

**DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE LOCAL AREA PLANNING PROGRAM
DRAFT NOTES: CULTURAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SESSION
JUNE 28, 2012**

ATTENDANCE:

Carrie Campbell, Kim Washburn, Anita Lo, Shannon Fravitz, Pat McHenry, Charles Barber, Terry Hunter, Mary Bennett, Haema Sivanesan, Kim Nguyen, Donna Spencer, Michael Wan, Casey Bowman, Teresa Vande Twin, Eric Soete, Duncan Farthing Nicole, Jeffrey Boone, Michael Clague, Gene Chang, Rob Morgan, Diane Switzer, Mara Farevaag, Neil Scott, Tanya Fink, Cheryl Masters, John Cameron, Louise Painchaud, Sonja Embree, Irwin Oostindie, Ian McDonald, Michelle Sproule, Clayton Holmes, Wendy Thirteen, Savannah Walliry, Susan Ma, Thomas Robson, John Cameron, Anne Marie Slater

City of Vancouver: Wesley Joe, Chasma Heinze, Kira Gerwing, Tom Wanklin, Sandra Vigil Fonseca

WHO SHOULD BE HERE WHO ISN'T?

Enterprising Women Making Art (on holiday)

The owner of the Rickshaw

Chapel Arts

Ironworks studio

Other non-profit cultural tenants of Woodward's (Vancouver Latin American Film Festival, Urban Ink, Theatre Terrific, Karen

Jamieson, Geist)

Rickshaw theatre

Dunlevy snack bar (as venue)

221A Artist Run Centre and studios

Ironworks studio

Developers

PHS

COMMUNITY ASSETS

- **Vancouver Moving Theatre** - has largest impact on residents in DTES in terms of arts & culture.
- **Strathcona Community Centre** - storage and venue for arts performance and activity
- **VANDU** - supports drug users and other residents, Edge, and education meetings. They have been creative in using music and performance around areas of addiction and conviction. Art's as a tool for healthier communities.
- **Carnegie Centre** - Center of the community, heritage building, reps early days in Vancouver. It has reinvented itself overtime.
- **Chinatown** - is a cultural asset for the city. For its buildings, people, story of history in Vancouver, night market, many layers since the early days of city.
- **Firehall Arts Centre** - brings people to the DTES and it has a valuable relationship with the community.
- **Gallery Gachet** - only gallery focused on artists living with mental health issues. 20 + members, 60 volunteers and a yearlong program schedule. It is nationally known and includes local artists. Gachet is a key partner in creative projects in the DTES. Art cart - as mobile gallery and is a tool for outreach.
- **History & Cultural Diversity** - founding neighborhood with so many original buildings, many cultural groups have come through, from traditional people of the land to immigrants. Founding neighborhoods include; Chinatown, Gastown and Japantown all of which have an incredible richness of history.
- **Oppenheimer Park**
- **Main & Hastings** - four corners
- **Aboriginal arts studios** - on Pender and Raven Gallery
- **Chinese Buddhist Temple**
- **DTES Centre for the arts** (also could be considered missing)

- **Conductive Zoning** does exist, is under threat, and need to see more of. Culture crawl only exists here because so many diff artists can have so many diff types of studios in one neighborhood, successful because of so many buildings, this will be lost if light industrial is converted to housing
- **Artists** live in a compact dense, highest percentage of artists because up until this point it was an affordable place for them to live, the neighborhood welcomes artists. This kind of festival (heart of city) would be completely diff in another neighborhood, because we are drawing on all of the neighborhors, history, residents, artists—cultural and economic inclusivity for artists. Support, diversity.
- **Non-judgemental**—lots of people with a lot of issues, people try and support each other because they are all living on the edge, encouraging each other to keep going.
- **Heritage**—Gastown/Chinatown. History, value its where we can attract tourists and other parts/people of the country,
- **Sun Yat Sen**—it is a cultural place in Chinatown, the Chinese style, a great place for people, attracts tourists. The garden acts as a bridge between Chinese/Western/Multicultural. A connection. Part of a variety of diff organizations so there are a lot of different events, learning, storytelling, music concerts, enchanted evenings, lantern festival. Garden walks, educational tours.
- **The People Travel** around daily, the DTES—talks with many other artists—a number of different places in the neighborhood that are important to my survival (soup kitchens, community services) depend on a network of organizations. I live in a motorhome. An awful lot of intelligent well educated people in the soup lines but they got caught in something that took over their lives. A lot of people down here don't have the same illusions '**no illusions**'—because they know they are right near the edge at all times.
- **'Heart of the City' Festival** venue map is my dot—widespread studios, homes, stages.
- **Union St bike lane:** an amazing addition to the environment, atmosphere
- **Community Gardens**—Strathcona and Cottonwood—orchards, ponds, people gathering
- **The Edge artists housing coop**—common spaces, condo development, a certain number of units that are a coop, dark room, woodworking room—this is related to the ZONING
- **Crab Park**
- **Gallery Gachet**
- **Coop Radio**
- **W2**
- **Centre A**
- **Interurban**
- **Culture Plan**
- **Funky Winkerbeans** - This place has now new owners. It is on Hasting between Carrall and Abbot. It has been bought and the new owner owns upscale restaurants. This is the only space that remains in the DTES with performance of underground live music.
- **Cultural centers of the neighborhood(s):** Japanese, Ukrainian, Russian Hall centres. This is a network of cultural spaces that have been and are serving the community.
- **200 block of East Georgia:** the last vibrant functioning element of our authentic Chinatown. Something that it is actually functioning because you can see families, they are safe. It is not a tourist exhibit. Chinatown only exits between Gore and Main.
- **Nighttime market:** She can't walk on Pender, but the market she loves because it is bridging.
- **Street market on Pigeon Park:** some people are scared to go there, but this is how people are here.
- **No 5 Orange:** For a man his age he is attracted to the 'pin pon balls'.

