Great Beginnings: Old Streets, New Pride

June 2009 Project Progress Report
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For more information about the Great Beginnings Program, please visit the following link:
http://vancouver.ca/greatbeginnings/ or contact Sandra Nikolic, Project Coordinator, DTES Intergovernmental Initiative at 604.873.7262
A. The Great Beginnings Program - Introduction

The Great Beginnings Program is an initiative developed by the City of Vancouver to celebrate British Columbia’s 150th anniversary. The provincial government is supporting this initiative by investing $10 million over three years to celebrate the history, heritage, and culture of Vancouver’s first urban areas, including the neighbourhoods of Gastown, Chinatown, Japantown, and Strathcona. The provincial investment will be used to attract other supporters over the next three years, with the aim of creating a genuine legacy of improved physical, social, and economic conditions, as well as seeding future opportunities.

The program aims to restore the founding neighbourhoods’ original public appeal by creating attractive and welcoming physical environments through improvements to streets, buildings, and public spaces. It also establishes a foundation for improvements to the social environment through facilitating arts and cultural activities, celebrations, and street festivals for residents and visitors alike. The benefits of the initiative are direct, immediate, and visible. Project activities focus on practical and tangible actions that build community capacity through enhanced employment opportunities for local residents, artists, trades people, and others. The project fosters community cohesion, participation, and interaction between residents, businesses, and visitors to this area of the City.

The scope of the Great Beginnings Program springs from additional social support enhancements recently introduced by the Provincial government, including the development of 1,200 social housing units and improvements to mental health and addiction services throughout Vancouver. The Great Beginnings Program is coordinated with activities being undertaken through the City of Vancouver’s Inner-City Inclusivity Commitments for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, and the Vancouver Agreement.

17 projects were approved in 2008. 10 are complete and 7 are in progress. An additional 10 projects were approved in 2009.

The following report outlines all 27 Great Beginnings projects’ progress and accomplishments. Specifically, this report outlines:

- Completed Projects (June 2008 - June 2009)
- Projects in Progress (approved in 2008)
- New Projects (approved in 2009)
B. Completed Projects (June 2008 – June 2009)

Downtown Eastside Historic Neighbourhoods Map Guide Project

**Purpose**

*To increase the public accessibility and profile of historic DTES neighbourhoods (Japantown, Carrall Street Greenway, Chinatown, and Strathcona), and to prepare user-friendly map guides using research on heritage buildings and places to tell a story about the neighbourhood’s history.*

**Summary of Activities**

City of Vancouver staff members helped the Vancouver Heritage Foundation identify buildings and places of historical significance for inclusion in historic neighbourhood maps. Community group partners, including the Japantown Oppenheimer Commemoration Task Force and the Chinatown Society Heritage Building Association were consulted for map creation. Draft maps were presented to these groups for feedback in early 2009, and final revisions were subsequently completed.

**Status and Outputs**

Map guides have been produced for Japantown, Carrall Street Greenway, Chinatown (with a focus on Society Buildings) and Strathcona (with a focus on historic markets). Hard copies are available from the Vancouver Heritage Foundation, several locations in the community, and downloadable PDF versions can be found on the City of Vancouver public web site (*http://vancouver.ca/greatbeginnings/dtesHistoric.htm*). These map guides will help the public learn about the built heritage in the DTES, while highlighting special neighbourhood places and features.

Total number of heritage maps by Vancouver Heritage Foundation and the City Planning Department distributed is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization / Location</th>
<th>Carrall Street</th>
<th>Chinatown</th>
<th>Japantown</th>
<th>Strathcona</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate Foundation</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathcona BIA</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. community members and staff</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japantown Commemoration Task Force</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japantown Multicultural neighbourhood Celebration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese Language School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourism Vancouver</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Public Library</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VHF Pre-tour Lecture Event (5.26.2009)</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Erickson Foundation</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL Maps Distributed</strong></td>
<td><strong>450</strong></td>
<td><strong>450</strong></td>
<td><strong>820</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This map has been printed and is ready for distribution.
Outcomes
Creating links with, and extending walking routes and encouraging their use for work and leisure strengthen ties between DTES neighbourhoods and residents with area visitors and shoppers. Positive street activities will bring along a sense of safety, community pride and prosperity. Encouraging an increase in visitors to the DTES will contribute to a foundation for building employment opportunities and enhancing economic development.

Completion Date
February 2009. Strathcona map has been printed and is ready for distribution.

29 West Hastings Street Façade Renovation

Purpose
To revitalize and return active use to the ground floor of the building located at 29 West Hastings Street, with a longer-term objective of renovating the entire building.

Summary of Activities
The UBC School of Architecture worked with the Central City Foundation (property owner) and the Vancouver Women’s Health Collective (future tenant) on improvements to 29 West Hastings, a single room occupancy hotel, that will bring back an active use to the ground floor. The project has received grants for the proposed ‘daylighting’ (bringing in natural light) of the storefront. The project also will seek to make improvements to the entire building façade.

Status and Outputs
A development permit was approved by the City of Vancouver and construction began in the summer of 2008. Interior renovations were completed in December 2008 and façade work was completed in April 2008. Features of the façade work include: maximization of natural lighting via opening up the upper portion of the façade and using light reflecting fins and mirrors to direct light into the space, coating daylight...
reflecting fins and mirrors with florescent paint to illuminate the façade in the evening, and using recycled materials throughout the façade renovation project.

Lu's Pharmacy, a walk-in clinic and small scale pharmacy, is anticipated to open its doors in June of 2009 on the ground level.

Outcomes
In addition to improving the physical appearance of the street, the building façade improvement provides an active ground floor use on Hastings Street, which increases positive activity on the street and contributes to the liveability of the neighbourhood. The façade improvement and occupancy of a new ground floor tenant acts as a trigger for further investment and regeneration into the neighbourhood beyond this preliminary initiative.

The success of this pilot project has laid the groundwork for the Hastings Street Renaissance project (see page 28 of this report), which will spur additional physical upgrades through renovation projects and help secure tenants for vacant storefronts along four blocks of Hastings (between Cambie and Main).

Completion Date
Interior renovations were completed in December 2008 and façade improvements were completed in April 2009. The target date for the opening of Lu’s Pharmacy is June 2009.
Firehall Arts Theatre Mosaic

Purpose
To engage artists and residents of the Downtown Eastside in the design, creation, and installation of a public art pebble mosaic in front of the Firehall Arts Centre; to provide design and installation mentorships/associate artist placements with lead artist; and to visually improve the streetscape immediately in front of the Firehall Arts Centre.

Summary of Activities
Prior to receipt of funds from the Great Beginnings program, the design and creation of the majority of the art work had been completed with the financial support from the City of Vancouver Community Art Program, the Vancouver Parks Neighbourhood Matching Program, the Hamber Foundation and the Firehall Theatre Society/Firehall Arts Centre itself. This work was done through community workshops held around the neighbourhood; including Oppenheimer Park, the Firehall Courtyard, and at the artist’s studio on East Hastings Street. Countless numbers of volunteer hours were donated by residents, the Britannia Community Centre youth group, a group from the Aboriginal friendship centre, and audience members attending the 2006 BC Buds Spring Arts Fair. Five individuals from the community were paid as part of the design team and as facilitators in the community workshops.

Status and Outputs
The bulk of the work was completed in 2006 and 2007. Unfortunately, the installation was delayed due to the need of additional funds. As a result installation did not commence until September 2008. At this time, the difficulty and expense of removing the 12 inch uneven cement in the area in which the mosaic was to be installed was discovered. Removal was completed by late September, and installation commenced upon receiving additional required funds from the Great Beginnings Program.

