



REPORT

Report Date: June 9, 2021
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: June 22, 2021
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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 - 2021

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve the matching grant allocation of \$341,000 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, with funds from the Multi-Year Capital Project Budget of the 2021 DTES Capital Grant Program and managed within the approved Annual Capital Expenditure Budget.
- B. THAT Council approve \$145,000 in strategic grant allocations to support cultural equity and women's safety initiatives in the following amounts, with funds from the Multi-Year Capital Project Budget of the 2021 DTES Capital Grant Program and managed within the approved Annual Capital Expenditure Budget:
 - i. \$100,000 for the Parks and Recreation Project Team planning, consultation, ideation, design and cultural translation services to achieve the cultural equity objectives for Chinatown in the implementation of the North East False Creek (NEFC) Plan;
 - ii. \$20,000 to the Overdose Prevention Society (OPS) for community outreach and de-escalation supports.
 - iii. \$25,000 to the Community Impact Real Estate Society (CIRES) for initiatives for women's safety that could include community stewardship, partnerships and outreach, with funds to be administered by CIRES and directed towards a priority initiative based on the direction of the Managing

Director, Social Policy & Projects and in collaboration with community serving partners.

- C. THAT Council approve the reallocation of a \$50,000 grant from the Vancouver Economic Commission (VEC) to the Community Impact Real Estate Society (CIRES) to continue with the implementation of vacant space activation in the Downtown Eastside as a component of the Special Enterprise Pilot Program that was originally allocated to VEC in partnership with CIRES October 21, 2020 (RTS 13784).
- D. THAT Council approve a \$40,000 grant to RainCity Housing and Support Society to implement a pilot project for self-care for peer witness workers, and a \$21,000 to Vancouver Aboriginal Policing Centre to deliver three Indigenous Tools for Living training sessions on trauma tools for frontline workers, with the source of funding being funds that the City of Vancouver received from the Province of British Columbia to fund Community Action Team projects.
- E. THAT, pursuant to Section 206(1)(j) of the *Vancouver Charter*, Council deems any organization listed in Appendix A of this report that is not otherwise a registered charity with Canada Revenue Agency to be contributing to the culture, beautification, health, or welfare of Vancouver.
- F. THAT the General Manager of Planning, Urban Design, and Sustainability (GM of PDS) (or their designate) be authorized to negotiate and execute agreements to disburse the grants described in this report on the terms and conditions generally set out below and on such other terms and conditions as are satisfactory to the GM of PDS and the Director of Legal Services.
- G. THAT no legal rights or obligations will be created by the approval of Recommendations A to D above unless and until the applicable grant agreement or letter of agreement is approved by the City in accordance with Recommendation F above and executed and delivered by both the grant recipient and GM of PDS (or their designate).

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 13 grants to 12 non-profit agencies totalling \$341,000 to provide critical assistance and support community initiatives in a timely way to benefit vulnerable DTES residents and implementation of the DTES Plan. The funding will advance work towards

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 Neighbourhood Plan. A further \$145,000 is recommended for allocation towards three cultural equity and women's safety initiatives.

From the 2021 Capital Budget, \$1,000,000 was approved for DTES initiatives. This funding focuses on initiatives that address key priorities identified through community engagement on the DTES Plan implementation. This includes 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.

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)
- North East False Creek Plan (2018)
- 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

DTES Plan Implementation Grants

The Downtown Eastside (DTES) is located on the traditional, unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (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.

Census data shows that the DTES consistently has low-income populations at a much higher rate than the city overall. As of 2016 more than half of individuals in the DTES had incomes under \$20,000, a much higher rate than the city overall. The median household income in the DTES is \$23,359, which is considerably lower than that across the city at \$65,423.

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 DTES 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 balance rolled over. After the DTES Plan was approved by Council (2014) the DTES Plan Implementation Grants was re-established to implement the Plan in four key priority areas:

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

The objective of the DTES Plan Implementation Grants 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, including the Healthy City Strategy and Greenest City strategies.

Grants are recommended to the non-profit agencies as shown in Appendix A, totalling \$341,000 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 marginalised individuals to be more self-reliant, and for organizations to be more sustainable. A further \$145,000 in strategic grants is recommended to address urgent equity and cultural redress for Chinatown and improved women's safety initiatives in the area.

With respect to the Chinatown NEFC Plan Community Working Group, there is a need for \$100,000 to deepen social and equity based work within the NEFC park design process, including ideation and cultural translation services. In addition, the resources would support conversations with the NEFC Chinatown Working Group, and advance engagement activities with the Chinatown community.

Community organizations, peers and residents have identified an increase in violence in the DTES, likely exacerbated by the stresses of the pandemic. Service providers and peers are working together to identify potential solutions including additional outreach and spaces such as a 24-hour space for women. The violence has affected the community broadly with particular groups being disproportionately impacted including women and people who use drugs, with a higher proportion of Indigenous people among these.