- **Woodwards atrium** is a living cultural heritage. The rhetoric of gentrification and revitalization strategy is contradictory. We could get something meaningful out of this project. It represents the possibility that we might do something good out of this effort. Not a locked down, sterile, security locked zone.
- **Centre A:** It is 1 of 3 public galleries in Vancouver. It is the only one in NA that focuses in contemporary Asian community art.
- **Parker Street:** It speaks to the whole thing. There needs to be artist studios and that these are slipping away. This represents affordable studios all over the DTES.
- **Gore and Railway:** Artist housing, live work places. The core housing, the city owns this part, and the edges are owned by private owners.
- **Clayton house:** it represents the artists who have houses where they can work. He has a house where his wife has a pottery studio, he edits there. He feels that this is the only place where this kind of live and work units exists. It is unique.
- **Cottonwood garden:** this is a community garden that has 200 gardeners.

WHAT'S MISSING?

- **Youth engagement** vis a vis Chinese Opera
- **Affordable studio space**
- **An exhibition space** for DTES artists.
- **Pantages** - was Vancouver's oldest performance space. Threat of condos moving in and replacing/erasing history.
- **The old 'fashionable' district** areas along East Hastings used to be.
- **Significant space dedicated for community arts practice** - accessible, place for connecting artists, multiple spaces, access points for the community, storage. He put it at Gore & Hastings (currently storing equipment).
- **Death of accessible venues** in terms of affordability. Because of the cost you cannot have lectures, events for free. And accessible by transit. Hastings & Richards.
- **Lost connection to the historic waterfront** is missing.
- **Woodwards** - while not considered an 'asset' it is seen as a lost opportunity.
- **Dirty space** - active studio for the community (e.g. in North Vancouver - presentation house?).
- **Loss of affordable studio space** and little opps for 'pop up' shops or temporary spaces for animation or exhibition. This could also be at risk. Around the south side of Hastings. Missing opps and at risk.
- **Pigeon Park street market** - where several artists can sell their work (jewellery, crafts, photos, arts, etc.) - this is also at risk.
- **Night Market in Chinatown**
- **People can afford to live and work**—affordability is missing—housing accessible studio space (for emerging artists). The community centres are great because there is accessible space, resources tools. But its diff to find a place to work/live if you don't work within that system. There are a lot of barriers that people have to operate as an artists
- **Non profit owned and operated studio space**—for people who make their living as an artist
- **Training and performance centre/theatre** affordable/accessible
- **Smaller, moveable portable shelters for homeless**, allows people to have their own space with a community area
- **Control the negative press**—positivity or tolerance towards the area. My thinking has become very different working and living in the neighborhood—instead of alienating that sell drugs...
- **Culture Plan:** that ensures that everything we have now stays—beyond
- **A bridge between diplomacy and the community**—the community can have its own peace officers...