The mosaic is installed and the artist is working on necessary finishing work. Once the finishing work is complete, a sealant coat will be applied over the mosaic to ensure its safety and longevity. The artist has indicated this work will be done by the end of June/early July 2009.

Outcomes
The completion of the mosaic has improved the appearance and safety of the area between the sidewalk and the heritage Firehall building itself, has added a community-based artwork project to the neighbourhood and has demonstrated the City’s ongoing pride in and commitment to public places, to the value of community art participation as a capacity building and life-enhancing experience, and to the community of the Downtown Eastside.
There has been positive feedback from pedestrians, who constantly stop to observe and discuss the mosaic. The mosaic is located at an historic corner in the DTES (corner of Gore and Cordova Street). The Vancouver Trolley uses this location to drop off tourists on the hour during the day, which means that visitors have access to the art piece.

**Completion Date**
While the work is now 99 per cent complete, the artist has indicated the final finishing details for the mosaic will be completed by late June/early July 2009.

**Pennsylvania Hotel Façade and Neon Lighting Program**

**Purpose**
To bring new life to the intersection of Hastings and Carrall Streets and to provide additional night-time lighting to the neighbourhood.

**Summary of Activities**
The Pennsylvania Hotel, a single room occupancy (SRO) hotel, underwent a heritage building rehabilitation and conversion while retaining its SRO status in 2008. Installation of an historic neon sign on the hotel completed the heritage restoration.

Through a coordinated effort with the sign provider, and an application for the necessary City permits for installation, the owner and developer of the hotel, the Portland Hotel Community Services Society (PHS), installed a neon sign that effectively showcases the newly renovated Pennsylvania Hotel.

The City of Vancouver Housing Centre co-funded the project with the Great Beginnings Program, and PHS Community Services managed the sign installation.

**Status and Outputs**
The building façade upgrades are complete and a 3-storey replica of the historic neon sign that was originally located at the Pennsylvania Hotel has been erected. There is a noticeable improvement to the physical appearance of the building and intersection.

**Outcomes**
The neon sign will become a landmark in the DTES - media has been quoted as praising the new look of the building and intersection. Animating streetscapes and public spaces creates a sense of self and identity in a neighbourhood, and re-establishes a sense of community pride and self-esteem for local residents and business owners.
Further adding to neighbourhood revitalization, the sign is displayed opposite Pigeon Park, which will also experience revitalization efforts in 2009.

**Completion Date**
Neon sign installation occurred in January of 2009.

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**The Windows Project**

**Purpose**
*To temporarily decorate and animate four windows in the DTES, highlighting community members’ stories of winter traditions and / or celebrations from the diverse cultures of area residents.*

**Summary of Activities**
Six University of British Columbia (UBC) theatre design students were chosen to decorate four selected windows in the DTES as a graduation project. The students attended workshops and community meetings to prepare for interaction with community participants and to engage with, gather ideas from, and to present design concepts and drawings to local community members. All installations were temporary.

Project participants included:
- UBC theatre design instructors and students
- The Mavor Moore Theatre Society
- Carnegie Community Centre
- The Aboriginal Front Door
- The Strathcona Business Improvement Association
- The Listening Post
- 319 Cinema
- The Heart of the City Festival

**Status and Outputs**
Window decorations were displayed with full documentation of the process. Three of the four planned window displays were installed and taken down. The fourth permanent display was never completed because the UBC student responsible for completing the project became ill and had to return to his home country.

**Outcomes**
Animating streetscapes and public spaces creates a sense of self and identity in a neighbourhood, and invites people to gather and connect with one another in meaningful ways. It also re-establishes a sense of community pride for local residents and business owners.

**Completion Date**
The art installations were completed on 15 December 2008 and dismantled in January 2009.
**Anti-Graffiti Project - BC Hydro Pad Mounted Transformer (PMT) Beautification Pilot Project**

**Purpose**
*To beautify PMTs by engaging youth from local communities to create artwork that promotes environmental sustainability.*

**Summary of Activities**
A local community artist joined the BC Hydro Outreach Team to do interactive presentations with young people at the Strathcona, Roundhouse, and Trout Lake Community Centres to discuss the topic of energy and community members’ environmental responsibilities. The artist then led groups through the creation of ‘mini-murals’ that could be adapted and replicated by an artist and painted onto a PMT.

Six community workshops took place over two weeks, with **233 children** participating in discussions and drawings. Twenty-four ‘mini-murals’ were developed and passed along to local artists who adapted them for appropriateness, while retaining the integrity of the children’s art and message. Ten PMTs within a short distance to participating Community Centres were identified as suitable canvases.

**Status and Outputs**
Painting on all ten PMTs has been completed, and participating community centres have each received a $2,000 donation from BC Hydro for their participation.

**Outcomes**
The community has been very responsive to this project, with many people wanting to see more of these often graffiti-ridden and unsightly boxes turned into public art displays.

Encouraging local children to participate in community-based art displays instils a sense of community pride and can boost self-confidence.

Children also benefit from attending sustainability workshops and sharing their newly-discovered knowledge with the community.

**Completion Date**
The project was completed in the spring of 2009.
Carrall Street Public Forum

Purpose
To create an open forum for community members (including residents, artists, business owners, and visitors) of the Gastown / DTES neighbourhood where Carrall Street’s history, current successes and stresses, and future can be discussed.

Summary of Activities
The Carrall Street Public Forum was held following a one-night performance event called *Carrall Street* by Althea Thauberger, which took place on the 200 block of Carrall Street on 30 September 2008. *Carrall Street* presented the street as a stage, or zone of illumination, where the roles of performer and spectator blurred. The interweaving of organized performers, passers-by and audience members allowed for unforeseen interactions to take place and revealed something of the street’s history, its current issues, as well as its future. *Carrall Street* was planned in collaboration with local performers, and community members.

ARTSPEAK (the organizer) produced newspaper and electronic event advertisements to publicise the public forum across the community and to ensure wide-spread knowledge of the event.

Status and Outputs
The Carrall Street Public Forum, held on 2 October 2008, provided an opportunity for community engagement and critical discussion around the social, political, and artistic questions raised by the performance street event, *Carrall Street*.

Outcomes
Community members and local artists and performers were the direct beneficiaries of the forum through learning about the neighbourhood’s history, and being provided with an opportunity to discuss current issues faced by the neighbourhood and community concerns regarding the changes and transformation the area is facing.

Completion Date
2 October 2008.

Homeground Festival - 2009

Purpose
To facilitate a creative, mutually supportive event for homeless and under housed DTES residents during the period of the 2010 Olympics by providing a refuge and a comfort zone where participants can receive sustenance and be entertained and/or take part in community-based art and music activities.
Summary of Activities
The 2009 Homeground Festival was a three day pilot festival, in preparation for a larger festival in 2010. Carnegie Community Centre and the DTES Neighbourhood House, with associate community groups, worked together to provide the festival. Carnegie provided and oversaw the site and all equipment and the DTES Neighbourhood House oversaw the entertainment programming and food delivery.

The festival was held at Oppenheimer Park and the site consisted of two large tents with seating and several smaller tents for art work, an open-air haircutting venue, a media tent, and an information tent. People circulated from tent to tent or activity to activity throughout the park. There was an active clean-up team. There were also some services, such as physical care services (foot care, manicures and pedicures) offered in nearby community partner buildings. There was a full day-by-day agenda, with flyers containing the locations of all events distributed throughout the event. It included meal times and was posted in a number of places throughout the park.

A survey of attendees was conducted in order to ensure that the festival was meeting its target population of under housed and homeless individuals.

