



REPORT

Report Date: September 18, 2020
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Meeting Date: October 6, 2020
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TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability
SUBJECT: Downtown Eastside (DTES) Plan Implementation Grant Allocation - 2020

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve the matching grant allocation of \$543,600 to Downtown Eastside (DTES) non-profit organizations (as detailed in Appendix A) to strategically advance the social, economic and environmental objectives of the approved DTES Plan.
- B. THAT Council approve the \$670,000 strategic grant allocations below to support COVID-19 response actions:
 - i. \$100,000 for community stewardship peer employment; with \$50,000 being allocated to the Eastside Movement for Business and Economic Renewal Society (EMBERS) for peers in Chinatown, and \$50,000 to Portland Housing Society (PHS) for peers in DTES;
 - ii. \$50,000 to Vancouver Economic Commission in partnership with Community Impact Real Estate Society (CIRES) and Buy Social BC to identify vacant spaces and interested landlords and tenants to activate affordable spaces in the DTES in order to support recovery of non-profit agencies and social enterprises;
 - iii. \$500,000 to Engineering Services to implement the COVID-19 response Community Hubs project to support the physical spacing needs of the residents in the DTES and provide necessary amenities and infrastructure;

- iv. \$20,000 to Community Services to retain a consultant to engage the community to explore the creation of a Community Economic Development hub at 501 Powell.
- C. THAT Council approve the allocation of \$250,000 grant to Vancouver Japanese Language School and Japanese Hall (VJLS-JH) to support their pursuit of establishing a Japanese Interpretive Centre and as a part of the City's redress actions for the Japanese Canadian Community.
- D. THAT Council approve to fund the above initiatives for a total of \$1,463,600 from the Multi-Year Capital Project Budget of 2020 DTES Capital Grant Program; and expenditures will be managed within the current approved Annual Capital Expenditure Budget.

Approval of this grant recommendation requires at least 2/3 affirmative votes of all Council members under Section 206 (1) of the *Vancouver Charter*.

REPORT SUMMARY

Council approved the *Downtown Eastside (DTES) Plan* in March 2014 setting out the policies, strategies, Quick Start and Short Term actions needed to achieve the long term vision that “the neighbourhood will be made up of mixed-income communities with a range of affordable housing options (including social housing) for all residents, local serving commerce, social services and cultural activities where all feel welcome, valued and at home”.

This report recommends grants to 19 non-profit agencies totalling \$543,600 to provide critical assistance and to support community initiatives in a timely way that will benefit the vulnerable DTES residents and the implementation of the DTES Plan. The funding will advance work toward well-being and align with the Healthy City Strategy, the City's social sustainability framework and related initiatives, including Reconciliation and the Equity Strategy. It will also support actions in the DTES Community Economic Development (CED) strategy and the Chinatown Plan.

For the 2020 Capital Budget, \$1.3 million was approved for DTES strategic projects. This funding focuses on initiatives that address key priorities identified through community engagement on the DTES Plan implementation, namely: supporting non-profits and social enterprises in capacity-building and community stewardship through flexible employment opportunities for low-income people; and, the identification and access to vacant affordable spaces to support non-profits and social enterprises.

As part of COVID-19 response strategies, this report also recommends grant allocations totalling \$670,000, and to support the City of Vancouver longstanding commitment to cultural redress, diversity and inclusion, \$250,000 is recommended to support the creation of an Interpretive Centre at the Japanese Hall.

The grant allocation also supports an integrated vision of health and well-being in the neighbourhood and supports the ongoing work needed for the City and all partners to respond to systemic barriers due to the compounding intersections of racism, poverty, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia and colonialism.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- Culture | Shift: Blanketing the City in Arts and Culture (2019)
- Making Space in Arts and Culture (2019)
- Downtown Eastside Community Economic Development Strategy (2016)
- Healthy City Strategy Action Plan (2015)
- Downtown Eastside Plan (2014)
- Downtown Eastside Social Impact Assessment (2014)
- City of Reconciliation Framework (2014)
- Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan and Economic Revitalization Strategy (2012)
- Vancouver Economic Action Strategy (received by Council 2012)

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

REPORT

Background/Context

The Downtown Eastside (DTES) is located on the traditional, unceded territories of the *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm* (Musqueam), *Sḵwx̱wú7mesh* (Squamish) and *səl ilwətaʔt* (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, and comprises the seven mixed income neighbourhoods of Gastown, Victory Square, Chinatown, Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District, Thornton Park, Strathcona and the Industrial Lands.