- **Funky Winker Beans, old logger social club, the Dotson whale hotel, the Pennsylvania, the Drake, the Princess, the Waterfront.** All these places are gone. These are bars that used to have live music and now they are gone.
- **Pantages theatre:** it is a great loss of a beautiful theatre and an example of the city ignoring the cultural aspects and the vision that could have brought together housing and theatre. It represents the short-sighted decision to do the kind of project that they are doing. It symbolizes what is missing and a lack of values in relation to cultural assets, the community and the scale of what is happening.
- **The DTES is one the more diverse communities.** Little cohesion in the community, communities are microcosms. Thinking in Chinatown sustainable economic development. Things are happening in pockets. How do we start thinking in a coordinated effort that will serve the communities within the DTES?
- **Anne Marie:** There is no cohesion among the communities because it is advantageous to don't have cohesion. There is no cultural strategy or cultural platform in the DTES.
- **Local kiosks:** where residents can get information about the cultural events and places in their neighborhood.
- **Affordable houses for everyone.** No condos, no unaffordable housing. So the neighborhood can live there. Example Co-ops, so there is ownership, security, it is a non for profit model.
- **Outdoor seating is missing in Abbot and Hasting.** WE can locate some across the farm in Hasting. Some also along Carral Street. This is needed to socialize with your neighbors in a summer evening, to play chess or cards.
- **Market ally, the green door. The white lunch and its sign.** A lot of people will work there when they got out of prison. **The smiling Buddha**, east of Pigeon Park, across from pantages. Between Colombia and main. **The Only Seafood café**, he could have bought it for 3500 years ago.
- **Red gate studio:** This block is sterilized by market. It was the last remaining art studio and it is closed. In the past it was a cultural hub for the Italian community. It demonstrates the lack of political will from politicians. They washed their hands and said the place was lacking fire codes.
- **Crab park:** lack of connection to the water.
- **Youth amenity under the viaduct.**
- Sterilization of the built form is happening. There is no room for people who bring art and culture to the city. The polarization of development has consequently lost art spaces.
- The red gate represents the lack of a consistent cultural policy. There has never been one. In 1986 we had the same set of circumstances are happening now. The same stuff with the City. He had an architect to design a project that will work for the artist, but they were evicted. We have a Greenest City Plan, but no cultural plan... We could place a moratorium on development until we have a cultural policy.
- Affordable business space.

AT RISK

- Local businesses in the community that are more mom and pop - more community players and partners. Main & Hastings. Loss of commercial services for low income.
- Losing venues for emerging artists to show their work. Hastings & Carrall - around where the interurban gallery is. Particular to visual artists. Impacted by the commercial higher end galleries coming into the neighborhood.
- Strathcona CC - as a venue to present artists and as a production facility (storage, rehearsal, creation).
- Oppenheimer Park - around the park with the prospect of condos being developed
- Powell Street festival
- Aboriginal Festival

- All heritage facilities - bldg. at Hastings & Gore - un-used (would be worth identifying which ones exactly so they could be on our radar). Map out the heritage inventory. This one is an art deco bldg.
- Chinese Buddhist Temple - under-used - Mark this down as an asset.
- Dominion bldg. - large no. of arts organizations have their offices there and rising rents will force them out in time.
- The existing characteristics of the nhood - losing the heritage character with the bldg. of new condos - erasing the character of Chinatown in particular. Around Main & Gore. Threshold of affordability is rising.

OTHER COMMENTS:

- Would not the new condo owners buy from the markets - not really as low income are buying from low income.
- Levy new owners to pay a DTES fee to support arts & culture in the DTES.
- Opps for studio space was Grandview Woodlands - it was suggested to refer to the community planning in that nhood.
- Strathcona BIA has prepared a green plan for the area.
- Outreach for Chinese Seniors to help connect seniors and not isolate them
- Successfully trained 30 seniors to perform on stage
- Been in operation one and half year; held an event to celebrate 125 anniversary; in Nov. will have a diamond jubilee
- Lived here for 15 years; works with Vancouver moving theatre; when moved into neighborhood started working on Artist at Home festival through Strathcona Comm Centre; brought out a number of artists in the neighborhood; meant to tell the story of all the artist that are in the area
- Main partner is Carnegie and their partners; attempt to try and touch every single art related organization in the DTES; it is so rich that there is no way we can touch it all of the time. Work with 50 diff partners and all kinds of diff organizations/individual artists

Every time we talk about the arts is that it shouldn't be isolated; the festival I work on is directly connected a whole diff approach. We're headed into the 9th annual festival

Hook up low income people with lawyers who offer their time for free that work in the private sector—serve a significant amount of the population in the DTES. Working on a community medical venture—'Richer' pediatric care in schools/community—currently working to add legal services to that

Culture Crawl—constantly growing supporting artists school outreach program, studio based—echo chamber, performance based. Working on a real estate project to secure some studio space for non-profits

Garden is one of the Best Chinese gardens outside China: two parts—one open to public—the other is admission based with exhibitions, music festival that you have to pay soon. The garden partners with other originations to promote festivals. Partner with heart of the City festival for example.