Status and Outputs
Project outputs included:

- 9 meal servings per day, feeding approximately 1,600 people per day for three days
- Water freely available to festival attendees
- 9 hours of continuous activities and entertainment from 11:00 am to 8:00 pm by local and visiting musicians and storytellers on each of the three festival days
- 205 festival volunteers
- Health and shelter referral for homeless individuals

Outcomes
There was some transferability of skills learned by local resident security/traffic control persons in that training allows for future similar, paid work in other settings.
Homeless and under housed local residents were offered connections to health and social services. Outreach teams connected with the homeless by finding them shelter for the night and then by continuing to work with them over the long term. These connections to treatment centres, housing, and health services remain a festival legacy that reaches beyond the duration of the festival itself.

Volunteers and community guardians acquired work experience that may help them in finding further employment.

Completion Date
The Homeground Festival occurred from February 20-22, 2009. Phase II of the project is in planning stages and will occur in February of 2010.

Japantown Multicultural Neighbourhood Celebration

Purpose
To support the diverse cultures, art, history, and people of the Japantown/Oppenheimer area, to foster community development and engagement in arts-based events and enhance local capacity building initiatives, and to establish an annual event that fosters discussion about the future of the Japantown/Oppenheimer neighbourhood.

Summary of Activities
The first annual Japantown Multicultural Neighbourhood Celebration was held at Oppenheimer Park and surrounding facilities. This festival was organized by the Vancouver Japanese Language School and Japanese Hall, Tonari Gumi, and Vancouver Moving Theatre, in partnership with several other DTES community organizations. The festival program included:

- a parade to launch the event,
- walking tours,
- story-telling,
- multicultural performances,
- historical and cultural exhibits and presentations from local and professional Japanese-Canadian, Latino, and/or Aboriginal arts groups, and
- an early evening gala performance featuring professional artists and community cultural groups.

Celebration Flyer
**Status and Outputs**
Planning for the neighbourhood celebration required workshops for Japantown / Oppenheimer-involved artists.

The Japantown Multicultural Neighbourhood Celebration was held on 28 March 2009.

**Outcomes**
The Japantown Multicultural Neighbourhood Celebration contributed to:
- support for local Japantown/Oppenheimer artists,
- collaboration among local and professional artists,
- mentoring of a young production coordinator,
- publicity for local artists and events,
- communications to the broader community about the Japantown area and its planning,
- capacity-building for local organisations to collaborate to deliver arts events, and
- the development of a program guide with historical information (adapted from the Japantown Historical and Cultural Review).

**Completion Date**
28 March 2009.

**The Heart of the City Festival**

**Purpose**
*To celebrate the history, culture, and people of the DTES, paying particular attention to honouring founding communities including the Chinese, Japanese, European, and First Nations communities as part of a two-phase, two-year community engagement capacity-building exercise.*

**Summary of Activities**
The project involved collaborative partnerships with local cultural organizations to celebrate and honour Vancouver's founding neighbourhoods (Chinatown, Gastown, Strathcona, and Japantown), and to foster community development, relationship-building, the promotion of capacity-building through the arts, to increase understanding of the history and culture of DTES neighbourhoods, and to actively engage the community and its residents in the presentation of their history and culture. A series of walking tours, outdoor visual art displays, and workshops educated participants and audience members about historical, cultural, and social issues in the DTES.

Festival events supported by the City included:
- Art and History in the Streets (walking tours, outdoor displays)
- Festival Visual Animation (creation of indoor and outdoor banners designed and created as a legacy of the 2008 Festival)
- DTES Access to Media (public service announcements and live events)
Participating organizations included:
- The Chinese Cultural Centre
- The Chinatown Merchants Association
- The Japanese Language School and Hall
- The Vancouver Aboriginal Centre
- The City of Vancouver (through the Great Beginnings Project)

Status and Outputs
Occurring from October 29 to November 9, the 2008 festival supported a diverse range of events, including First Nations canoe launches, cultural dinners and dances, celebrations of art and history, and youth education and training. Through the Great Beginnings Project, the City of Vancouver provided funding toward five major Heart of the City Festival events.

The 2008 Festival and post festival activities included:
- 1,038 community and professional artists
- 490 volunteers
- 12,454 live audience attendance
- 146,454 broadcast audience
- 100,000+ media coverage audience
- 20,000 Post festival broadcast audience

Outcomes
Showcasing the local cultures, histories, and talents of the DTES community contributes greatly in building community inclusion, acceptance, capacity-building, relationships, and pride. Community members who contribute to and participate in the festival achieve a sense of pride, ownership and enhanced self esteem from sharing the traditions of their culture and history. Affordable and often free event admission rates encouraged low-income residents to take advantage of events. Non-residents of the DTES benefited from learning about and appreciating the rich and diverse culture found in the community.

Completion Date
Phase I (August 2008 - November 2008) festival events have been completed, with a large amount of success. Phase II (2009) will consist of 5 separate events, which are currently in planning stages.
C. Projects in Progress (approved in 2008)

Blood Alley Community Greening Project

Purpose
To engage local residents, businesses, and other community members in a greening project, and to maintain pride in an important public space and foster its continued upkeep.

Summary of Activities
With the assistance of the City of Vancouver and the collaboration of local stakeholders, the Environmental Youth Alliance (EYA) are engaging in a community-based gardening and cultural exhibition in Blood Alley.

A number of stakeholders and community groups are engaged in the project, including:

- Environmental Youth Alliance
- Portland Hotel Society
- residents of the Stanley New-Fountain Hotel and the Lore Krill Housing Co Operative
- neighbouring business owners
- City of Vancouver staff

Workshops with community members identified the following elements of the greening project: design and installation of planters for the Stanley-New Fountain hotel balcony, improvements to the plantings in existing planters, and the installation of community-made totem carvings.

Through open communication with project participants and the City of Vancouver, a totem is being carved for the community rather than the original plan to install a large-scale board game. It has been agreed that a totem will be a cultural and aesthetic asset to the alley, as well as a demonstration of community volunteer engagement and pride.

Status and Outputs
Key components of the project have already been completed, such as stakeholder and community outreach. Community workshops regarding physical additions to the space, and future activities are either currently underway or are planned for completion by summer of 2009.

The Environmental Youth Alliance facilitated 30 workshops for the Blood Alley community, including:

- 3 visioning sessions
- 2 garden design workshops
- 4 planter building workshops
- 3 planting workshops for new and existing planters
- 1 garden work party
- 2 garbage construction workshops
- 3 design workshops for the development of the totem pole
To date, 12 totem carving workshops

The Environmental Youth Alliance has completed a community-based collaborative gardening and cultural project in Blood Alley, including:

- planters on balconies of the alley’s south-most residents
- additional shrubs and trees in existing planter
- boxes on the alley
- erection of a community-carved totem in front of the Stanley-New Fountain Hotel

Outcomes
The greening project will foster a sense of community and an increased commitment to and pride in the ongoing maintenance of the alley. The project’s commitment to facilitation and cooperation encourages a green and interactive space that reflects the needs and desires of the community.

The greening project engages a difficult to house population (residents of the Stanley New Fountain Single Room Occupancy Hotel). Participation by this group of community members contributes to inclusiveness and pride and encourages participation by this population in future community initiatives. Such inclusive community partnerships will boost the confidence and self-esteem of community members.

Outcomes will become more apparent upon project completion later in 2009.

Anticipated Completion Date
The primary deliverables are complete. The totem carving will be erected at a community celebration of the Blood Alley Community Greening Project in early August 2009.
Downtown Eastside Awning Improvement Program – Phase I and Phase II

Purpose
To upgrade awnings for retail sites in the Chinatown, Gastown, and Strathcona Business Improvement Associations (BIAs), to contribute to a more positive retail environment in the DTES, and to provide funding to implement small-scale awning improvements.

