre, the various Business Improvement Associations, and members of the former Local Area Plan Process Committee, and more. So far, what we’re hearing as priority issues include, but are not limited to:

- Women’s safety, particularly Indigenous women;
- Lack of an Indigenous or reconciliation framework in the DTES;
- Critical need for day to day public amenities and infrastructure, such as, washrooms, drinking fountains, Wifi, and more;
- More shelter rate housing;
- Affordable space for local businesses and non-profits;
- Violence and safety in the community and impact on businesses and workers in the DTES; and
- Street disorder and cleanliness.

**Regent and Balmoral**

Vancouver City Council voted to approve the expropriation of the Balmoral and Regent Hotels in the DTES on November 6, 2019. This extraordinary measure is being taken to bring the buildings into public ownership and create new low-income housing.

Due to decades of under investment in the buildings which resulted in structural and life-safety concerns, both buildings were closed and more than 300 of the city’s lowest income residents relocated to safer housing, in partnership with BC Housing.

Staff are in active discussions with the Provincial government, and will continue to seek partnerships with all levels of government for the renovation and/or redevelopment, as well as operations, of the two buildings. The City’s intention is to engage with partners and the community in discussions related to the future of the two buildings.

The Downtown Eastside Plan calls for increased affordable housing options, including prioritizing the delivery of shelter rate homes. Since the start of 2019, more than 230 shelter rate units have opened or are currently under

construction in the Downtown Eastside, with another 155 shelter rate units approved for development in the area. This includes temporary modular housing in the neighbourhood.

**See full staff report :** <https://council.vancouver.ca/20191106/documents/cfsc2.pdf>



**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
**Phone 3-1-1,**  
**[vancouver.ca/dtes](http://vancouver.ca/dtes)**  
**[dtesplan@vancouver.ca](mailto:dtesplan@vancouver.ca)**