



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: June 14, 2005
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TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Director of Current Planning and the Manager of Special Projects

SUBJECT: Allocation of Capital Plan Funds in the Downtown Eastside

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve grants totalling \$682,000 to support six community projects as the City's contribution towards the Downtown Eastside revitalization, with funding to be provided from the Downtown Eastside Revitalization unallocated capital accounts (\$170,000 from 2002 account and \$512,000 from 2003-05 accounts).

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of the forgoing.

COUNCIL POLICY

On July 28, 1998, Council confirmed, in principles, to provide general guidance to actions and planning in the Downtown Eastside, Chinatown, Gastown and Strathcona, which include encouraging legitimate commercial activity, improving conditions at the street level, improving existing SRO's, reducing crime, and helping community people find allies and seek a common future.

On October 1, 2002, Council approved a funding allocation of \$2.5 million toward Downtown Eastside revitalization initiatives in the 2003-2005 Capital Plan.

Approval of grants requires eight affirmative votes.

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

This report seeks Council approval to allocate grants totalling \$682,000 from the Downtown Eastside (DTES) Revitalization Capital Funds towards six community projects. Approval of the funding will supplement community and business contributions to help realize these projects. The projects recommended for funding will assist existing community-based initiatives to better serve the community, and will help achieve Downtown Eastside economic revitalization and community-building objectives, with a specific emphasis on providing support to local women, children, youth & families. Currently, there is a total of \$1,212,000 unallocated balance in the DTES Capital Budget account (2002-2005).

BACKGROUND

Community Improvement Projects: Capital plan funds have assisted a number of community improvement initiatives in the Downtown Eastside, including the redesign of Hastings and Main and the lighting of Victory Square Park. With these projects, City funds were used to leverage additional public and private sponsorship. The funding of the projects proposed in this report will help key existing community based services, contribute to business enhancement and generally improve the quality of life in the community. City funds will also serve as a leverage to secure further investments from both the private and public sectors.

DISCUSSION

The following projects are recommended for allocation of Downtown Eastside Capital Funds:

Strathcona Playground: Strathcona is an inner city neighbourhood characterized by a high percentage of low income, single parent households. In a recent UBC Early Child Development Mapping Project, Dr. Clyde Hertzman identified Strathcona as the most at risk neighbourhood in the city related to early childhood development. Strathcona is deficient in terms of green space and recreation options for children compared to other areas of the city. A creative playground was constructed at Strathcona School and Community Centre in 1972 with donated labour from the neighbourhood. This old playground was found to be unsafe and in need of replacement by a safety audit performed by the Vancouver School Board Maintenance Division last year. The community has made replacing the playground a priority and has engaged in fundraising to achieve this aim, however, competing community fundraising priorities, including an ESL literacy plan for local children, have limited fundraising capabilities and has resulted in a shortfall of \$101,330 for the playground reconstruction project. With the capital grant from City Council for the playground project, the Strathcona Parents Advisory Committee will then be able to commit their fund raising effort to continue the Literacy Program over the next five years (2004-2009). Literacy is the major school goal and all of the academic efforts are dedicated to raising student learning outcomes in Literacy.

Staff recommend that a \$100,000 grant from the DTES Capital Fund be provided to Strathcona Elementary School for the construction of the playground, to provide support and quality of life enhancement to the children living in Strathcona.

- **Strathcona Playground Replacement**
- | | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Project cost | \$125,330 |
| City DTES Fund | \$100,000 |

2005. Central City Mission Foundation is committed to keeping the building for community childcare in perpetuity and engaging local community groups with the operation of the facility to ensure the needs and interests of local residents are addressed, as well as building capacity in the community.

Providing high quality licensed childcare in the Strathcona area will create a caring, safe and supportive environment that enhances the quality of life for children and their families. The facility will be operated by a community-based organization. This will help build community capacity and provide employment opportunities to local residents. This is consistent with Council's Childcare Policy, which commits the City of Vancouver to being an active partner, with senior levels of government, parents, the private sector and the community in the development and maintenance of a comprehensive childcare system in Vancouver. It is also consistent with the Vancouver Agreement Economic Revitalization Plan and Employment Strategy in that it will provide jobs for local residents and childcare services for parents who are returning to the work force.

Staff recommend that Council provide a grant of \$250,000 from the DTES Capital fund to Central City Mission Foundation for renovation and start up expenses related to the child care centre at 717 Princess Street.

- **Childcare Centre Renovations and Start-Up Costs 717 Princess Street**

Project cost	\$2,600,000
City DTES Fund	\$ 250,000

Women's Drop-in Facility improvements (W.I.S.H.): WISH estimates that approximately 450 different women, involved in the survival sex trade in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, come to the Drop-in Centre in a week. Many live with mental health concerns, physical and mental disabilities, medical conditions, and substance use. WISH addresses many of the basic needs of women working in survival sex by providing hot meals, clothing, nursing care, referrals to shelters and links to many other agencies in the area. WISH is proposing to create a Wellness Centre where women will be able to access services 24 hours a day. The current WISH facility is located in the First United Church and where it has access to less than 800 sq. ft. A larger space is needed to adequately accommodate its current services. A larger facility will also permit complementary agencies to co-locate and offer their programs to the women who use the WISH Drop-in centre.

The WISH Wellness Centre will house a program providing a wide range of health services, including the needs of women with HIV and AIDS-related viruses, and will allow women who cannot, or do not, access primary health care an opportunity to do so in a safe environment.

