



CITY OF VANCOUVER

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ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

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TO: Standing Committee on Planning and Environment
FROM: Director of Planning in consultation with the Director of Social Planning
SUBJECT: Mount Pleasant Community Action Agenda

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council endorse the Community Action Agenda (CAA) which identifies key social issues in Mount Pleasant to be addressed through local community-based actions and projects.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services supports the recommendation.

COUNCIL POLICY

On April 17, 2007, Council approved the Terms of Reference for the Mount Pleasant Community Planning program which integrates long range community planning with a social development component to address key social issues.

In December 2006, Council passed a resolution making a commitment to Project Civil City. This initiative supports projects which improve the effectiveness of service delivery to vulnerable populations, including homeless people, mentally ill and drug addicted members of our society. The Community Action Agenda (CAA) supports and contributes to achieving the goals of Project Civil City by improving service delivery to vulnerable populations in Mount Pleasant.

On September 20, 2005, Council endorsed, in principle, the work plan for a Social Development Plan for the City of Vancouver.

On May 24, 2005, Council approved a definition for social sustainability.

On April 23, 2002, City Council adopted a definition and principles for sustainability as a basis for City actions and operations. The CAA seeks to advance the principles of social sustainability through community-based actions at a local level.

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the Community Action Agenda (CAA) for Mount Pleasant. The CAA has been brought forward early on in the Mount Pleasant Planning Program to enable the community and staff to move quickly to begin to address key social issues in Mount Pleasant.

This report provides Council with an overview of the development of the CAA which identifies the following four key social issues identified in Mount Pleasant:

1. **Support for the Vulnerable**
2. **Safety and Security**
3. **Open Drug and Sex Trades**
4. **Homelessness**

Accompanying each of the four issues are a series of goals that further define each issue. This report sets out the processes by which the community and staff would implement the CAA, including the formation of a Social Coordinating Group (SCG) that will directly develop local actions to address the key issues. Linkages to other City initiatives and policy work, including the Social Development Plan and Project Civil City are briefly reviewed.

BACKGROUND

In April, 2007, Council approved the Terms of Reference for the Mount Pleasant Community Planning program which outlined steps to identify key social issues to be addressed through a Community Action Agenda. This new approach of blending long range community planning with short term social development requires the CAA to be endorsed early on in the overall planning program.

The Terms of Reference also calls for the formation of a Social Coordinating Group, comprised of Mount Pleasant residents, businesses, and service providers to develop local actions to address key social issues after the CAA is endorsed by Council.

DISCUSSION

The preparation of the CAA included an extensive community engagement process and a feedback survey. An analysis conducted by staff identified the most common social issues facing Mount Pleasant, along with a series of goals that the community could pursue to address the key issues.

Community Engagement and the Feedback Survey

Three separate community engagement processes and a survey were carried out to understand the community's perspective on social issues in Mount Pleasant.

1. Outreach meetings

Staff met with nearly 70 different organizations early to explain the overall planning program and get feedback on social issues. Organizations included resident groups, strata councils, co-op boards, school staff and PAC groups, artists, seniors and youth groups, Aboriginals and new immigrants, community associations and religious organizations, a homeless group, and local government service providers. See Appendix A for list of community organizations and engagement schedules.

2. Focus group sessions

Staff organized 6 focus group sessions with marginalized groups in Mount Pleasant that face cultural, language and mobility barriers to traditional public engagements. Groups included new immigrants, ethnic groups (e.g., Chinese, Vietnamese, and Filipino), youth, homeless people, and urban Aboriginals.

3. Community fairs

The Mount Pleasant team hosted two, one-day long community fairs where participants gave feedback on a range of community planning topics, including social issues. Approximately 700 people attended the fairs held on June 2, and 10, 2007.

4. Feedback Survey

Staff distributed approximately 600 feedback forms to participants at the various engagement events and established three community venues for general pick up and drop off purposes. Approximately 160 forms were returned, including website submissions.

The CAA: Key Social Issues and Goals

A multitude of social issues and concerns were identified through the direct outreach and survey feedback processes. Over 1,000 comments, ideas, and suggestions were recorded on social issues alone. Issues and concerns focused on support for the vulnerable, safety and security, open drug and sex trade and homelessness. The following four issues and associated goals form the CAA:

1. Support for the Vulnerable (40% of responses). The community identified three key goals that should be pursued:

- Meet basic needs of low income families and seniors through community-based actions,
- Increase community engagement and socialization opportunities for marginalized youth,

- Enable new immigrants and marginalized populations to fully participate in society (through improvements to language skills, mobility, education, and health care).

2. **Safety and Security** (25% of responses). The community identified four key goals that should be pursued:

- Reduce graffiti on public and private land,
- Reduce break and enters, theft from auto and other property crimes,
- Reduce street level nuisance behaviours, and
- Increase safety of vulnerable and marginalized populations.

3. **Open Drug and Sex Trade** (20% of responses). The community identified four key goals that should be pursued:

- Reduce open drug and sex trade activities on the streets,
- Reduce visual and noise impacts on local neighbourhoods,
- Reduce the amount of paraphernalia left from drug and sex trade activities, and
- Reduce the number of problem premises associated with the drug and sex trade.