Based on Census 2016, in the DTES the median total income is \$18,458 for those over 15 years of age vs the city-wide median total income of \$32,896. Over half (53%) of the 14,300 workers living in the DTES make less than \$20,000.

Despite the high level of poverty and vulnerability, the DTES is a very creative, diverse area with close-knit communities, a mix of land uses, unique heritage assets and cultural amenities. The *DTES Plan* provides the 30 year vision, strategies and policies needed to achieve a better quality of life for the residents, and improved opportunities for businesses and industries.

In the past, Council has approved capital funds to support individual initiatives in the Downtown Eastside according to needs identified at the time. During the creation of the DTES Plan, only a limited portion of the approved capital was allocated to urgent projects with the balanced rolled over. After the DTES Plan was approved by Council (2014) the granting of DTES Capital Grants was re-established to implement the Plan in three key priority areas:

- supporting neighbourhood improvements and community building.
- fostering community economic development.
- protecting valuable community assets.

The objective of the DTES Plan Implementation grant is to build partnerships with non-profit organisations, charities, social enterprises, Societies and Business Improvement Associations to help implement the *DTES Plan* and to further other City's social, economic and ecological sustainability objectives and key platforms that include the Healthy City Strategy and Greenest City strategies.

Grants are recommended to the non-profit agencies as shown in Appendix A totalling \$ 543,600 to provide critical assistance and to support community initiatives in a timely way. The grants will continue to provide support to make the city more inclusive, help marginalized individuals to be more self-reliant, and for organizations to be more sustainable.

As part of the 2020 Budget approvals, \$1.3 million were made available for strategic project of which the expenditures are to be managed from within over 2020 and 2021, with a focus on initiatives to address key priorities heard from community, as follows:

- *Urban environment and public realm enhancement* – Creation of Community Hubs, spaces for people to queue and to sit and eat, and facilities to address basic comforts and provide public amenities. These are desperately needed in the community, including but not limited to: washroom access, garbage bins, benches, drinking fountains, street lights, electric charging stations for wheelchairs and other personal devices, etc.;
- *Identification and access to vacant affordable spaces* – including women’s safe spaces, common amenity areas for seniors, maker spaces, local serving retail, arts and culture spaces and other co-sharing work spaces;
- *Flexible strategic funding connected to feasibility studies, capacity building and community stewardship* – for example - supporting non-profits and social enterprises in flexible employment opportunities for low-income people, which also aid peer-to-peer stewardship of commercial areas and infrastructure/public space use.

The strategic project funds recommended in this report respond to the following community priorities—the urgency of which have been demonstrated by COVID-19—peer employment opportunities for residents to address safety, security and community well-being ; and access to vacant affordable spaces to support local economic recovery. Table 2 outlines the recommended strategic response grants.

Strategic Analysis

The DTES Plan Implementation Matching Grants presents a strategic opportunity to advance three key priority areas identified in the planning process: protecting community assets, neighbourhood improvement and community building, and community economic development. The proposed projects also support the Social Impact Objectives of the DTES Plan (Chapter 1).

The grants recommended in this report (see Appendix A for more detail of each project) align with Council priorities and strategies, in particular the *Healthy City Strategy*, the *Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan* and the *DTES CED Strategy*. The grants focus mostly on the *Healthy City Strategy*, an inspirational strategy for all residents of Vancouver, particularly to the diverse neighbourhoods of the DTES. This strategy aspires to the vision of a “Healthy City for All” through three focus areas of “Healthy People” (taking care of basics) “Healthy Communities” (cultivating connections) and “Healthy Environments” (ensuring liveability now and into the future).

Five applications are not recommended for approval (see Appendix B for more details).