WISH is currently working with community groups, the City of Vancouver Planning and Social Planning Departments, the Vancouver Police and others to listen to ideas and concerns around locating a 24/7 facility. A \$1 million grant from VanCity Credit Union will cover the costs of purchasing a home for the WISH Wellness Centre. However, additional funding is need to equip the Centre with a commercial kitchen, designated shower rooms, washrooms, and program-specific rooms, as well as to cover the costs of any potential building improvements required to meet building by-law requirements. The total cost of these improvements is dependent, in part, on the building. Initial estimates place these costs at \$500,000.

Council has declared support for a 24/7 facility for street women and addressing safety concerns is a council priority, therefore, staff recommend that Council provide a grant of \$250,000 from the DTES Capital Fund for the renovations of W.I.S.H. Wellness Centre. The disbursement of funds is contingent on WISH securing an appropriate facility for the Wellness Centre and commencing renovations.

- WISH Wellness Centre
- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| Project Cost | \$1,500,000 |
| City DTES Fund | \$ 250,000 |

Computer Equipment for Carnegie Centre Literacy Program: Carnegie Community Centre offers an important and crucial literacy program in the DTES community, particularly targeting low income residents that do not have access to computer equipment. Carnegie Centre has 15 public workstations with computers that need replacing. The cost of computer replacement in these 15 workstations including installation is estimated at \$24,000 (\$1600 per station x 15).

The workstations are located in the public computer lab, seniors lounge and literacy centre. They are all very heavily used for skills development, literacy upgrade, personal communication and entertainment.

The initial funding for these computers came from a one time Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant to Vancouver Public Library. There is no other source of funding to replace these computers. The VPL has generously agreed to partner with the City and share 50% of the replacement cost.

Staff recommend that the City provide a grant of \$12,000 to Carnegie Centre for the replacement of their computer stations.

- Computer Equipment for Carnegie Centre Literacy Program
- | | |
|----------------|----------|
| Project cost | \$24,000 |
| City DTES Fund | \$12,000 |

China Gate: The original China Gate outside the Chinese Cultural Centre on 100 block East Pender Street was part of the China Pavilion during Expo 86. It was gifted to the Province of B.C. by the government of the Peoples' Republic of China which in turn gifted it to the Chinatown community of Vancouver in 1987. The Gate was moved from the EXPO site to the City property in front of the Chinese Cultural Centre. The original Gate was constructed as a temporary structure with a light wood frame and thin wood fascias, which in time, deteriorated. In 2003 the City removed the deteriorated fascias of the Gate, due to safety concerns, leaving the steel frame and concrete columns.

Responding to a request for replacement of the gate from the Chinatown community, the City of Guangzhou, China (twin city of Vancouver) generously agreed to donate materials, artisans' labour and shipping costs of new marble fascias for the Gate to the City of Vancouver to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the twining of the two cities in 2005. The Mayor of Guangzhou and Governor of Guangdong will be visiting Vancouver in September of this year to attend Guangzhou and Vancouver sister cities 20th anniversary celebration. The celebration will include the unveiling of the new Gate.

The estimated budget for design and installation of the new Gate is \$92,000 (including maintenance.) The Chinatown community has raised \$47,000 to date and is now requesting the City provide a grant of \$45,000 in order to complete this project. The value of the gift to

the City of Vancouver from the City of Guangzhou, including material, labour and shipping is estimated at \$60,000. Securing funding for design and installation work will allow the installation to begin immediately upon arrival of the marble fascias. A new China Gate will be a tourist attraction and a focal point in Chinatown and will help revitalize the Chinatown and the Downtown Eastside

Staff recommend that Council approve \$45,000 funding to partner with the Chinatown community to install the new China Gate on Pender Street outside the Chinese Cultural Centre.

• China Gate	Project cost	\$152,000
	City DTES Fund	\$ 45,000

Other DTES Revitalization Projects: Staff note that two additional reports are being prepared for Council consideration that will request approval of additional funds from the 2005 Capital Budget earmarked for Downtown Eastside Revitalization. One of the reports will be focusing on specific improvements in Chinatown related to the Main Street Showcase Corridor plan; the other will request renewal of the Lease Subsidy and Tenant Improvement Programs as part of the City's contribution to the Downtown Eastside Economic Revitalization Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total balance of unallocated capital for Downtown Eastside Revitalization is \$1,212,000. Grants totalling \$682,000 are requested in this report to support six community projects. This will leave \$530,000 remaining in the Unallocated account for future allocation. City's funds will leverage more than \$3,834,330 in further investments from other governments, private businesses and other community partners.

	City DTES Fund	Total Cost
Strathcona Playground Reconstruction	\$100,000	\$125,330
Strathcona Community Centre Kitchen Project	\$25,000	\$115,000
Childcare Centre - 717 Princess St	\$250,000	\$2,600,000
Women's Drop-in Facility Improvements (WISH)	\$250,000	\$1,500,000
Computers for Carnegie Centre Literacy Program	\$12,000	\$24,000
China Gate Reconstruction	\$45,000	\$152,000
Total	\$682,000	\$4,516,330

CONCLUSION

This report recommends that Council approve grants totalling \$682,000 from Capital funds, as the City's contribution in support of the six significant community initiatives in the Downtown Eastside, as described in this report.

All the above projects are developed by local organizations and have considerable support from the community. City's funds will help to enhance strategic community based services, build community capacity, as well as contribute to business enhancement and generally improve the quality of life in the Downtown Eastside.