Summary of Activities
This program upgrades existing store awnings in the DTES to make more positive retail environments throughout the neighbourhood. In an effort to revitalize the targeted shopping areas, the DTES Awning Improvement Program enhances the appearance of awnings that shade storefronts. The City funds 40 per cent of the cost to replace existing awning covers and/or to convert existing non-retractable awnings into manually retractable ones. The first phases of the program have been administered through the Vancouver Chinatown Merchants’ Association (VCMA), with possible expansion of the program into Strathcona and Gastown BIA areas. Businesses outside these areas who are interested in participating in the program can contact the City directly for more information.

The City of Vancouver Licensing & Inspections staff met with the VCMA to discuss administrative challenges and possible improvements to the program. There was agreement that the program has been extremely successful so far, and since there are still merchants in Chinatown that are strongly interested in taking advantage of the program, it will continue through to the end of 2009.

In the coming months, the program will commence in Strathcona via support from the Strathcona BIA. VCMA representatives agreed to meet with Strathcona BIA representatives to share their program administration experiences and to pass on strategies used to gain business interest in the program. This sharing between the two business associations will contribute to a similar level of interest and uptake in Strathcona as there was in Chinatown.

The program is on hold in Gastown until further notice. A survey will be conducted by staff to explore whether the program is appropriate for the neighbourhood.

Status and Outputs
As at 1 June 2009, 10 awnings have been completed in Phase I of the program and a remaining 20 awnings were completed in Phase II. The VCMA has suggested local area sign companies to undertake work on individual awnings; keeping the economic activity generated by this project within the neighbourhood.
Outcomes
Staff members from the City’s Licensing and Permits Department responded to community concerns regarding permit requirements for the installation of new awnings. Staff provided businesses with clear information to speed up the permit application process, which has enhanced the effectiveness of the program as well as the working relationship between the City and the business community in the area.

Merchants, shoppers, and residents in the area have all benefited from this physical improvement to the neighbourhood. The new awnings improve the street scene and provide a positive shopping experience for business owners, shoppers and visitors. The neighbourhood boasts cleaner building frontages, which enhances current, and encourages future business opportunities by providing an improvement to visual marketing. Success of this first phase of the awning improvement program will encourage expansion into neighbouring BIAs.

Completion Date
Phase I was completed in April 2009 and Phase II was completed in June 2009.

Chinatown Plaza Parkade Neon Sign

Purpose
To bring neon signs back into Chinatown and to enhance commercial activities in the neighbourhood both during the day and night, which is a key objective of the “Chinatown Vision” as approved by council in 2002.

Summary of Activities
City of Vancouver Planning Department and Real Estate Services staff members have been compiling various community groups’ and organizations’ feedback on draft sign designs. The public consultation process consisted of public information gatherings with representatives from: the Chinatown BIA, the Chinatown Revitalization Committee, the Chinatown Merchants Association, the Chinese Cultural Centre, the Chinese Benevolence Association, building tenants and the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee.

A general attendance open house occurred on 2 October 2008 to review preliminary sign options based on historic and contemporary designs.
The City of Vancouver is taking the lead in bringing neon signs back into the neighbourhood; the sustainability of the project will continue as more owners are encouraged to independently install neon lights at their business location.

**Status and Outputs**
Staff have finalized the design, which has now been approved by the community.

The project will result in a 5-storey neon sign at the intersection of Keefer and Columbia Streets, with English and Chinese characters and will provide a physical improvement to the exterior of the Chinatown Plaza Parkade.

The implementation phase, consisting of the necessary permits and technical analysis, will be completed in summer 2009. City staff are also working on reviewing the current Sign Bylaw to further encourage more neon signs in the neighbourhood.

**Outcomes**
The neon sign will become a prominent landmark at night and in the day time in Chinatown. It will encourage additional lighting and will help to animate the intersection at Columbia and Keefer Streets.

Chinatown will be re-branded as a night-time visitor destination, where visitors are encouraged to frequent the area to experience the revitalized streetscape. This will encourage investment and regeneration into the neighbourhood far beyond the initial parkade neon light installation.

**Anticipated Completion Date**
Project completion is expected by summer / fall 2009.

**Princess Avenue Interpretive Walk Mural Project**

**Purpose**
*To establish an interpretive walk on Princess Avenue that will showcase the rich history and cultural diversity in the Strathcona neighbourhood.*

**Summary of Activities**
The City of Vancouver’s Planning, Social Policy and Engineering (Anti-Graffiti) Departments are directly involved in the project, while the Strathcona Community Centre Association is managing the overall project, including administration and the hiring of artists and consultants. Partnering agencies and community groups include:
Workshops (including design workshops and a one-day street event on Princess Avenue) involving local children successfully engaged the community in participating in the design development for capital improvements to their neighbourhood.

**Status and Outputs**

Completed projects include a mural on the front of the Strathcona Community Centre and sidewalk stamps at the intersection of Cordova Street and Princess Avenue. New access ramps, crosswalks, and sidewalk stampings were installed in late April 2009 and additional electrical work was completed in May 2009. A traffic signal at Princess Avenue and Cordova Street was completed in June 2009. (Great Beginnings staff ensured that the completion of the traffic signal coincided with the completion of the interpretive walk project). More opportunities for murals and artwork are being considered.

There was a Public Open House / Walking Tour to celebrate the Princess Avenue Children’s Interpretive Walk on 26 May 2009. The event took place at the Strathcona Community Elementary School and consisted of a student-led walking tour to view the completed mural at Keefer and Princess Avenues. Photo exhibits were on display at the school showing the history of the school and neighbourhood.

**Outcomes**

In addition to a positive increase in coordination and relationships between partnering agencies, the project will contribute to a physical improvement to the streetscape. Positive neighbourhood-focussed activities will be encouraged on
Princess Avenue, including an increase in the perception of safety on the street, which promotes an increase in children and families frequenting the neighbourhood. A traffic light has been installed at the corner of Cordova and Princess Avenue, contributing to the safety of the neighbourhood.

The involvement of the community in this project compliments community planning processes in the DTES and enhances communication, engagement and positive dialogues within the community. Including local children and senior citizens in neighbourhood planning projects contributes to empowerment, ownership, participation, and equality, and provides these populations with ownership in developing their local environment.

**Anticipated Completion Date**
The mural and sidewalk stamping was completed in April of 2009. Additional mural and art locations are in planning stages.

**Anti-Graffiti Project – Community Murals**

**Purpose**
*To engage the local community in tackling graffiti vandalism and beautifying DTES neighbourhoods.*

**Summary of Activities**
Within the Great Beginnings area, approximately 50 buildings have been identified as suitable locations for murals, and final selection criteria ensures that frequently tagged walls a priority. Locations within a close proximity to participating community organizations, and which are visible to foot and vehicle traffic are prioritized.

**657 Powell Street:**
The first mural was completed at 657 Powell Street in the Strathcona neighbourhood in partnership with the Strathcona Business Improvement Association.

**315 East Pender Street:**
The second mural was completed at 315 East Pender Street in the Strathcona / Chinatown neighbourhood. The lead artist, Grace Guo, lead a group of 10 community members through the application of the artwork. The group of artists included Grace’s children, the property owner and her family, and local artists. Several residents from the community joined in the project by contributing their ideas, feedback, and thanks.
601 Keefer Street:
The mural was designed through several community engagement events that included an outdoor design workshop, an indoor design workshop that included over 200 youths, and many City staff members. The design depicts a dragon, which is both an important part of the Chinese culture, and the mascot for the ‘Strathcona dragons’ (school team). The tai chi image relates to a hobby that is popular at the community centre. The commencement of the mural painting was celebrated with a dragon ceremony and a youth choir.

