

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE PLAN

Community Newsletter #13: June 2022

Welcome

This is the 13th edition of the community update for the Downtown Eastside (DTES) Plan. These newsletters will keep you informed about progress on implementing the plan, upcoming events, and other important information. Since the DTES Plan was approved, many short and long term policies have been implemented, and some of the most recent are outlined in this newsletter.

Improved Well-being for All

Eastside Works

Eastside Works is now in their fifth year of grant funding. They will be working with the City's Homelessness Services to expand their Community Stewardship Program, which supports the Chinatown community with neighbourhood safety, to three other Vancouver Neighbourhoods. Eastside Works also received additional funding to support nine other organisations and over 100 peers to undertake community support work in the DTES. They have also received additional funding for their Substance Use Support and Employment Program, a harm-reduction

based low-barrier employment program that provides wrap-around supports for those who want assistance managing their substance use, and maintaining or enhancing employment.

Sex Worker Safety Plan

Engagement on the Sex Worker Safety Plan is currently underway with community experts and people with lived experience. Part of this work will include identifying strategies and initiatives for sex workers to have improved access to housing, cultural programming and supports, employment and training options, health care and safe supply.

Poverty Reduction Strategy

Consultants have been hired to identify actions the City can undertake to decriminalize poverty, including reviewing recommendations from past reports, finding alternatives to 911 emergency responses, and addressing issues around street sweeps and how it affects people living on the streets.

Healthy Homes for All

SRO Strategy

A single room occupancy (SRO) inter-governmental investment strategy is being explored with senior levels of government.



New social housing development at 124 Dunlevy St



Special Enterprise Program vacant space activation at 450 East Hastings St

The SRO Collaborative and the Vancouver Chinatown Legacy Stewardship Group's ideas on housing equity and revitalisation have been shared with senior governments as part of this work. Broader community engagement is anticipated later in 2022.

SRO Replacement and Revitalisation

The Winters Hotel fire and tragic loss of tenant life has deeply impacted the DTES community and SRO tenants. The Atira Women's Resource Society has recently purchased the New Columbia Hotel (303 Columbia) a 78 room residential hotel, which is being used as replacement housing for the tenants of the Winters Hotel.

SRA Vacancy Control Implementation

In March 2022, City staff held Single Room Accommodation (SRA) Vacancy Control Policy

informational workshops: three virtual sessions with building owners/managers, an in-person session with building owners in Chinatown, and an in-person session for tenants at the Japanese Language Hall. The purpose of these workshops was to share information with residents and owners on the newly adopted Vacancy Control Policy, which limits the rent increase at tenant turnover in privately owned SRO buildings.

For more information, please visit vancouver.ca/people-programs/sra-vacancy-control-policy.aspx

Social Housing Policy & Projects

From July to December 2021, 250 social housing units were approved. This includes 78 units at 327 Main St with a ground floor social enterprise space and a rooftop amenity/ceremonial space, and 172 units at 401 Jackson Ave with

a social service centre. Many of these newly approved homes will rent at deeply affordable rates, including the shelter rate of income assistance, and will provide secured homes for very low-income residents. Three social housing buildings totalling 302 units opened during this time, including at 616 E Cordova St, 124 Dunlevy Ave, and 950 Main St.

In addition, we brought policy updates to City Council to increase and streamline social housing development in the DTES. For more information, see the Well-Managed Development section of this newsletter.

Vibrant & Inclusive Local Economy

The Downtown Eastside Market

The DTES Market is a safe, legal low-barrier space for vendors who experience challenges with accessing traditional employment opportunities. We are currently seeking proposals from non-profit organisation(s), social enterprise(s), for a cooperative or a collective or partnership to operate and manage the DTES market. We will be accepting proposals until July 8, 2022.

For more information and to apply, visit: <https://bids.sciquest.com/apps/Router/PublicEvent?CustomerOrg=CityofVancouver>



450 East Hastings St



Downtown Eastside Market

Special Enterprise Program (SEP)

The Special Enterprise Program (SEP) is a five-year pilot that aims to preserve and strengthen the cultural diversity, long-term viability, and economic opportunity of heritage businesses, social enterprises, and non-profit organisations in the Downtown Eastside.

This program has three components: capacity building/business supports, affordable spaces, and community-serving business in Chinese Benevolent Society buildings. Three non-profit organisations are working with the City to implement the program: Vancouver Chinatown Foundation for community revitalisation (VCF), Community

Impact Real Estate Society, and Strathcona Business Improvement Association (with the support of Dunfield Consulting).

The first affordable spaces pilot was completed in March 2022, which involved upgrading a vacant space at 450 E Hastings St and tenancing it to Lookout Housing and Health Society. A SEP monitoring and evaluation framework - a data collection, reporting, and project assessment tool - is being developed to track the progress of the pilot program over the next five years.