Most of the matching grant applications are related to Community Asset Management priority areas related to much needed access to affordable spaces for non-profits and social enterprises. The funding distribution of the recommended grant applications are shown and summarized in Table 1.

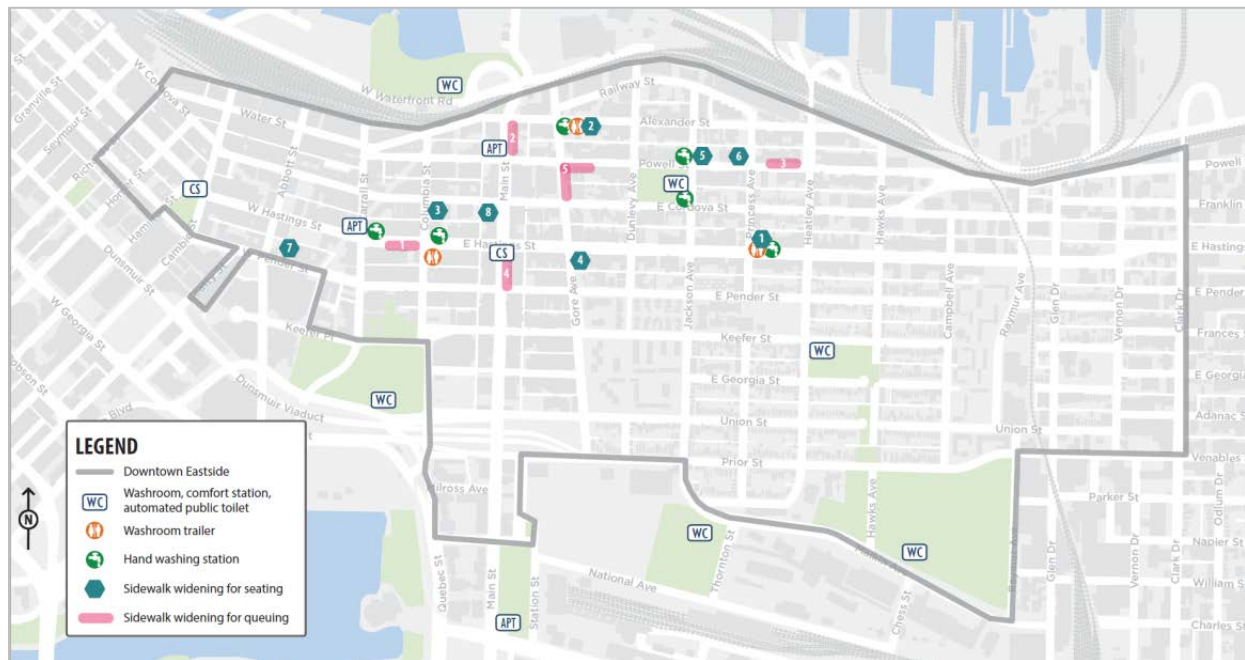
Table 1: Recommended DTES Plan Implementation Matching Grants

Funding Area	Objectives	Number of Grants	% of Grants	Total Funding
Community Economic Development	A vibrant and inclusive economy through Community Economic Development	3	16%	\$79,570
Community Asset Management	Retention and improvement of valuable assets identified in the DTES Plan and SIA	16	84%	\$464,030
Neighbourhood Improvements	Improvements to the neighbourhood places and spaces for community wellbeing, safety and walkability	0	0%	\$0
Total		19	100%	\$543,600

As part of COVID-19 response strategies, the following interventions are proposed to respond to community needs. Table 2 outlines the recommended strategic response grants.