4. **Homelessness** (15% of responses). The community identified four key goals that should be pursued:

- Reduce the number of homeless people living on the streets,
- Reduce the amount of garbage and litter associated with homelessness activities,
- Increase access opportunities to basic health care and day-to-day living supports, and
- Increase job training and employment opportunities for homeless people

Many of the social issues described are complex, share various 'cause and effect' relationships, and do not generally exist in isolation from each other. Findings common solutions that can address a multiple of social issues at the same time will be sought as the different issues and goals are turned into local actions by the Social Coordinating Group.

The CAA: Implementation

The CAA has been brought forward early in the overall Community Planning Program to enable staff and the community to move quickly to begin to address key social issues in Mount Pleasant. Once endorsed by Council, the CAA will form the community's guide for implementation. The SCG will be comprised of community leaders and organizations that are familiar with the key social issues. Their focus will be to utilize community expertise and existing initiatives to implement priority actions with the help of local working groups. The SCG will help ensure that diverse groups and agencies are represented at the table and that the broader public is involved.

The SCG will be primarily responsible for coordinating the implementation of the CAA. Staff will assist the SCG to develop a framework for setting priorities for the actions and to monitor overall implementation. The SCG will also develop on-going public engagement, community support and implementation strategies for the priority actions. Terms of Reference for both the SCG and its subsequent working groups were approved by Council in April, 2007, and are

listed in Appendix B. For a few examples of the types of actions identified so far by the community see Appendix C. As certain key social issues are under the responsibility and jurisdiction of other levels of government, it will be important to clarify and understand the City's role.

The success of the CAA will be a result of the early buy-in from a broad base of citizens and stakeholders that have actively participated during the engagement process. As result of this early buy-in, nearly 60 citizens and stakeholder groups have registered to join the SCG, and others have signed up for workshops. This list represents a wide cross-section of residents, businesses and community organizations. Membership remains open to the broader community during the entire program.

Related City Initiatives

Social Development Plan

The Planning and Social Planning Departments are collaborating so that the Mount Pleasant planning process can be utilized as a model to inform the Social Development Plan. This includes connecting Mount Pleasant activities to Social Development Plan priority areas, linking the process with public and private funding contacts and existing Mount Pleasant initiatives, and supporting the development of performance measures to track outcomes.

Project Civil City

Project Civil City seeks to support and enhance effective partnerships among government service providers that are already addressing social issues, and to facilitate and encourage new partnerships that further contribute to improving Vancouver's quality of life for all residents. Wherever possible the SCG will work with Project Civil City in taking action on common issues, especially through community-based partnerships. Together these two city programs share similar citizen engagement approaches that complement each other in identifying and tackling key social issues and by turning higher level government-community partnerships into local actions and projects on the ground.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications. As certain social issues are the responsibility and jurisdiction of other levels of government, the CAA will seek first to mobilize existing community resources including volunteers, and to access existing funding programs and services to implement local actions.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Mount Pleasant community is a microcosm of the city and in many respects reflects the various populations of Vancouver. The community's demographic make-up reflects many of the other inner-city neighbourhoods faced with high rates of low income and poverty, and new populations of immigrants and urban Aboriginals. The CAA complements the main components and principles of social sustainability in addressing some of the key basic needs of the community, and by providing opportunities to enhance and support individual and community capacity building objectives. Goals for this work are to improve coordination in

the delivery of Mount Pleasant services, expenditure of resources and to enhance problem-solving capabilities.

CONCLUSION

The CAA is ready for the implementation phase to be carried out by the community's Social Coordinating Group, (SCG). The CAA reflects what the Mount Pleasant community has identified as the key social issues and what they would like to do at the local level to address them. The CAA is supported by a broad community base of stakeholders groups, residents, businesses and government service providers; and is in keeping with the goals and objectives established by Council through the Social Development Plan and the Project Civil City initiatives. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the Community Action Agenda for Mount Pleasant so that staff and the community can move quickly to begin to address key social issues in Mount Pleasant.

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Community Engagement Schedule of Participants

Outreach Meetings

1. Aboriginal Patients' Lodge
2. BC Society of Training for Health and Employment Opportunities
3. Bethlehem Lutheran Church
4. Broadway Youth Resource Centre
5. Broadway Youth Action Committee
6. City in Focus
7. China Creek Employment and Assistance Centre
8. China Creek Co-op
9. Coast Foundation Society
10. Collingwood Community Policing Centre
11. Community of Hope - Homeless People
12. Community of Hope - Volunteers Group
13. Drift Gallery Society
14. EcoCity Activist
15. Evangel Towers Residents
16. Florence Nightingale Elementary - PAC
17. Florence Nightingale Elementary - Staff
18. Filipino Fellowship Baptist Church
19. Filipino Seventh-Day Adventist Church
20. Genesis Vancouver (phone meeting)
21. Gold Buddha Monastery
22. Good Shepherd Chinese Anglican Church
23. Glad Tidings Church
24. Japanese Community Volunteers Association
25. Jasime Place Co-op
26. John Howard Society
27. Kimount Boys and Girls Club
28. Kingsgate Mall Merchants Association
29. Kivan Boys and Girls Club
30. La Boussole Centre
31. Lutheran Church
32. Lookout Emergency Aid Society
33. Lu'Ma Native Housing Society
34. MISCELLANEOUS Productions Society
35. Mount Pleasant BIA
36. Mount Pleasant Block Watch
37. Mount Pleasant Dog Owners
38. Mount Pleasant CARES
39. Mount Pleasant Community Centre Assoc
40. Mount Pleasant Community Library Branch
41. Mount Pleasant Elementary - PAC