Other murals that are slated for this year are in various stages of development:

496 Prior Street:
This building houses a design and fabrication workshop for film and art, and all mural artists are members of the staff and of the community. The mural is at the planning and preparation stage. Artists are currently working on mural design, while the property tenant is preparing to power wash relevant walls. Once BC Hydro has wrapped all adjacent hydro wires to ensure artists can safely paint the wall, painting can commence.

315 Powell Street:
The mural will result from a collaboration between lead artist, Milan Basic and a group of residents of the St. James building. Residents will be involved in the design process from beginning to end of the project.

419 Jackson Avenue:
This large private residence is situated on the corner of Hastings Street and Jackson Avenue. Due to the great deal of motor and pedestrian traffic and the situation of a community garden in the vacant lot beside the mural wall, this location offers a fantastic opportunity to tell a story of the neighbourhood and place a large scale art piece into a rather bleak space. The resident property owner has produced 60 year old family photos taken in the Strathcona neighbourhood, and is meeting with artists who will collaborate with her to incorporate the images into the mural design. Youth who have attended the Restart Program (see page 31 of this report) in the past may join the project.

633 Main Street / 1175 Union Street:
These murals are at various stages of development and should all be completed by the fall of 2009.

Success of the mural project has relied on engagement with local organizations, which, in turn encourages community group involvement.

Status and Outputs
Two Great Beginnings mural have been completed at 657 Powell Street and 315 E. Pender Street in the Strathcona and Chinatown neighbourhoods.

Staff have worked with community representatives and volunteers through the Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House at Hastings and Jackson Streets to create a mural and community garden. The Anti-Graffiti Management Team has received a great response from passers-by while artists have been painting murals. Residents have been outspoken and become involved creatively in the projects. In some cases the resident property owners have picked up a brush, or dug into family photo albums to provide
inspiration to the artists, and in all cases; the people involved felt richer for having had a hand in the project. Social and economic barriers came down and artists of all skill levels collaborated together.

More mural projects are planned through the Great Beginnings project with the ‘East Side Mural Project’ at the Russian Hall at 600 Campbell, and 1249 Adanac, and the 300 Raymur Avenue mural that will be created and applied through the Restart Program.

The 600 Campbell Avenue, (Russian Hall) mural design has been submitted for approval, and the building is now awaiting some final preparations such as protective wrappings of the electrical wires which will ensure a safe work environment for the artists. The lead artist will guide a large group of artists through the rest of this grand project that will wrap around 3 sides of the very large Russian Hall.

The 1249 Adanac Mural has been designed, and approved for painting. Mural application is slated for late July or August and promises to dramatically improve the immediate area. A popular bicycle route runs adjacent to it which inspired the cyclist in the mural.

Outcomes
The long term impacts of placing murals in a community include a reduction in graffiti, a more visually appealing neighbourhood, and an increased perception of safety as graffiti often instils fear in residents and visitors. In addition, a renewed sense of neighbourhood pride and identity is often associated with community beautification projects.

Success will be measured by monitoring graffiti at each mural site via photographs, recording comments received from the community, and community engagement in the actual project.

Anticipated Completion Date
This is an ongoing Great Beginnings project.

The Clean Streets Project
Purpose
To increase street cleaning in a 65 block area within the founding historic neighbourhoods (Gastown, Chinatown, Japantown and Strathcona) and to provide additional recycling at special events, in partnership with social enterprise organizations.

Summary of Activities
The Clean Streets project involves additional City street cleaning shifts, the addition of a Street Use Inspector, enhanced education and enforcement, and increased lane
micro-cleaning by the social enterprise organizations United We Can (UWC) and Coast Mental Health Foundation (CMHF). Both social enterprises provide low threshold employment opportunities to individuals with barriers to traditional employment.

Additional recycling at special events was provided through UWC’s Urban Binning Unit (UBU) program. The work involved the use of mobile purpose-built recycling carts, or “UBU’s” to collect deposit beverage containers at two special events in 2008: the Celebration of Lights and the Chinatown Festival. Collected containers were returned for deposit refunds to the UWC bottle depot on Hastings Street located in the DTES.

Participating organizations include:

- The City of Vancouver Engineering Services Department
- United We Can
- Coast Mental Health Foundation
- The Vancouver Police Department

Status and Outputs
The program continues to move forward, and is achieving its objectives. An initial 40 block area has been expanded to include 65 blocks, which all boast cleaner streets and lanes, increased By-law compliance, and the completion of a detailed inventory of dumpsters. The project has created 30 new low threshold job positions being filled by 100 local individuals. In addition, 6,000 deposit beverage containers were collected at both the Celebration of Lights and Chinatown Festivals. There is a noticeable improvement in the cleanliness of sidewalks, lanes, and other publicly accessible spaces.

The increased street cleaning and street use inspection work is an ongoing component of the Great Beginnings Program. The scope of micro-cleaning services provided by UWC and CMHF are reviewed quarterly and formalized annually to ensure program goals are met. The recycling at special events component of the project is complete for 2008 and UWC will provide similar services for events in 2009.

Outcomes
The Clean Streets Project has received positive feedback from the community, BIAs, and various City departments. Social enterprises are being approached by individuals commending them on their commitment to cleaning the neighbourhood of needles and litter. The decrease in litter and needles in publicly accessible areas increases the sense of public safety, which benefits residents, businesses and visitors.
Individuals in the DTES with barriers to traditional employment have been provided with a greater sense of pride and self-esteem, which better enables them to seek, obtain and maintain employment, and also allows them to make a positive contribution to their community. In fact, CMHF has reported that one of their members is now able to survive on micro-cleaning wages, allowing her to survive without relying on former employment in the sex trade industry.

Reducing waste from special events is contributing to the City’s waste diversion goals, while bringing about an increased public awareness of the positive aspects of binning activities.

Anticipated Completion Date
This project will be ongoing for the duration of the Great Beginnings Project.

Strathcona Community Elementary School First Nations Homework Club

Purpose
To ensure that Aboriginal students achieve increased academic success in Vancouver schools and that they participate fully and successfully from kindergarten through to the completion of grade 12.

Summary of Activities
The Strathcona Community Elementary School has hired a Homework Club coordinator who has developed and emphasized:
- the empowerment of Aboriginal students regarding their ability as students and learners
- creating an environment where Aboriginal students will become more confident and engaged in learning both in the classroom and at home
- the promotion of Aboriginal ways of learning and Aboriginal culture
- networking with other schools
- making connections with Aboriginal role models

Homework Club activities include a minimum of 30 and up to 60 minutes of study time and provides sandwiches donated by a nearby church group to participating children. An arts and crafts activity or outdoor play time is incorporated into the Homework Club as well. Activities incorporate active learning, Aboriginal cultural activities (e.g. drum making, story-telling), guest speakers, and/or field trips to educational places of interest.

The Homework Club runs at least one day per week (usually Tuesdays), with the option of running additional sessions (for a field trip or activity) during the week. The Club normally runs after school hours, from 3.10 pm - 4.30 pm.

Status and Outputs
Between January and April 2009, the average number of students participating in the Homework Club steadily increased from 20.7 (January) to 24 (April). Approximately 36% of all Aboriginal students attending Strathcona Community Elementary School attend the Homework Club.
Outcomes
School teachers have indicated that students enrolled in the Homework Club look forward to attending.

Onsite outdoor activities do not exclude non-Aboriginal students, thereby fostering cross-cultural friendships and social inclusion.

Aboriginal Homework Club participants are encouraged to engage in school extra-curricular activities (sports and leadership roles such as peer helping). Students are also provided with extra confidence in their studies, which translates into self-confidence in other areas of social life.