Table 2: Recommended strategic response grants

Organization	Project Description	Amount
Eastside Movement for Business and Economic Renewal Society (EMBERS)	Community stewardship peer employment in Chinatown to continue with community relations assistance as part of COVID-19 response.	\$50,000
Portland Housing Society (PHS)	Community stewardship in partnerships with Strathcona BIA and DTES Neighbourhood House to provide a safe gathering space near Astoria Hotel.	\$50,000
Vancouver Economic Commission in partnership with Community Impact Real Estate Society and Buy Social BC	Study to identify vacant spaces and interested landlords/ tenants to activate affordable spaces in the DTES	\$50,000
Engineering Services	implement COVID-19 response community hubs at priority locations (refer to Figure 1 below); building on the emergency response spaces for queueing and seating	\$500,000
Community Services	To retain a consultant to engage the community to explore the creation of a Community Economic Development hub at 501 Powell St.	\$20,000
Total		\$670,000

Figure 1: Priority locations for public space for queuing and seating

In 2014, the Downtown Eastside Plan was approved by Council with policies (6.5.7, 13.1.1, 13.2.4) to support Japanese-Canadians in their initiatives to honour their heritage and family memories in the Powell Street District (Paueru Gai) through public realm improvements, public art, events and programming, and strategic development and heritage rehabilitation opportunities.

In 2019, Council approved Making Space for Arts and Culture: Cultural Infrastructure Plan as part of Vancouver's culture plan, Culture/Shift: Blanketing the City in Arts and Culture. Making Space lays out the City's long-term vision and commitment to address acute space challenges, and sets a 10-year target of 800,000 square feet of new, repurposed or expanded affordable cultural space, as well as policies and tools to support no net loss of space. It prioritizes support for cultural heritage and recognition of cultural redress in neighborhoods where communities have suffered from discriminatory policies and actions, including the expropriation of land and property. The plan outlines support for the Japanese Canadian community in exploring space opportunities and preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

In the same year, the Federal government designated the 1928 heritage building a National Historic site and Provincial Government representatives joined City staff in a community workshop to explore possible needs for assistance.

Currently, cultural, heritage and planning staff are working with local Japanese Canadians on their community-led cultural redress initiatives to recognize the history and heritage of Japanese Canadians in the Paueru Gai/historic Powell Street area. The Interpretive Centre at the VJLD-JH is one key initiative with a total budget of \$3.5 million and the \$250,000 grant will provide strong support to its creation. It is understood the community has raised \$500,000 and is intending applying for additional funding from Provincial and Federal sources. The Interpretive Centre will be an important asset and resource to commemorate and educate people about the Japanese Canadians history in the Powell Street area. (See Appendix D for additional pictures).



RECEPTION LOBBY - RENOVATION

Financial

The total amount recommended in this report is \$1,463,600 in grants with \$543,600 for the DTES Plan Implementation Matching Grants program, \$670,000 for strategic grant allocations to support COVID-19 response actions and \$250,000 grant to support the VJLS-JH to establish a Japanese Interpretive Centre.

These initiatives are funded from the Multi-Year Capital Project Budget of 2020 DTES Capital Grant Program; and expenditures will be managed within the current approved Annual Capital Expenditure Budget.

Once these grants have been approved by Council, a term of reference will be signed between the applicant and the City of Vancouver outlining the terms and conditions for each grant release.

CONCLUSION

The grants and funding recommendation in this report align with the overarching DTES Plan goal for the area to be a more livable, safe, and supportive place for all of its diverse residents, particularly recognising that by supporting the high proportion of residents who face systemic barriers creates a more equitable neighbourhood for all. It will help the City to address its priorities of fostering community economic development, protecting community assets, neighbourhood improvement, and community building and to support vital COVID-19 response projects urgently needed in the DTES community, which has been profoundly impacted by the pandemic.

