



REPORT

Report Date: August 20, 2021
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VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: September 22, 2021
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TO: Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities

FROM: General Manager of Arts, Culture, and Community Services

SUBJECT: First United Church and Lookout Powell Street Getaway Grant Funding Recommendation

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve a grant of \$200,000 to the charitable institution, First United Church Community Ministry Society (“First United”), under section 206(1)(a) of the *Vancouver Charter*, to be spent on renovations to support the creation of a temporary shelter at 467 Alexander Street while their current location at 320 East Hastings Street is being redeveloped; with the source of funding to be the 2021 City operating budget subject to:
- i. BC Housing providing the remaining funding to complete the estimated \$1.3 million renovations;
 - ii. all required development and building permits for 467 Alexander Street having been issued by the City; and
 - iii. First United executing and delivering to the City of Vancouver a grant agreement on terms satisfactory to the Director of Legal Services and the General Manager of Arts, Culture and Community Services (“ACCS”).
- B. THAT Council approve a grant of \$200,000 to the charitable institution, Lookout Housing and Heath Society (“Lookout”), under section 206(1)(a) of the *Vancouver Charter*, to be spent on renovations to support the creation of a swing space for the Powell Street Getaway at 450 East Hastings Street while their current location at 528 Powell Street is being redeveloped; with the source of funding to be the 2021 City operating budget, subject to:

- i. all required development and building permits for the renovation work at 450 East Hastings Street having been issued by the City; and
 - ii. Lookout Housing and Health Society executing and delivering to the City of Vancouver a grant agreement on terms satisfactory to the Director of Legal Services and the General Manager of Arts, Culture and Community Services.
- C. THAT Council authorize the General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services to negotiate and execute grant agreements to disperse the grants described in Recommendations A and B on the terms and conditions set out herein or such other terms and conditions as are satisfactory to the General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services and the Director of Legal Services.
- D. THAT no legal rights or obligations will arise or be created by Council's adoption of Recommendations A and B unless and until all legal documentation has been executed and delivered by the respective parties.

The grants being considered in Recommendations A and B require at least 2/3 affirmative votes of all Council members per Section 206(1) of the *Vancouver Charter*.

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks Council approval of two separate grants to:

- First United - \$200,000 towards renovation costs for the creation of a temporary shelter at 467 Alexander Street while their current site (320 E. Hastings) is redeveloped;
- Lookout – \$200,000 towards renovation costs for the creation of a swing space for the Powell Street Getaway while their current site is being redeveloped.

The grants will support the continued provision of services critical to meet the needs of low-income and marginalized residents of the Downtown Eastside.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- **Housing Vancouver Strategy (2018-2027)** embedded the SRO revitalization actions into a citywide framework to address housing affordability. The current Council approved goal is to replace SROs with self-contained, shelter-rate social housing for singles, with an accelerated replacement target of 2,000 new units over 10 years. Recognizing the important role of existing SRO housing in combatting homelessness, the Strategy also calls for improving and protecting the remaining stock for low-income residents through regulatory tools and investment, and enhanced partnerships with senior levels of government.
- **Healthy City Strategy:** On October 29, 2014, Council approved goals, targets and indicators of the Healthy City Strategy 2014-2025 Phase I. On July 8, 2015 Council approved the first four year action plan for the Healthy City Strategy.

- **Framework for City of Reconciliation:** In 2014, Council approved the Framework for City of Reconciliation which recognizes that reconciliation goes beyond just one community and must enhance opportunities and understanding of all communities.
- **DTES Plan:** In 2014, Council approved the DTES Plan that set 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.”

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

REPORT

Background/Context

First United

First United is an inner-city ministry of the United Church of Canada committed at its heart to the struggle for social justice, offering programs of advocacy, housing and healing in Vancouver's DTES. First United is a resource to the DTES and to those who are most in need of a welcoming place to be, to find support, and to feel safe. They have been operating in the DTES for over 135 years and serve as a place to find sanctuary and connection.

First United Shelter

First United operates a year-round shelter (320 E. Hastings) providing 60 beds each night, with space for 40 men and 20 women in separate areas (due to COVID capacity has been reduced to 50 beds). Clients have 24 hour access to the building and receive three meals a day, seven days a week. As a low-barrier shelter, First United welcomes people who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to access support from other providers. Every client is paired with a case planner who works with them to identify and work towards goals related to housing, wellness, income security, and overall stability. The shelter welcomes clients with well-behaved pets and those active in addiction. The shelter is also a trans-inclusive place and offers space specifically for self-identified women.

Lookout Community Housing and Health Society

Lookout is a non-profit charitable organization established in 1971 that offers a range of programs, housing and health solutions to vulnerable adults living with multiple challenges.

Lookout serves 14 municipalities in the Lower Mainland and provides shelter and housing to more than 1,400 people each night. Lookout's multiple services include: 18 outreach teams, two community resource centres, medical and dental clinic, food bank, needle distribution and community cleanup, HIV and Hep C supports, three social enterprises, numerous peer and employment programs and youth counselling programs. These services collectively serve more than 2,500 people daily.