Homeless, photographer received two arts grants from DTES; also hope in shadows. Photographs have been donated to VNH to make the environment more uplifting. Moved here 10 years ago. Rather live in a motorhome than in apartment. I park anywhere I can without being bothered.

WHAT IS UNDER THREAT

- **Legitimate live music venues** when public agencies buy buildings that have bars and these bars are no longer available.
- **Long house gathering place** for the nations associated to this area and **cultural galleries**.
- **Legendary small markets:** they represent the human scale, walkability, eyes on the street.
- **Georgia Street**, it is going to become Chinatown Adventure Park.
- **Cheap food establishments:** Cafes, coffeeshops. Start-ups are a million dollar plus. They are designed to award developers and not residents.

- **Gallery Gache** a new upscale pizzeria is close by.
- **Jimmy Hendrix shrine**
- **Affordable studio space:**
- **Heritage brick roads** between Hastings and??? Been lost to pavement. The pavement is covering brick roads.
- **Lack of action from the City in delivering cultural programs.** There is an activist spirit in the City, but without council there is no implementation for the cultural policies. We need tax reforms to protect gallery gache.
- **Coast Salish presence** in the area. We need to engage indigenous culture and relate it to everybody. We see a Coast Salish village working collaborative with immigrant communities and other residents.
- **Coast Salish names**
- **Culture is at risk.**
- **Artist will have to move out of the neighborhood** and policy doesn't exist to protect them. The most important, we have academic and new people moving in. Also the DTES is been investigated in terms of culture. There is no voice from the people who live here. There is a gap between new people and old residents. No room for conversation between people who do cultural activities in the community and the newcomers.
- **Iron road studios** it is a jam studio, is getting pushed out.

OPPORTUNITIES

- LAPP is an opportunity for maximum potential, to strengthen
- Identifying and maintaining cultural assets—a deeper understanding, opportunity to discover new assets—more space, more resources
- Non-profit owned studio space—self-sustaining, accessible, affordable
- Continue to engage artists in the plan, to keep things relevant and current
- Ironic that the developers are not here in this meeting. There is nothing in the middle, the PHS (the poverty pit) and the developers.
- Implement local plans that people have been developed in different districts in the community, such as the one from Strathcona and CAPP. Look for what they have in common. The City is ignoring what they are saying.
- Summarize the assets and what are the most important. 50% of Hong Kong building is dedicated to social housing. This will be scaring if it happens to Vancouver because houses are unaffordable.
- Policies that are not implemented when there is already community buy-in for them.
- Create a priority list and an oversee system to protect assets. They can get protected through different programs, accountability systems. It must be a community based prioritization so non-profit agencies or developers are not the ones who decide what is going to happen.
- Build capacity for artists so they can organize themselves.
- Create partnerships and organize models for funding art projects. Cultural groups need to organize in order to attract investment from Vancity or other funders. Build financial capacity.
- Chance to share what is happening and possibilities for support among organizations. COV can provide space for this.
- Cultural groups need to organize, arts and culture community was recently organized.
- Artist and cultural organization is a too broad term, a bubble that covers low income and wealthier artists and art related people.
- This workshop/wheel is a token effort. This is not about getting things done, but about putting a happy face to what is happening.

- We have identified a lot of iconic places, but if you change the whole complex these dots will not be allowed, will be lost. Policy and zoning flexibility is important.
- PHS is a monopoly and the needle exchange is being lost to it.
- We want to see policy that makes people accountable, that the money stays here and it is sustainable.
- Review the policies bring them back. Let's lay the framework together artists and city workers.

KEY ISSUES

- Key issue here is housing
- Policies to encourage/maintain spaces for cultural assets
- Continue to engage in the dialogue btw. The artist community and other sectors (refusal to engage from the artists side)
- Maintain a minimum standard of maintaining space—from the artists and landlords side
- Security is an issue
- Maybe if artists were more invested in planning they would be more involved trying to solve the issues
- Putting together a housing plan, there should be housing for artists—they should be part of the conversation
- Live/work studios might not be affordable still
- If we are talking about housing it needs to be designed to be fit into the neighborhood—and finding out what works in this neighborhood—find housing that works for the people in this neighborhood
- Trying to create a positive environment that is conducive to growth
- Have to have an environment where people feel they are contributing so people feel part of it

CHALLENGES

- Stepping stones
- How does the work of the plan get translated into something that is alive and relevant
- How do you overcome the silos of the housing/artists etc.—to bring interest groups together. Where's the common mission?
- Overcoming pre-conception of 'increased security'—peace officers, should come from within the community from the community
- How do you empower people more—the arts are a way to offer a place for people to express themselves that they might not have—how do you share issues and make the issues important
- Joining different sectors within the arts—this can be an opportunity to try and do that