



REPORT

Report Date: March 2, 2020
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Meeting Date: March 31, 2020
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TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability
SUBJECT: Downtown Eastside (DTES) Capital Grant Allocation

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve the grant allocation of \$203,500 to the Downtown Eastside (DTES) non-profit organizations, as detailed in Appendix A, to provide timely and critical funding to support these organizations to advance the social, economic and environmental objectives of the approved DTES Plan. Source of funding is from the various 2020 DTES Capital Program budgets.

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 grants to six non-profit agencies totalling \$208,500 to provide critical assistance and to support community initiatives in a timely way that will benefit the vulnerable DTES residents and the implementation of the DTES Plan. The funding will advance work toward 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 Plan.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- In December 2016, Council approved the *DTES CED Strategy (Phase 2)*.
- In October 2014, Council adopted the *framework for City of Reconciliation*.
- In October 2014, Council approved the *Healthy City Strategy 2014-25*.
- In March 2014, Council approved the *Downtown Eastside Local Area Plan (DTES Plan and Social Impact Assessment (SIA))*.
- In July 2012, Council approved the *Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan and Economic Revitalization Strategy*.
- In January 2012, Council received for information the *Vancouver Economic Action Strategy*.
- In July 2011, Council approved the *Greenest City Action Plan 2020*.

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

REPORT

Background/Context

The Downtown Eastside (DTES) comprises the seven mixed income neighbourhoods of Gastown, Victory Square, Chinatown, Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District, Thornton Park, Strathcona and the Industrial Lands.

Based on Census 2016, in the DTES the median total income is \$18,458 for those over 15 years of age vs the city-wide median total income of \$32,896. Over half (53%) of the 14,300 workers living in the DTES make less than \$20,000.

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 Downtown Eastside 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 balanced rolled over. After the DTES Plan was approved by Council (2014) the granting of DTES Capital Grants was re-established to implement the Plan in three key priority areas:

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

The objective of the DTES Capital grant 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 and key platforms that include the Healthy City Strategy and Greenest City strategies.

Grants are recommended to the non-profit agencies as shown in table 1 totalling \$203,500 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 marginalized individuals to be more self-reliant, and for organizations to be more sustainable.

Strategic Analysis

The DTES Capital Grant presents a strategic opportunity to advance three key priority areas identified in the planning process: protecting community assets, neighbourhood improvement and community building, and community economic development. The proposed projects also support the Social Impact Objectives of the DTES Plan (Chapter 1).

The grants recommended in this report (see table 1) 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).

The annual major allocation of the DTES Capital funds is the DTES Capital Matching Grants Program which accepts applications once a year in the Spring. However, there are times when non-profit organizations are facing a critical situation where emergency repairs or upgrades are needed in order to continue to serve the vulnerable population in the DTES or implement projects of a time-sensitive nature. The following projects (refer to Appendix A for more details) support advancing key objectives in the DTES Plan and are of a critical and time-sensitive nature:

Table 1

No.	Organization	Grant Amount	Purpose
1	WISH Society	\$30,000	Interior repairs to office area damaged by flooding
2	Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre	\$33,000	Repair to the interior basement wall damaged by flooding
3	Yue Shan Society	\$20,000	Completion of a business plan for their heritage building in Chinatown
4	Tides Canada	\$25,000	Support the Blinner’s Project to delivery of a fleet of carts and two docking stations.
5	Strathcona Business Improvement Area	\$39,000	Explore the feasibility of using the Buddhist Temple kitchen as a community-serving

	Society		kitchen.
6	Mission Possible Neighbours	\$40,000	Provide peer to peer support to people adjacent to the current temporary DTES Market site.
7	Vancouver Chinatown Business Improvement Area	\$9,000	To be a part of the BIZMAP interactive marketing website.
8	Vancouver Community Network	\$7,500	To develop a strategic vision and plan for the DTES Market.
	Total Amount	\$203,500	

Implications/Related Issues/Risk

Financial

The total amount for grants being allocated is \$203,500. The source of funding for this program is from various DTES Capital Program funding rolled over to 2020. After allocation of these grants approximately \$532,500 remains in the Capital budget for the DTES Capital Program (not including future amounts to be allocated from the 2019-22 Capital Plan).

Once these grants have been approved by Council, a Letter of Understanding will be signed between the applicants and the City of Vancouver outlining the terms, conditions, budget, and grant release details.

CONCLUSION

The grants and funding recommendation in this report will assist these non-profit organizations and their critical and time sensitive projects. They also align with the policy objectives of the DTES Plan and will help the City to address its priorities of fostering community economic development, protecting community assets, neighbourhood improvement, and community building. These projects will support priorities identified in the DTES Plan.

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DTES Capital Grants Fund Allocations #1 - 2020

No.	Organization	Grant Amount	Purpose	Benefits
1	WISH Society	\$30,000	To repair water damages to their interior office space so they can continue to provide critical services to their members	WISH, a safe haven for sex-working women for 35 years will continue to provide a safe space for their 90 women employees and the 300 women (average) accessing their programs & services each day & night.
2	Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre (VAFC)	\$33,000	To repair water damages to their interior basement wall, space and kitchen area.	VAFC employs 68 workers from the community. The renovated space will support their Turtle Island Organics social enterprise which is a teaching tool for indigenous people to learn traditional medicinal practices and a gateway to employment and stability.
3	Yue Shan Society	\$ 20,000	To support the completion of business plan for their heritage building in Chinatown.	Yue Shan is one of 12 key Society buildings that are an integral part of Chinatown. The completion of a business plan is a key a preparation step towards building rehabilitation in the future as part of the Chinatown Society Heritage Building Program.
4	Tides Canada	\$25,000	To complete the implementation of the Binner's universal cart project including the delivery of a fleet of carts and two docking stations.	Supports a need in the community for a cart sharing system that supports physical capabilities, fosters economic opportunities, and reduces crime and stigma as informal recyclable collectors. Supports the City's zero waste goals by diverting materials from the landfill.
5	Strathcona Business Improvement Area (SBIA)	\$39,000	Feasibility study of using the Vancouver Buddhist Temple's (VBT) kitchen as a community-serving kitchen to meet the needs of the community.	The VBT is a significant historic building in the Powell Street area and to the Japanese Canadians. A community-serving kitchen will provide reliable rental income to the temple, support local food preparation, improve connections to the community, and increase food security in the neighbourhood

DTES Capital Grants Fund Allocations #1 - 2020

No.	Organization	Grant Amount	Purpose	Benefits
6	Mission Possible Neighbours	\$40,000	To engage and provide peer to peer support to people adjacent to the current temporary DTES Market site.	Provide employment and skills development to local residents with barriers to employment. Support peer to peer connections crowd management, de-escalation of conflicts and increase of awareness of available support services.
7	Vancouver Chinatown Business Improvement Area	\$9,000	To be a part of the BIZMAP interactive website.	Provide a complete Chinatown business area profile to existing and potential new businesses, and to the public. Help to minimizing vacancies, expand businesses' customer base, grow the local shopping district based on community needs, and create a stronger and more vibrant neighbourhood.
8	Vancouver Community Network	\$7,500	To develop a strategic vision and plan for the DTES Market.	A clear strategy and story for the DTES market as a complex social innovation to increase customer visits, improved public perception, increase partnership opportunities for vendors and peers, and instill a sense of pride of being part of the DTES.
	Total Amount	\$203,500		