42. Mount Pleasant Elementary School - staff
43. Mount Pleasant Family Centre
44. Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House
45. Native Education College
46. Pacific Association of First Nations Women
47. Queen Alexandra Elementary School - PAC
48. Queen Alexandra Elementary School - staff
49. Raven Song Community Health Centre (x2)
50. Royal Canadian Legion No.177
51. Salvation Army Community and Family Services
52. Simon Fraser Elementary School - Staff
53. Social Planning and Research Council of BC
54. Strata Council - 234 E. 5th Ave
55. Strata Council - 550 E. 6th Ave
56. Strata Council - 101 E. 7th Ave
57. Strata Council - 319 E. 7th Ave
58. Strata Council - 3131 Main St
59. Strata Council - 3150 Pr. Edward
60. Strata Council - 350 E. 5th Ave
61. St Francis Xavier Church - staff
62. St Francis Xavier Church - PAC
63. St Michael's Anglican Church
64. St. Patrick's Church - Seniors Group
65. St. Patrick's Church
66. TRAC (Tenants' Rights Action Coalition)
67. Vancouver Community College
68. Vancouver Children's Safety Association

Focus Group Sessions

1. Vietnamese group
2. Homeless people group
3. Chinese (Mandarin / Cantonese) group
4. Filipino group
5. Aboriginal group
6. Youth group

Community Fairs - 700 participants

1. Two - 1 day events open to general public, 20 community and staff information booths

Community Feedback Survey

- Survey forms handed out at the above Outreach, Focus groups and Community Fair events. 3 community pick up and drop off venues:
1. Mt Pleasant Community Centre
 2. Mt Pleasant Neighbourhood House
 3. Mt Pleasant Public Library

Terms of Reference for the SCG and working groups (Council approved April 17, 2007)

Social Coordinating Group (SCG)

Government and non-government service delivery agencies, City staff, and community, business and property owners will be responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Community Action Agenda. The SCG relies on the expertise of existing community groups who are already working on issues and includes a project coordinator to provide linkages between appropriate City services and liaison with key external agencies (e.g. Coastal Health) and senior government where appropriate. This group will focus on localized, social issue problem-solving, partnership building, and project implementation.

SCG Objectives

- focus on tackling pressing social issues in Mount Pleasant
- utilize community expertise and existing initiatives to create tangible solutions
- help ensure appropriate and diverse groups and agencies are represented
- help ensure that the broader public and especially those impacted by any action projects/plans are involved
- provide appropriate consultation back to groups represented on the SCG and to the community at large
- utilize community experience in taking action on social issues by contributing to long-range community planning and policy-making

SCG Duties

- help to identify local issues and actions already underway
- participate in problem solving
- develop project, action and evaluation plans
- monitor and manage action projects/plans and activities
- contribute to long-term social sustainability policy, especially in Step 3 - Setting Community-wide Directions, in the Community Plan process
- contribute to and participate in a community engagement process, and help to ensure marginalized and hard-to-reach people are included

Working Groups

Area or project based Working Groups may be formed. The area based groups would be made up of sub-area citizens and stakeholders to assist in the detailed planning for the Shopping and Residential Sub-areas (e.g. public realm options, housing location options). These Working Groups will not select preferred options. Project based groups would come under the SCG's umbrella to implement individual action projects/plans.

Some examples of local actions that the citizens of Mount Pleasant have identified for consideration by the SCG:

- Create community-based working groups to lead local actions or projects,
- Establish community-based dialogue sessions to raise awareness and to inform citizens on key social issues,
- Establish a community-based support services network for sex trade workers,
- Link similar partners together to increase each other's awareness and support for crime prevention activities and efforts,
- Create a network among building managers (including strata / co-op councils) on best building maintenance practices,
- Translate crime prevention materials,
- Develop a cultural community garden and other art projects that celebrate diversity and increase cultural and social acceptance,
- Conduct regular neighbourhood clean-ups at parks and schools to remove drug and sex litter,
- Establish a shower and washroom program for homeless people,
- Create a place where homeless people can recreate and socialize without discrimination, and
- Expand existing Community Policing programs that support crime prevention activities, including graffiti removal.

Numerous actions and projects have been identified through the earlier public engagement process and more actions and projects are expected to emerge as the implementation phase of the CAA is realized over the next 24 months.