An internal interdepartmental SEP tech team was established in February to guide and support the implementation

of the program for the next five years. This group includes staff from Arts, Culture and Community Services: Community Economic Development, Cultural Services; Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability: Downtown Eastside, Chinatown Transformation Team, Economic Development, and Heritage; and Development, Building and Licensing: Permitting Services.

In June 2022, City Council approved \$310,000 to two non-profit organisations, the Vancouver Chinatown Foundation for economic revitalisation, and the Community Impact Real Estate Society to continue supporting the implementation business supports and affordable spaces.

For more information, visit: vancouver.ca/special-enterprise-program



Potential Strathcona traffic calming measures

Improved Transportation

Strathcona Traffic Calming

We are exploring new traffic calming measures in Strathcona on local residential streets. These measures aim to: reduce vehicle speeds and volumes; discourage short-cutting; make local streets safer and more comfortable for people walking, cycling, and rolling; maintain emergency vehicle access; and



New decorative security gates at the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Park Courtyard

ensure implementation measures are informed by an equitable engagement process.

In the spring, community feedback on these measures was collected to understand local traffic concerns, and we will be reporting back on next steps in June, including which locations require further attention and which potential traffic calming measures will be implemented.

For more information, visit: shapeyourcity.ca/strathcona-traffic or if you have any questions, email: strathconatrafficmanagement@vancouver.ca

Arts & Culture Opportunities

Cultural Project Grants Program

On May 17, City Council approved City-wide grants for cultural infrastructure projects and cultural projects with a number of grants disbursed for projects and organisations within the DTES.

This includes a planning grant for \$25,000 to the Carnegie Community Centre Association to research a process for decolonising Carnegie Community Centre.

For more information and to read the City Council report, visit: <https://council.vancouver.ca/20220517/documents/r4.pdf>

Parks & Open Spaces

Park Washroom Upgrades

The two Portland Loos and a drinking fountain are expected to arrive at CRAB Park by end of this month. However, the washroom project is currently experiencing some delays due to manufacturing issues/material shortages with the electrical kiosk. The new washrooms will be available for public use in the summer.

Construction and supply chain impacts are also delaying the completion date of the field house washroom renovations at Oppenheimer Park. During this time, the washroom trailer will remain open and staffed in the

coming weeks and month. There are plans to relocate this washroom trailer to the east side of the park, closer to the field house, to continue serving park users.

Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Chinese Classical Garden

The Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Park is open to the public from 10 am to 3 pm daily. Currently, the park is only accessible from the Carrall St. entrance. The courtyard has been experiencing ongoing issues, including arson, theft, drug use, and vandalism.

In conjunction with the Chinatown Transformation Team, Park Board staff have worked with community



Rendering of the redesigned Blood Alley Square



East Hastings and Kiwassa Design Charrette

stakeholders to identify opportunities for increased programming of the courtyard. To improve safety and protect the courtyard, new decorative security gates, which can be closed overnight on a daily basis, have been installed.

Community Place-making

Blood Alley Square Redesign

Construction of Blood Alley Square will be completed this year and stewardship planning is underway. In collaboration with community partners, the Stewardship Plan will guide the daily management, maintenance, and programming of the Square.

For more information, please visit: vancouver.ca/blood-alley-square

The adjacent Maple Tree Square will also receive infrastructure improvements following the completion of the hydro utility restoration work.

Gassy Jack statue

The Gassy Jack statue and pedestal have been removed. The City continues to work with the Squamish Nation to explore ways to enhance their visibility in the Gastown area. This work will be integrated into the plans to repair the streets in the area.

The City will also be reaching out to Musqueam and Tsleil-waututh, as well as urban Indigenous

communities, to understand whether they are interested in working with us on this project.

Community Hubs

Upgrading of community hubs with accessible platforms, railings and planters to accompany furniture is underway throughout the Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District.

Drinkers' Lounge Parklet

City Council has extended the provision to enabling the Drinker's Lounge parklet at 111 Princess Ave, which is provided in partnership with the PHS Community Managed Alcohol Program.

Well-Managed Development

East Hasting St and Kiwassa Urban Design Framework

The DTES Plan identified developing an Urban Design Framework to guide new development along East Hastings St and Kiwassa. The Plan anticipates that the most significant changes in the DTES will be this area as it develops into a new mixed-use neighbourhood delivering both social and rental housing with locally-serving retail and services, and creative light industrial.

The framework will include urban design guidelines for the portion of East Hastings



East Hastings and Kiwassa Urban Design Open House



Oppenheimer Park and children's playground

between Campbell Ave and Clark Dr, and Kiwassa. This will include specific directions on how new buildings will look, and address elements such as built form, architectural features, and heritage compatibility.

A public realm strategy will also be developed to inform the delivery of enhanced open spaces and public realm improvements for private developments and across the broader neighbourhood. We will be coming out with urban design principles that build on what we heard through local walkshops, open houses, design charrettes and community visioning. Stay tuned for more information!

DTES Policy Review

On May 19 City Council approved amendments to the FC-1 (East False Creek) District and Downtown-Eastside/Oppenheimer District Official Development Plan (DEOD ODP), as well as consequential amendments to the DTES Rezoning Policy and DEOD Urban Design Guidelines.