Anticipated Completion Date
December 2010.
D. New Projects (approved in 2009)

Hastings Street Renaissance – Phase I Implementation

Purpose
To provide physical upgrades through renovation projects and securing tenancy for vacant storefronts along four blocks of Hastings Street in the DTES, to build capacity of local residents, organizations, and businesses to take full advantage of those upgrades for business and community development in order to be responsive to community needs, and to deliver tangible, visible, and timely results along the four city blocks.

Summary of Activities
The first phase will be delivered over a one-year period and, if successful, will have a highly visible outcome and a broad positive visible impact on the DTES.

This strategy is comprised into four general components:
1) Façade upgrades for 6 buildings that are currently in poor states of repair
2) Identify new and existing businesses, non-profits organisations, and arts-based community groups to occupy vacant storefronts
3) Create opportunities for DTES residents to gain training and employment in construction-related trades
4) Make small, but noticeable improvements to the public realm to compliment the improved streetscape.

The City has identified five of the six storefronts that will participate in the project:

- 103 East Hastings Street
- 45 West Hastings Street
- 108 East Hastings Street
- 254 East Hastings Street
- 29 West Hastings Street
- TBD

These storefronts will be upgraded to provide long-term, affordable tenancies for artist galleries and studio spaces. For the first phase of implementation, staff are focussed on securing affordable space for arts-based economic activity. Pending the outcome of this pilot project, staff are working on future phases that focus on social enterprises and local serving small businesses.

Status and Outputs
The primary output for this project is to deliver occupied storefronts with improved facades along this four-block stretch of Hastings Street.

Outcomes
A critical premise for this strategy is to hone in on renovations of facades, rather than fostering wholesale re-development of buildings. There are several rationales for this approach: first, it is quicker to implement renovations as compared to redevelopment projects, thereby realizing physical streetscape improvements within the timeline for Great Beginnings Program funding. Second, renovations will result in tangible,
manageable, visible improvements block-by-block. Third, this approach will impose less impact than wholesale re-development, thereby giving the community fair time to react to and become part of any changes that occur in their neighbourhood. Fourth, making minor renovations will ensure that vacant space along Hastings Street is improved to a state where it is suitable for occupancy, but not so re-furbished as to price-out non-profit agencies, start-up social enterprises and businesses, or to displace the businesses that are already operating along the corridor. Finally, by focussing on renovations, this strategy improves the overall standard of maintenance for the streetscape and collectively improves the public realm and urban context in order to evaluate future re-development projects in the area.

**Anticipated Completion Date**
The overall Hastings Renaissance project will run for 18 months from March 2009 to September 2010. Individual projects will be completed in phases. The first phase will be launched in March 2009 and will include 6 projects that will be completed by early summer 2009.

**DTES Arts Demonstration Project**

**Purpose**
To build capacity of community-based artists and existing arts organizations engaged in DTES community art projects; to maximize resources that are available for arts and culture; to build the capacity of local residents through participation and employment; and to provide visible, measurable results that contribute to the long term sustainability of the organizations involved.

**Summary of Activities**
The DTES Arts Demonstration Project has identified three priorities within its proposed program of activities:

- the animation of public space
- the enlivening of storefronts
- the supporting interdisciplinary activity required, and the need to work with existing arts organizations to build capacity and to maximize resources.

The DTES Arts Demonstration Team has been undertaking some preliminary work over the past six months; and has determined that arts demonstration projects will fall into one of the following six groupings:

- Dancing on the Streets
- Open Studios
- Public Movies
- Storytelling
- Arts Fairs
- Carrall Street Greenway (to coincide with the re-opening of this public space)

Project facilitators will work with existing organizations that are interested in involvement with one of the above groups to develop arts events or programs, and / or will support existing events or programs that meet the criteria of the above groups.
**Status and Outputs**

The project will identify four to six activities, events and/or installations in consultation with the community that will occur at numerous locations within the DTES over the next six to eight months. The project will compliment existing programs of other city departments within the scope of the Downtown Eastside Intergovernmental Initiative. The principles of creativity, capacity, collaboration and coordination will guide the choice of projects to be undertaken.

Each project will have at its lead an existing arts and cultural non-profit society from the community, with the intention that as part of the project their organizational capacity will also be enhanced. Possible lead organizations are being researched and a number of organizations have been identified as potential hosts.

**Outcomes**

The project is expected to have the following outcomes:

- Improved positive perception of the neighbourhood
- Increased visits to the neighbourhood by non-residents
- Positive arts, employment, and capacity building experiences for residents
- Increased economic benefits to local businesses through greater consumer traffic in the neighbourhood
- Improved streetscape
- Increased capacity of existing arts organizations and increased audiences for their work

**Anticipated Completion Date**

A complete timeline for each activity is being developed, with the first project scheduled to commence in fall 2009. There will be variance between projects, which will depend on the complexity and skill level of the lead organization and the community group that will be engaged. Ideally each project should have a lead time of a minimum of three months, and the length of each event/activity will be determined as the scope of work is finalized.

**DTES Celebrations and Festivals**

**Purpose**

*To promote the vibrant history of the DTES through performances, art activities, historical walks/talks, and community engagement.*

**Summary of Activities**

Festival activities and events will pay particular attention to honouring the founding communities of the DTES, including the Chinese, Japanese, European, and First Nations communities. Events will engage the participation of DTES residents, activate specific areas within the neighbourhood, and attract and involve participants from across the city. The DTES Celebrations and Festival project will support partnerships and collaboration between local organizations to deliver a range of celebrations, festivals, and associated arts-based events that serve both local residents and visitors to the Downtown Eastside throughout the year.
Activities are intended to provide training and support to local artists and residents, to support art that reflects local priorities, and that build the capacity of local artists.

Festival and celebration project proposals have been presented to the Great Beginnings Management Committee Team and projects that align with program criteria have been approved. Festivals will begin to roll out starting in the summer of 2009.

The DTES Celebrations and Festivals Project will consist of the following events:

- The Heart of the City Festival
- After Homelessness (forum theatre)
- Traces: Projecting Stories of Strathcona
- Spatial Poetics
- Music of the Returning Journey (DTES Centre for the Arts)
- Chinatown Festival Youth Programming

**Status and Outputs**
Anticipated project outputs include:

- A series of DTES celebrations and festivals occurring throughout the year and throughout the neighbourhood
- Increased opportunities to showcase the collaborations between artists and community-based arts programming

**Outcomes**
Outcomes will include:

- Improved positive perception of the neighbourhood
- Increased visits to the neighbourhood by non-residents
- Positive arts and capacity building experiences for DTES residents
- Increased economic benefits to local businesses generated by ongoing positive community-based activities in the neighbourhood
- Improved social environment throughout the year
- Increased capacity of existing arts organizations, including broader exposure for local artists and arts-programs

**Anticipated Completion Date**
April 2010.
Restart Restorative Justice Mural Workshop and Facilitator Training

Purpose
To train artist mentors and facilitators to deliver Restart Mural Workshops and deliver a workshop for 20+ people this July.

Summary of Activities
The Facilitator Training manual was created by two Restorative Justice Facilitators and included input from several people who have experience with the Restart Program and facilitation. The Team Building workshop will give artists the tools to incorporate their natural talents and experience into the Restart model, and give facilitators and volunteers the same skills. At the same time that these people are learning how to deliver the Restart workshop and build and deliver a mural with the workshop participants, they will build relationships that will foster more effective facilitation teams. Content is sometimes of an emotional nature. Therefore, it is important that the facilitators and mentors have a clear understanding of their roles, responsibilities and support system before beginning the project.

The Team Building training commenced on June 13th with 17 people participating, and will be completed on June 20th with an expected 26 participants.

