

COUNCIL MEMBER'S MOTION

5. Declaring Support for an Eastside Arts District

Submitted by: Councillor Fry

WHEREAS

1. The area of Vancouver commonly referred to as the East Side: roughly and generally-speaking Columbia Street to Victoria Drive and 1st Avenue to the waterfront; is a distinct locality that supports a diverse ecosystem of residential, industrial, commercial, and cultural uses;
2. Of all major Canadian cities, Vancouver has the highest population of artists and cultural workers (Hill Strategies: "Artist and Cultural Workers in Canadian Municipalities" 2014). The highest concentration of artists in Vancouver are found in the East Side, specifically postal region neighbourhoods V6A and V5L (Hill Strategies: "Artists by Neighbourhood in Canada" 2005);
3. The Eastside Culture Crawl is an annual 4-day visual arts festival that involves artists on Vancouver's East Side opening their studios to the public, the event serves to highlight and advocate the importance of the arts as a cultural and economic driver for the region;
4. Since the Eastside Culture Crawl started in Strathcona in 1997, the event has grown to include over 500 artists, crafts-people and designers, attracting an audience of more than 45,000 people. Today, the Eastside Culture Crawl has partnerships with a variety of local venues, galleries, studios and maker-spaces and has become a prominent feature of the East Side's cultural identity and place-making;
5. The Eastside Culture Crawl Society recently reported that almost 400,000 square feet of artist studio spaces have disappeared in the last 10 years in their catchment. The Society's 2019 "A City Without Art? No Net Loss, Plus!" report also went on to document that of 1,612 artists with studios in the area, 1,332 face an imminent threat of displacement due to future property development;
6. Vancouver's 2019 Culture|Shift Strategy and Making Space for Arts and Culture specifically identifies the need to secure affordable industrial spaces for arts and culture; the insecure rental tenure coupled with an affordability crisis have exacerbated the displacement of cultural spaces and artists;
7. Vancouver's 2019 Culture|Shift Strategy and Making Space for Arts and Culture Action 19 specifically identifies "cultural districts" along with density bonusing and commercial linkage fees as a potential tool to prevent displacement and secure spaces for affordable non-profit arts and cultural space in commercial and industrial zones;
8. In its National Cultural Districts Exchange Toolkit Americans for the Arts (the US' leading arts advocacy non-profit) describes the importance of cultural districts to strengthen local economies, create an enhanced sense of place and deepen local cultural capacity. The toolkit further advises the use of local partnerships

and consultants, engagement, planning, placemaking, and funding as imperatives to developing and advancing a cultural district;

9. The official recognition of the Eastside Arts District along with policies and dedicated funding would serve as a catalyst for building community identity, tourism, and economic growth. (Eastside Culture Crawl Society: "A City Without Art? No Net Loss, Plus!" 2019); and
10. The False Creek Flats Grade-Separated Road Alignment approved by Council on October 22, 2019 recommended:
 - a) (F) THAT staff work with the Strathcona neighbourhood to prepare a summary of capital investment priorities for the next 10-15 years, including investments in community facilities, and parks and open spaces, and report back to Council in mid-2020;
 - b) (A) FURTHER THAT Council endorse that the Prior/Venables Street underpass include an all-ages-and-abilities route for the Adanac Bikeway, provide accessible walking connections, facilitate access to local businesses via Raymur Avenue, and be integrated with public spaces and an enjoyable public realm.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to report back on recommendations for the declaration of an Eastside Arts District.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to consult with the Eastside Culture Crawl Society, as well as local artists, residents and businesses on scoping an Eastside Arts District Strategy, complimentary to the report back on recommendations for the declaration of an Eastside Arts District, and include:
 - i. Determining district boundaries and scale;
 - ii. Identifying resources, stakeholders and partners;
 - iii. Considerations around land use policy and regulatory frameworks;
 - iv. Look for potential sources of long term funding, programming and sustainability, including but not limited to incentives, density bonusing and partnerships.
- C. THAT this Declaration and Strategy be developed in conjunction with existent and ongoing work on the Vancouver Plan, Making Spaces for Arts and Culture, Employment Lands and Economy Review and overlapping local area plans;

FURTHER THAT staff provide an interim report back on the declaration of an Eastside Arts District as part of the larger culture plan update later this year.
- D. THAT pursuant to Council direction from October 22, 2019, staff include planning and implementation of an Eastside Arts District and Strategy as one of the possible recommendations in a summary of capital investment priorities and integration of public spaces and an enjoyable public realm.

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