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**Mayor Ken Sim Announces Major Initiatives to Revitalize the Downtown Eastside
at Save Our Streets Forum**

VANCOUVER, BC – Today, Mayor Ken Sim addressed the Save Our Streets Forum to unveil a comprehensive plan aimed at transforming Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside (DTES) through measures focused on accountability, dignity, and public safety. The announcement marks a pivotal moment in the City’s approach to addressing addiction, crime, and housing challenges in one of its most complex neighbourhoods.

“The Downtown Eastside reflects our city’s resilience, but also its struggles,” said Mayor Sim. “For too long, hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent without delivering meaningful change. It’s time for a new direction - one that prioritizes recovery, inclusivity, and public safety while integrating the DTES into the broader Vancouver community.”

At the forum, Mayor Sim outlined three key proposed policy shifts:

1. Updating the Downtown Eastside Area Plan

Updating the Downtown Eastside Area Plan to encourage a mix of housing, businesses, and services. This approach aims to break the cycle of hyper-concentrated services in the DTES, including supportive housing, shelter services, and social services. This allows for the integration of the DTES neighbourhood into Vancouver’s broader community, ensuring a more balanced, supportive environment for residents, businesses, and visitors.

2. Pausing Net New Supportive Housing

Vancouver currently houses 77% of the region’s supportive housing, despite comprising only 25% of the region’s population. The City also faces the challenge of managing thousands of deteriorating Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units. By pausing the construction of net new supportive housing units in Vancouver, the City can focus on renewing and revitalizing the current ageing housing stock to better meet residents’ needs until supportive housing availability increases across the region.

3. Cracking Down on Gang Activity

In collaboration with the Vancouver Police Department, the City will launch a citywide crackdown on organized crime and gangs operating in the DTES. This initiative aims to address street-entrenched violence by dismantling criminal networks that exploit vulnerable residents and undermine community safety.

Mayor Sim highlighted progress made under his leadership, including fully funding the Vancouver Police Department for the first time in 15 years, introducing the province’s first Indigenous Crisis Response Team, and announcing a new Community Policing Centre to serve the Gastown and Hastings Crossing area, achieving a significant reduction in crime rates across the city. However, he emphasized the need to address systemic challenges in the DTES.

“We need to prioritize accountability, dignity, and recovery,” said Mayor Sim. “We owe it to neighbourhood residents, Vancouverites, and all British Columbians to do better, and we will.”

The Save Our Streets Forum brought together civic leaders, community members, and advocates united by a shared goal of tackling the systemic issues related to public safety and street disorder affecting neighbourhoods across British Columbia. Mayor Sim’s speech reaffirmed this Mayor and Council’s commitment to driving meaningful change through collaboration and action.

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