RESTART:
The first mural workshop will be delivered this July and will result in a large-scale mural at 300 Raymur. Youths from 11 -21yrs will work with artist mentors, facilitators and volunteers to participate in discussions about graffiti, and share perspectives on the subject over 3 evenings. Then the entire group will paint the mural they have designed, working from early morning till about 5pm.

Status and Outputs
A detailed and comprehensive training manual has been created that can be used in the future to run more Team Building workshops. This workshop will result in 26 people who will have the tools to facilitate and mentor in future Restart Workshops.

RESTART:
Each workshop will involve 20-24 people, and yield a high quality mural that will deter graffiti, beautify the public realm and positively link the youths to their community.

Outcomes
Though the Team Building Workshop was voluntary for the participants, the Restart Program pays the mentors and facilitators which will offer future employment and
experience that may empower these people to take on further programming that will
draw on the skills they have acquired.

**RESTART:**
The workshops will continue at a rate of 1-3 per year, serving youths and employing
mentors and facilitators from all over Vancouver as well as creating volunteer
opportunities for members of the community. Some youths that have completed
Restart and simply stopped doing illegal graffiti, while others have researched Art
Colleges, and enrolled in full time studies. Still others have accepted work on film
sets, and community art projects that pay a substantial sum of money. Positive
relationships develop in the Restart workshops. Since the last Restart workshop
delivered in November 2008, 12 youths continue to meet for ‘Black Book Sessions’ at
the Kitsilano Community Centre where they were mentored by a Restart Facilitator
and Mentor through the process of designing and silk screening sweatshirts, making
stencil art, aerosol and 3-D art pieces, and the group is currently planning their own
gallery show.

One youth was very concerned when he was told that the Black Book Sessions would
not be offered through the summer.

YOUTH: “What will I tell my friends when they call at
night and they want to go paint?”
FACILITATOR: “What do you mean? What do you tell
them now?”
YOUTH: “Well, I tell them I can’t. Because I promised
you that I wouldn’t do graff (graffiti). And I know if I
do, I can’t do Black Book or Restart.”

The above conversation prompted the group of youths to discuss peer pressure and
making smart decisions. In the end, they supported one another to make choices that
may be tough socially, but would ultimately bring positive opportunities and
relationships into their life. In the end the facilitator offered to continue to offer the
once a week workshops but due to the lack of further funding would not be able to
supply the snacks and beverages that they were accustomed to. As a result the Black
Book Sessions have become potluck events and the youths have been baking banana
bread, making pan cakes, and other items to contribute, while the Mentor artist has
provided full meals such as homemade pulled pork sandwiches, chicken and ribs.

**Anticipated Completion Date**
Team Building: June 13 & 20, 2009
Mural Workshop: July 2009
Mural Completion: July 2009

**Mission Possible Social Enterprise Graffiti Removal**

**Purpose**
To create low-threshold employment opportunities for residents of the DTES, to rid
the DTES of graffiti, to encourage property owners to be pro-active in graffiti
abatement, prevention and awareness, and to offer information on City programs and
practical affordable solutions.
Summary of Activities
Mission Possible, a social enterprise that provides employment for individuals with barriers to employment, approaches private and commercial property owners that have graffiti tags on their building to offer graffiti removal and paint-over (treatment) services. If the owner of the business or property chooses to use their service, a contract between the owner and Mission Possible will be signed and the work will be completed on an as needed basis. Mission Possible will take a “before” digital photo of the graffiti, complete the graffiti removal and then take an “after” photo. An invoice will then be generated by Mission Possible and delivered to the client.

Status and Outputs
The Mission Possible graffiti removal team has begun to remove graffiti in the DTES. As at 21 May 2009, the team had contracts to monitor and maintain 4 buildings and provided one-time service to an additional 7 properties. Expected project results include a cleaner public realm, boasting less graffiti and the appearance of a safer, cleaner environment.

Mission Possible is currently placing bids for maintenance contracts in order to build their customer base. Also, they are looking into acquiring stream extraction equipment to increase their capacity.

Response has been positive and results are apparent. Recent graffiti survey results (5 June 2009) show that visible graffiti within the Great Beginnings area has decreased by over 50%.

![Graffiti Survey - Great Beginnings Area](chart.png)

Outcomes
An increase in clean walls in the neighbourhood will deter further graffiti painting. The project contributes to an increase in available low-threshold employment for DTES residents; skills development to increase the likelihood of further employment opportunities; community engagement - different groups of people working together and eroding social barriers, encourage more proactive property owners; and neighbourhood pride.
The first month of operation saw 375 hours of training, promotions, surveys, and actual removals completed. The case manager is engaged in taking referrals, conducting assessments, and providing ongoing support to staff. Currently, there are eight people who have come to the social enterprise through self-referral.

**Anticipated Completion Date**
December 2009.

**Sew a Legacy: Olympic Banner – Sports Bag Production**

**Purpose**
To support the development of sewing skills, business acumen, and employment capacity of inner-city sewers and to provide inner-city school children with Olympic drawstring sports bags and school and/or gym supplies.

**Summary of Activities**
The City of Vancouver is working closely with EMBERS (an inner-city social enterprise) to foster inner-city sewers’ business acumen and capacity-building by greatly contributing to their confidence and ability to work on future projects with different stakeholders or for independent business ventures. The Vancouver Agreement is providing the funds used towards the hiring of local, inner city women sewers.

VANOC is allowing the City’s Olympic Host City logo to be placed on each sports bag, and have waived the licensing fee usually associated with using an Olympic logo. The inclusion of the logo contributes to the legacy value of finished products.

The City of Vancouver has donated approximately 730 used Olympic roadside banners that will be used as sewing material for inner city sewers to create sports bags for donation to inner city school children.

Partnering organizations include:
- The City of Vancouver
- The Vancouver Agreement
EMBERS
Dev Co
VANOC
The Vancouver School Board
The Vancouver Parks Board
2010 Legacies Now

Status and Outputs
EMBERS has identified 35 inner-city sewers who will be taking part in this project. Used banners have been removed from city street poles, have been cleaned, and are ready to be used as a sturdy material for sports bag creation.

It is anticipated that approximately 1,400 sports bags will be sewed and made available for distribution to inner city school children. A distribution plan is currently being determined by the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver School Board, the Vancouver Parks Board, and 2010 Legacies Now.

Outcomes
Project outcomes are expected to include:

- The establishment of a process to maintain employment of inner-city sewers in production
- A lasting economic and social legacy through skills- and capacity-building, and creation of legacy Olympic memorabilia
- A learning model for development of future inner-city micro social enterprise as well as testing the value & practicality of the proposed “brokering service”
- The creation of short-term employment for inner city women sewers

Anticipated Completion Date
September 2009.
Sew a Legacy: Brokering for Sustainability Business Plan

Purpose
To provide a means for a number of EMBERS’ micro-entrepreneurs who operate sewing businesses to expand their sales as part of a broader marketing network and to enhance EMBERS’ new ‘Grow a Business’ program (planned for July 2009).

Summary of Activities
The Sew a Legacy: Brokering for Sustainability Business Plan program is designed to help accelerate the growth of small operating businesses with direct sales and marketing. The broker service will create a new opportunity for participating sewers.

The Business Plan builds on previous research that identifies “Creative Capital & a Thriving Economy” as key needs for social enterprise success, including:

- Market development (focus on new markets and large contracts)
- Production coordination (to facilitate collaboration on large contracts)
- Marketing and promotion of the sector

The business plan proposal also follows up on a Foundation Phase Project, which established both relationships with and capacity-building of social enterprises; and relationships with potential customers as significant elements of the broker service.