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DTES Plan Implementation Grants					
No	Organization	Project Description	Outcomes	Quick Starts (see Appendix C)	Amount Recommended
1	Osei-Duro Foundation	4 month pilot (Reruns) - digital training program with UGM social enterprise. Continuum of employment on UGM's Repair to Wear project.	Skills development and job training for at-risk women in the DTES	Economy (C7,C8,C9)	\$14,050
2	Potluck Cafe	Financial support to construct a new space (288 E Hastings) and purchase kitchen equipment	A new facility for Potluck to continue creating jobs and providing food to DTES residents.	Economy (C6,C8,C9)	\$50,000
3	VanCity Community Foundation	build 3 new private offices at 312 Main's co-working floor. Needed by DTES groups to work safely during COVID	3 self-contained work space	Economy (C6)	\$39,300
4	Bloom Group	Feasibility study to redevelop the Cordova House (368 Cordova) and adjacent property (305 Dunlevy)	Feasibility to redevelop affordable community space and below market rental housing.	Housing (B3) Arts + Culture (D2)	\$22,500
5	Atira Women's Resource Society	For the purchase of equipment and furnishings, and to support the renovations of a critically needed daycare (321 Princess Av)	Furnished daycare for 24 DTES children	Well-Being (A3)	\$50,000
6	Vancouver Buddhist Temple	Develop a DTES Buddhist Education Centre. Funds for security + safety upgrades, minor interior renovations + equip't replacement.	Additional funding to support this Japanese Canadian cultural institution	Heritage (D4)	\$27,000
7	DTES SRO Collaborative Society	New food hub (288 Keefer) - walk-in cooler and freezer installation, floor repair and security gates	Creation of a DTES food sovereign co-operative with support services.	Well-being (A1,A2,A3)	\$25,000

8	Hoy Ping Benevolent Association	Install new security gates, new street level water line outlet and renovations to the men's and women's washrooms	Improved Chinese Society building	Heritage (D4)	\$21,500
9	Eastside Cultural Crawl Society	Update their interactive website which also acts as an 'official' website for many local artists.	A new and efficient website to support over 500 artists	Arts + Culture (D2)	\$21,900
10	Vancouver's Women's Health Collective Society	renovations to provide two separate washrooms, add shower stall, and a washer/dryer	Improved and safer access for 40 women daily	Well-being (A1,A3)	\$22,000
11	Food Stash Foundation	purchase of a second truck to facilitate the rescue of perishable food	Double support for more charities and individuals with access to healthy food	Well-being (A2)	\$15,520
12	Mission Possible Compassionate Ministries Society	New awning, purchase new vehicle and case management software.	Increase MP capacity and more employment opportunities	Economy (C6, C8, C9)	\$57,660
13	WePress Community Arts Space Society	Secured community computer server, community video information screen and kitchen equipment for their DTES Community Kitchen (DECK) project.	Improved food security, access to technology, and increase community information + connections.	Well-being (A1, A2,A3)	\$50,000
14	Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House	Relocation support to a temporary site due to renovation of their current site.	Continued programming and services to the DTES residents.	Well-being (A1,A2,A3)	\$50,000
15	Kong Chow Benevolent Association	upgrade washrooms on the 2nd and 3rd floors, replace single-glass non-operable windows and sliding door on the 3rd floor	Improved Chinese Society Building in Chinatown	Heritage (D4)	\$16,620
16	Atira Women's Resource Society	Renovations to the basement of the Imouto Housing for Young Women	Improved common space for the young women residents.	Well-being (A2,A3)	\$7,750

17	Queer Arts Festival	New glass door and media equipment (projector, mini Mac), furniture piano caster and cover.	Improved public visibility, improved media equipment	Arts + Culture (D2)	\$17,000
18	Atira Women's Resource Society	For a kitchen renovations at the Empress Rooms at 362 Alexander.	Improved common kitchen for 33 women at risk residents.	Well-being (A1,A2,A3)	\$20,300
19	WISH	new laundry equipment, furniture, kitchen supplies, recovering our lounge chairs, security improvements and repairing our food service line.	Improved low-barrier, safe space for street-based sex working women.	Well-being (A1,A2,A3)	\$15,500
				Total	\$543,600

NOT Recommended				
No.	Organization	Project Description	Grant Amount	Comments
1	Hastings Crossing BIA	Cleaning Peer workers from Mission Possible maintenance program. 6 months 32 persons hours per week.	\$ 9,607	Additional garbage clean-up provided by the City already.
2	Gastown Business Improvement Society (Gbis)	Community engagement strategy for the existing Draft Gastown Urban Design Study	\$ 25,000	Staff will be engaging with the public and key stakeholders on changes to Gastown public realm. GBIS has started a study to reflect their needs and help inform that work, however that is one perspective and should stay clearly separate from City initiatives.
3	Strathcona BIA	Community-serving Retail in Chinese Society Building - continuation	\$ 49,000	2019 DTES Grant approved for similar project and underway. Needs completion of current project before further granting of funds.
4	Give A Better Life Foundation	Renovations to create a food recovery, sorting and distribution centre including the installation of a new walk-in fridge at 43 W Hastings (Save-on-Meat).	\$ 50,000	Building is privately owned. Operations capacity uncertain.
5	Watari Research Association	New food hub (288 Keefer) Interior alterations and commercial kitchen renovation	\$ 50,000	Building is privately owned.