Staff recommend \$25,000 be provided to Community Impact Real Estate Society (CIRES) to distribute, based on the direction of the Managing Director, Social Policy, towards solutions for women's safety, potential in partnership with residents, women serving non profits other funding sources.

Staff also recommend \$20,000 be provided to the Overdose Prevention Society (OPS) for outreach supports in and around the Overdose Prevention site located at 99 West Pender where it recently relocated to. The OPS has identified an increase in the need for outreach and de-escalation supports. OPS has had some success in de-escalating issues and identifying peaceful solutions through peers surrounding the OPS. However, to be more effective and responsive to this need, this requires funding along with funds for evaluation that will help identify impact over the next 18 months.

In October 2020, Council approved a grant of \$50,000 for the Vancouver Economic Commission (VEC) to work in partnership with the Community Impact Real Estate Society (CIRES) and Exchange Inner City (EIC). This involved a project to identify landlords and tenants interested in activating affordable vacant spaces in the DTES (RTS 13784). This project now forms part of the Special Enterprise Program for the DTES. Project oversight and administration have been restructured in order to streamline project administration and process. To enable continuity, staff in consultation with VEC are recommending reallocating the approved funds to the project partner CIRES to continue with the implementation of the project. VEC will continue to assist the project as a project advisor. CIRES is a local non-profit organization with expertise in the curation of commercial spaces and social enterprise property management that supports community economic development initiatives in the DTES. Reallocation of this grant from VEC to CIRES requires Council approval.

The City of Vancouver has to distribute money that it received from the Province of British Columbia. Since 2018, the City of Vancouver through ACCS has received provincial funding from the Overdose Emergency Response Centre (OERC) for the Vancouver Community Action Team (CAT). The Vancouver CAT is comprised of representatives from over 25 different organizations working on addressing the overdose crisis at various levels, including Indigenous partners, non-profit organizations, frontline workers, health professionals, first responders, advocacy groups, government representatives, peer workers, and other people with lived experience. The CAT is co-chaired by the City of Vancouver's Social Policy Department and Vancouver Coastal Health and meets regularly approximately every 6 weeks. The City is the fiscal agent for the CAT and decisions on CAT spending are made collectively by members. In 2020, the CAT received one-time funding for \$150,000 for project activities related to the CAT. This funding will be used to hire a CAT Coordinator, honoraria for peers and an Elder, and project activities as determined by the CAT. The CAT wishes to disperse funding to two non-profit groups to support projects related to the overdose crisis that meet the objectives of the OERC. In order to disburse funds to non-profit organizations, Council approval is required because the City holds the funds.

Strategic Analysis

The DTES Plan Implementation Grants presents a strategic opportunity to advance four key priority areas identified in the planning process: protecting community assets, neighbourhood improvement, community economic development, and strategic projects. 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).

Most of the matching grant applications relate to Community Asset Management and Community Economic Development priority areas related to much needed access to affordable spaces for non-profits and social enterprises. The funding distribution of the recommended grant applications is summarised 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	5	45%	\$154,400
Community Asset Management	Retention and improvement of valuable assets identified in the DTES Plan and SIA	7	47%	\$161,600
Neighbourhood Improvements	Improvements to the neighbourhood places and spaces for community wellbeing, safety and walkability	1	8%	\$25,000
Total		13	100%	\$341,000

As part of meeting cultural redress and women’s safety priorities, the following strategic interventions totalling \$145,000 are proposed to respond to community needs. Table 2 outlines the recommended cultural redress and intersectionality initiatives.

Table 2: Recommended strategic projects and cultural redress grants

Organization	Project Description	Amount
Overdose Prevention Society (OPS)	Community outreach and de-escalation supports.	\$20,000
Community Impact Real Estate Society (CIRES)	Solutions for women’s safety, stewardship, partnerships and outreach.	\$25,000
The Parks and Recreation Project Team	Planning, design and ideation towards achieving cultural equity objectives with Chinatown towards implementation of the North East False Creek Plan	\$100,000
Total		\$145,000

In order to advance the implementation of the Special Enterprise Program, staff recommend the reallocation of approved grant funding to CIRES to support vacant space activation in the

DTES. This reallocation does not impact on the DTES Capital Grant Program Budget as it involves previously approved grant funding (2020).

Table 3: Recommended reallocation of strategic project grants

Organization	Project Description	Amount
Community Impact Real Estate Society (CIRES)	Reallocate grant funding from VEC to CIRES to ensure administrative continuity. The project scope of the original grant remains unchanged: identify sites, landlords and tenants interested in activating affordable vacant spaces in the DTES and develop a detailed proposal for 2 space activation pilots, including an analysis of feasibility, budget and delivery.	\$50,000
Total		\$50,000

In order to distribute the CAT funding described above, staff recommend grants in the following amounts. These allocations are to disperse funds received from the Province of BC to CAT and do not impact the DTES Capital Grants Program.