The proposed business plan will:

- review the elements of the broker service based on previous research and the Foundation Phase Project
- undertake further research as required including practical application of the model through pilot contracts
- propose concrete recommendations for implementation
- guide the establishment of the broker service as an Olympic legacy for the DTES characterized by the utilization of the City of Vancouver’s 2010 banners up to 75 inner-city sewers who are micro-entrepreneurs or members of social enterprises

Status and Outputs
The Business Plan is currently in planning stages, and will include:

- conducting primary research and engagement
- conducting market research (including industry trends and projections)
- assessment of legal structures and requirements
- identification of marketing strategies

Outcomes
The Business Plan Project will establish an Olympic legacy for the DTES, and will provide business opportunities for inner city micro-entrepreneur sewers.

Anticipated Completion Date
September 2009.
Community Court Placement Coordination

Purpose
To utilize a community court system to provide earlier, fair resolution to criminal cases, benefiting offenders, victims and the wider community, while creating new relationships, both within the justice system and with health and social services, community organizations, area residents, merchants, faith communities and schools.

Summary of Activities
A Community Service Supervisor meets with and explains the exact nature of community service and helps develop potential roles and responsibilities of Community Court clients while at their agency. The onus of creating and maintaining paperwork will be on the Community Service Supervisor. The supervisor will be available to transport clients to service placements and check in as needed, to facilitate introductions, and to ensure guidelines are understood. The supervisor will also take on the responsibility of thoroughly interviewing/assessing potential clients and has the unwavering goal of setting placements up for success.

The City of Vancouver Engineering Services Department has drafted a bi-weekly, nine-day fortnight work schedule for supervisors and offenders. Offenders will be assigned tasks that include: micro-cleaning, poster removal from poles, watering plants, and weeding.

Status and Outputs
One Community Service Supervisor has been hired directly through Great Beginnings funding. This individual began employment on 8 June 2009.

Outcomes
By co-ordinating sentencing with support, the courts give offenders a chance to address the causes of their behaviour and repay the community through community service and work placements.

Anticipated Completion Date
Spring of 2010.

Community Hanging Baskets

Purpose
To engage in a public realm improvement and community engagement project that will contribute to providing meaningful community work service opportunities and healthy, restorative, creative opportunities for residents.

Summary of Activities
The community hanging baskets were installed on 2 June 2009 on trolley poles on either side of Hastings Street, between Clark Drive and Gore Avenue. Great Beginnings funding went towards the installation of the hanging basket brackets on these blocks, and towards the initial purchase and installation of summer flower hanging baskets and winter flower hanging baskets on Hastings Street between Clark Drive and Gore Avenue.
The Strathcona Business Improvement Association (BIA) will assume ownership following the initial installation of the first seasonal baskets. The BIA’s ownership commitment involves maintenance of the baskets as required for the next 3 years. The BIA has also committed to replenishing the plants and rotating the baskets on a seasonal basis (twice a year) for a period of three years.

The Downtown Community Courts (DCC) will support the project by watering the hanging baskets at least two times a week during the summer months. Many of the DCC’s clients ordered to perform community service are from the Downtown Eastside, allowing for community involvement.

**Status and Outputs**
54 baskets were installed on 2 June 2009.

The Strathcona BIA now owns one portable watering tank, which will be used to water the hanging baskets.

**Outcomes**
The project will contribute to public realm improvement, beautification, and improved community living through active participation of local residents.

Hanging baskets are assembled by “Landscaping with Heart”, a Coast Mental Health Social Enterprise Company. Using this organization, which provides the baskets at competitive market prices, invests in people living with a mental illness by providing professional landscaping training and market employment.

**Anticipated Completion Date**
The agreement with the Strathcona BIA for basket maintenance expires in the winter of 2012.
From Grey to Green: Main Street Lane Improvement Project

Purpose
To utilize a physical upgrading project in the laneway between Hastings Street and Cordova Street, west of Main Street, to create a social enterprise that will provide a that street-engaged population with meaningful employment, while improving the safety and public perception for visitors, employees, and residents who use the laneway as part of their daily activities.

Summary of Activities
The proposed laneway is one of the most dangerous and unsightly in the City of Vancouver and is often used for open drug trafficking and drug use, public urination and defecation, prostitution, and loitering. However, there are also several legitimate and viable businesses and organizations located on Main Street who use this lane to access their facilities. This project is designed to engage Main Street businesses and organisations along with some of the local residents who use the lane for illegitimate activities in a three-pronged project that will attempt to improve current lane conditions. The three elements of this project are:

1) to develop arts-based programming that utilizes the exterior walls, the lane, and the edges of an adjacent semi-public parking lot in multi-media projections and projects;
2) to secure the parking lot adjacent to the lane using fencing that is produced through the art-program, including improving the surface of the parking lot (pavement or another surface treatment); and,
3) to develop a social enterprise to manage and operate that secured parking lot, as a pilot for a larger parking lot management business.

Future events include: community outdoor gatherings, outdoor movie screenings, art installations, mural creation and the creation and installation of an art fence.

Status and Outputs
Project activities will commence upon securing capital funding from City Council at the end of June 2009.

Outputs of the project will include:
- arts-programming in the laneway, featuring multi-media projects (which may include murals, film projections, etc.),
- fencing with art integrated into it in order to secure a parking lot adjacent to the lane,
- a secured parking lot with an improved ground-surface, and,
- a social enterprise to operate and manage the secured parking lot.

Outcomes
Anticipated outcomes of this project include:
- increase community pride in and stewardship of the laneway by involving a range of community members in arts-based programs that will occur in the lane,
- reductions in the illegitimate activities that currently contribute to the unsafe and unsightly condition of the lane,
- Low-threshold employment opportunities through the parking management social enterprise, and
- Improved infrastructure to support local business activities during daytime and evening hours.

Anticipated Completion Date
This project will begin in the summer of 2009, and is anticipated to be complete by January 2010.

Everyone Grows: Building a Model Community Garden
Accessible to seniors and People with Disabilities

Purpose
To support sustainable urban agriculture by building a diverse and integrated community garden, inclusive to the First Nations population, and accessible for seniors and individuals with disabilities, which will provide opportunities for self-help food production for low-income residents.

Summary of Activities
Cottonwood Community Garden, located in the heart of the Downtown Eastside at Strathcona Park, will be the site of a new 3/4 acre garden expansion based on the principles of universal design to enable seniors and people with disabilities to participate in community gardening. A total of 50-60 new plots will be built - 10 fully accessible - with the remainder universally designed and barrier-free, so they can be used by all people.

The following will be incorporated into garden design to support full accessibility:

- All garden pathways will be 3 - 4 feet wide
- The main path will be surfaced with a firm surface appropriate for persons with walkers, canes, strollers and wheelchairs
- Water taps will be high enough to access
- At least 10 plots will have raised beds that are 2 - 2½ feet high with reachable width (3-4’)
- The raised bed plots will have water taps at their plot so that carrying a hose will not be needed
- The tool shed will be accessible
- All meeting spaces will be accessible with wide-enough, smooth surfaces

The Urban Aboriginal Community Kitchen Project, a self-help project involving hundreds of First Nations people in the Downtown Eastside, is supporting and participating in this project.

Status and Outputs
This project will establish the first community garden in Vancouver that is accessible to seniors & people with disabilities, and is supported by an urban Aboriginal DTES
organization. The project will also contribute to the production of a handbook on how to build future accessible community gardens.

Outcomes
A resulting handbook will enhance the impact of this project, supporting gardeners to develop and distribute lessons learned on how to build an accessible community garden, so the availability of inclusive community garden space will continue to increase in years to come. Production of such materials may increase the number of accessible community gardens in Canada by providing a model accessible community garden.

This project has unique community building capacity. A diverse community that works together is a vibrant community. This community garden will be uniquely diverse with First Nations people, seniors, and people with disabilities working together with Downtown Eastside residents.

Anticipated Completion Date
February 2010.