The amendments respond to key community and City Council priorities of increasing social and supportive housing in the DTES. The changes streamline the development process for projects that deliver 100% social housing by increasing height and density under zoning. Changes

to the DEOD ODP also included built form regulations that balance protecting sunlight on the park, while not unreasonably limiting development potential for social housing.

These changes provide greater certainty and allows more projects to go through the development permit process, which is a less costly and shorter process when compared to the rezoning process.

The amendments also provides greater flexibility under the rezoning process for 100% social housing developments seeking additional height and density beyond what is allowed under zoning. Lastly, the amendments integrates heritage conservation under development and rezoning processes by encouraging the conservation of heritage resources.

For more information, please visit: <https://council.vancouver.ca/20220519/phea20220519ag.htm>

DTES Grants

The DTES Planning group operates a dedicated neighbourhood matching grant fund to support projects that help implement the Plan and further the vision for the community. In June 2022, City Council approved \$646,664 in matching grants to



Construction of a social housing development in the DEOD



Chinatown Lunar New Year parade

DTES non-profit organisations to advance four key priority areas identified through the planning process: protecting community assets, neighbourhood improvements, community economic development, and strategic projects.

Most of this year's matching grant applications relate to Community Asset Management and Community Economic Development priority areas related to non-profit space upgrades and equipment to support their operations. For example, the Wish Drop-In Centre Society was granted funding to improve their outdoor safe respite area, soundproofing a small meeting room and replacement of industrial kitchen appliances to provide a safer, accessible, comfortable, welcoming space in proper working order for women and gender-diverse sex workers.

Mission Possible received funds to replace equipment for its property maintenance services, including the purchase of a vehicle and computer equipment, to increase the organisation's capacity and employment opportunities for individuals facing barriers to employment in the DTES.

Additionally, four strategic projects were approved to support urgent repairs to four

Chinese Society buildings, which are important cultural heritage assets in Chinatown.

For more information, please visit vancouver.ca/people-programs/capital-gts-program.aspx

Chinatown Transformation

Cultural Heritage Assets Management Plan (CHAMP)

The Chinatown Transformation Team, the City Council-appointed Legacy Stewardship Group and its six working groups, and many community members have been working together over the past three years to identify a unified vision and priorities

for Chinatown. This work has culminated in the draft Cultural Heritage Assets Management Plan (CHAMP) Strategic Framework.

The CHAMP Strategic Framework is the first plan of this kind done for Vancouver's Chinatown. It is developed through a cultural redress approach, by centring Chinatown tangible and intangible cultural heritage assets. CHAMP honours Chinatown and the neighbouring areas' shared history and experiences of resilience by strengthening and sustaining cultural heritage assets for future generations.



Hot & Noisy Chinatown Mahjong Social



The plan has received support from Vancouver citizen advisory committees including the Chinatown Historic Area Planning Committee, the Vancouver Heritage Commission, and the Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee.

The CHAMP Strategic Framework was approved by City Council in June. We will now move into Phase two, which includes working with community members and stakeholders to develop an implementation plan with a prioritised list of actions, and continuing preparation towards a future UNESCO World Heritage Site application.

For more information, please visit: vancouver.ca/chinatown

Chinatown Memorial Square Redesign

We would like to thank everyone who participated in Phase two of the public engagement for the redesign of Chinatown Memorial Square, which took place in last autumn. We received feedback on the draft vision and goals for the project, and suggestions included possibly increasing the size of the space along with ideas on future uses for the space.

For more information, please visit:

English: shapeyourcity.ca/memorial-square-redesign

Chinese (中文): shapeyourcity.ca/memorial-square-redesign-chn

Highlights from the autumn 2021 public engagement are being prepared, and will be shared shortly. Currently we are in the process of retaining a design consultant to develop conceptual design options for the square that will be guided by the feedback we've heard from the community. These draft options will be shared for your feedback once they're ready.

For more information, please visit: vancouver.ca/home-property-development/chinatown-memorial-square-redesign.aspx

Sustainability

Extreme Heat Response

In preparation for extreme heat events in 2022 and beyond, staff are continuing to build on heat plans and are focused on improving communications, greater access to water, and the availability of daytime and evening cooling spaces in the DTES neighbourhood. Printable maps of cooling infrastructure and tips for how to stay cool are being updated and will be

available at vancouver.ca/hot-weather.

The City is interested in learning more about community and neighbourhood networks, both informal or formal, that help checked on isolated residents at high risk during heat events in 2021 and any plans for supporting communities this summer.

If you have input to share before or during a heat event, please contact 3-1-1

Drinking water is vital in heat events



Retrofit Grants

A non-market retrofit grant is being provided to the BC Non-market Housing Association in order to support retrofit planning, implementation and operations, capacity building, and prioritise cooling, as well as inform future improvements to provincial non-market incentives.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
vancouver.ca/dtes
dtesplan@vancouver.ca