QUICK START ACTIONS and SHORT TERM PROJECTS
(Summary of Section 18.6 – Action Plan 2013-43 of the approved DTES Plan)

A - Well-Being
1. Enhance residents sense of safety, inclusion and belonging, including implementing actions from the City's Task Force on Sex Work and Sexual Exploitation and Missing Women's Inquiry
2. Improve access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally-appropriate foods
3. Continue to prioritize that the safety of women, children, seniors, and culturally-diverse groups through well-designed spaces and inclusive programs
B - Housing
1. Offer grants to non-profits to upgrade SROs while maintaining affordability
2. Continue working with the Residential Tenancy Branch to improve tenant/landlord relations.
3. Address urgent social housing needs.
4. Explore creative financing using a 'cost-benefit' approach for scattered supportive housing sites.
C - Economy
1. Investigate regulatory changes and building code modifications to accelerate small conversions and renovations of business premises (especially in older buildings that are costly to maintain) to allow business owners who wish to make physical improvements.
2. Work with the four Business Improvement Associations to create a neighbourhood-wide business characteristics survey.
3. Work with VEC and BIAs to attract suitable new enterprises with retail strategies
4. Use City-owned properties, affordable leases, and revitalization tax supports to provide affordable goods and services to the area.
5. Undertake a study of vending alternatives and the establishment of neighbourhood market-selling facilities.
6. Facilitate social and green enterprise practices and innovative business methods to achieve Social Impact objectives and Greenest City Action Plan objectives
7. Innovate and support opportunities for market-selling, small business and micro-enterprise opportunities for DTES residents to build the survival economy
8. Identify, secure and maximize economic/business assets that serve the low-income community (particularly in the CBDA)
9. Increase local employment encouraging inclusive local hiring opportunities.

D - Arts & Culture and Heritage
1. Stabilize key existing physical assets and secure ownership in public domain
2. Retain/create flexible multi-use neighbourhood spaces such as studios, offices, rehearsal/production and indoor/outdoor space
3. Support community efforts to recognize Aboriginal First Nations heritage and the Salish Sea Civilization concept
4. Support community initiatives such as raising the stature of the Japanese Canadian heritage, preservation and rehabilitation of the Chinatown Society buildings, identify, preserve and improve places with social and cultural meaning to the community, such as CRAB Park, Pigeon Park, Oppenheimer Park, Powell Street (Japantown), Chinatown, Strathcona, historic lane ways and alleys.
5. Initiate the work on updating the Vancouver Heritage Register.
6. Create a framework and business plan for a Chinatown Society Building Grants Program
E - Parks & Open Space
1. Convert over-paved or under-used areas into mini-parks or plazas where possible.
2. Review existing street trees to fill gaps and replace ailing trees, and prioritize planting new trees in areas with few or no existing street trees.
3. Make existing parks more useable by adding new features
4. Enhance the public realm to improve walkability, and reinforce the distinct identity of historic areas
F - Community Place-Making
1. Encourage the revitalization of laneways through temporary installations and development opportunities.
2. Hastings Street and Kiwassa Urban Design Framework and Public Realm Plan
3. Undertake improvements to Water Street and Maple Tree Square, including the public realm, pedestrian, cyclist, and traffic safety, and introduce amenities for community programming and celebrations.
G - Well-Managed Growth & Development
1. Amend land use and development policies and bylaws to support plan implementation, including the adoption of a new DTES Rezoning Policy and Social Impact Objectives



HALL - PROPOSED MEZZANINE AND INTERACTIVE SCREEN



ATRIUM SPACE



LIBRARY SPACE



CO-WORK SPACE