Table 4: CAT Grants

Organization	Project Description	Amount
RainCity Housing and Support Society	Self-care for peer witness workers pilot	\$40,000
Vancouver Aboriginal Policing Society	Training sessions on trauma tools for frontline workers	\$21,000
Total		\$61,000

Financial

The full amount being recommended is \$597,000. The total amount in new grants recommended in this report is \$486,000 comprising of \$341,000 for the DTES Plan Implementation Grants program, and \$145,000 for strategic projects, involving cultural redress and women’s safety. These initiatives are funded from the Multi-Year Capital Project Budget for DTES Capital Grant Program and expenditures will be managed within the current approved 2021 Capital Expenditure Budget. Additional recommendations in this report involve reallocation of previously approved (2020) \$50,000 grant funding from VEC to CIRES and dispersal of \$61,000 Provincial funding for CAT to respective community societies, so there are no financial implications to the DTES Capital Grant Program.

Following Council approval of proposed grants, Terms of Reference documents will be signed between the applicants and the City of Vancouver outlining the terms and conditions for each grant release.

CONCLUSION

The grants and funding recommendations 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. Recommended allocations recognise supporting the high proportion of residents who face systemic barriers can serve to create a more equitable neighbourhood for all.

These grants will help the City to address its priorities of fostering community economic development, protecting community assets, neighbourhood improvement, and community building. They will also support cultural redress initiatives and urgently needed women's safety outreach.

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DTES Plan Implementation Grants					
No	Organization	Project Description	Outcomes	Quick Starts (see Appendix B)	Amount Recommended
1	The Bloom Group Community Services Society	Tenant improvements to their relocated Adult Guardianship program to 317 E Hastings Street.	Financial support for people who have difficulty managing their finances with 80 from the DTES.	Well-Being (A3)	\$17,000
2	Potluck Café (2003) Society	Financial support to construct a new space (288 E Hastings) and purchase kitchen equipment	A new facility for Potluck to continue creating jobs, training and providing food to DTES residents.	Economy (C6,C8,C9)	\$50,000
3	Gastown Business Improvement Society	Place making with inclusive gathering spaces for the community and visitors in Gastown; on sites to be agreed with Engineering.	Quality, safe and accessible public space/s for all to enjoy.	Community Place-making (F3)	\$25,000
4	Community Impact Real Estate Society (CIRES)	Space improvements to Washington Community Market, a social enterprise that provide affordable groceries to the DTES.	Creating a safer and more welcome environment for a 17 years DTES food service and employment.	Economy (C8) Well-Being (A2,A3)	\$32,700
5	Hope in Shadows Society	Office equipment purchases to improve Megaphone's operational capacity to deliver services to the DTES.	Increase capacity to deliver DTES services and provide computer usage to peers with limited access to technology.	Economy (C7,C8,C9) Well-Being (A2,A3)	\$2,700
6	Vancouver Aboriginal Health Society	Support the establishment of a preventative dental service in their Indigenous Early Years Facility.	Promote positive dental practice for Indigenous families facing mental/ emotional/cultural, geographic and financial barriers.	Well-Being (A3)	\$8,000

7	WISH Drop-In Centre Society	Interior alterations to make their support space more efficient and usable, including a ramp for better accessibility.	Improved quality, accessibility and comfort for women involved in street-base sex work.	Well-being (A1,A2,A3)	\$30,000
8	Kong Chow Benevolent Association of Canada	Interior alterations to their members space including the kitchen and both the men and women's washrooms.	Improved safety and comfort for the Chinese senior and improved bldg. maintenance.	Well-being (A3) Arts + Culture (D4)	\$24,000
9	Kong Chow Benevolent Association of Canada	Exterior façade upgrades to the Kam Wai Dim Sum retail front as well as to the society's entrance.	An attractive façade to support the heritage business and Chinatown's public realm.	Well-being (A2) Arts + Culture (D4)	\$22,000
10	MakeWay Charitable Society	Work with consultants to build capacity, research potential organizational models and develop marketing strategies.	Strengthen and increase the capacity to one of the most marginalised DTES employment groups	Economy (C7,C8,C9)	\$30,000
11	Chinatown Foundation	Improvements to the 5 shared kitchen and replacement of worn staircase carpets and front entry flooring.	May Wah (SRO) will be safer for the residents when they cook and move about especially seniors.	Well-being (A2,A3)	\$10,600
12	Downtown Eastside Women's Centre	Improvements to a commercial space at 25 East Hastings into a new drop-in centre	Safe non-judgemental drop-in space, 7,500 meals, 450 referrals to services and daily support.	Well-being (A1,A2,A3)	\$50,000
13	Mission Possible	Purchase of new and replacement equipment for its property maintenance service	Increase employment for DTES residents facing barriers to employment.	Economy (C7,C8,C9) Well-being (A1, A2,A3)	\$39,000
				Total	\$341,000

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