Lookout provides non-judgmental, non-sectarian services to individuals coping with a wide variety of challenges including poverty, mental illness, substance use, trauma, mental and/or physical disabilities, chronic health illnesses, financial and legal issues – or those simply unable to cope.

Lookout's Powell Street Getaway

The Powell Street Getaway (PSG) opened in 1993 and was originally known as the LivingRoom. The PSG is a welcoming and safe hang-out for local people living with mental illness and substance use issues. The PSG offers a variety of structured and unstructured peers programs to encourage people to participate in social and life skills development. The goal is enhance their ability to enhance their health outcomes, leading to a better quality of life.

Powell Street Getaway programs and services include: daily nutritious snack program, supervised consumption site, emergency food and clothing supplies, In-house social activities and field trips, structured peer training, pre-employment and internship programs, harm reduction and substance use programs, referrals to local community health supports and outreach support. The PSG also serves as a warming centre during the winter months.

Strategic Analysis

First United Redevelopment

A development permit has been approved for First United's existing site at 320 E. Hastings to create an 11–storey building that will provide a new home for First United's services, as well as affordable housing in partnership with Lu'ma Native Housing Society. The redevelopment will include ~103 non-market studio and one-bedroom homes, with laundry and amenities, two drop-in spaces, a large dining room, a legal advocacy clinic, a commercial kitchen, multipurpose spaces, public showers, a day sleeping room, a chapel and sacred spaces, outdoor decks, computer lab, and administrative offices.

The First United board has made the decision to discontinue providing shelter space in their redeveloped facility. Through extensive consultation with residents and clients, the decision was made to focus on providing long term, permanent housing as opposed to continuing to provide shelter. However, through discussions with BC Housing and the City, the board is committed to continuing to provide temporary shelter until their redevelopment (and housing) is completed.

The [625 Powell Street Foundation](#) has purchased 467 Alexander and will lease the site to First United (or BCH) to provide 50 temporary shelter beds for 3 years while their current site is redeveloped (anticipated to be completed in 2024).

BC Housing has confirmed operating funding for the temporary shelter and is confirming most of the necessary capital funding to complete the required renovations to the site so that it can be used as a shelter. In our partnership with BC Housing to deliver temporary shelters, the City has historically contributed funding to complete any necessary tenant improvements. This project is distinct insofar as it does not entail the creation of additional shelter capacity, but rather prevents the loss of existing spaces while First United's redevelops their current site with affordable housing. . The City's \$200,000 contribution in conjunction with BC Housing's \$1.3 million will ensure shelter beds are maintained while 320 E. Hastings is redeveloped.

Lookout Redevelopment

The Powell Street Getaway (PSG) at 528 Powell is a critical community asset providing overdose prevention and warming centre space during the winter months. A development permit has been issued to Lookout to redevelop the site to replace the Powell Street Getaway and create 114 units of social housing above (targeting September 2021 for demolition to begin).

Lookout has leased a privately owned site at 450 E. Hastings to serve as a temporary swing space for the PSG while their current site is redeveloped.

Vancouver Coastal Health will continue funding operations of the Powell Street Getaway, and the recommended \$200,000 capital contribution from the City will contribute to the necessary renovations to ready the space for occupancy later this fall.¹ Ensuring PSG can continue to operate to provide critical OPS services, as well as serving as a warming centre is critical to meet the needs of the community.

Implications/Related Issues/Risk

Financial

Source of funding for the grants recommended in this report is the 2021 City Operating budget.

First United

The cost of the proposed renovations for the temporary shelter space at 467 Alexander is estimated to be \$1,300,000. The recommended grant of \$200,000 will represent 15% of the project budget, with BC Housing funding the remainder. BC Housing will also fund the continued operation of the temporary shelter until the replacement housing is completed at 320 E. Hastings.

Disbursement of the grant will be subject to confirmation of BC Housing capital funding, approved permits and a grant agreement being entered into by First United on terms satisfactory to the City.

Lookout

The cost of the proposed renovations for a swing space for the Powell Street Getaway at 450 E. Hastings is \$260,000. Funding for the renovations are \$200,000 as recommended in this report and \$60,000 recommended in a second report also before council today. The “Downtown Eastside Special Enterprise Program – Allocation of Grant Funding to Implementers” (RTS No.: 14576) is recommending \$200,000 for the Community Impact Real Estate Society (CIRES) to assist three non-profit organizations, including up to \$60,000 to Lookout to ready 450 E. Hastings for occupancy. Lookout is responsible for securing the lease and any additional funding needed for renovations. Vancouver Coastal Health will continue to fund operations.

Disbursement of the grants will be subject to permits being approved and a grant agreement in place.

¹ The PSG is not a shelter and therefore not funded by BC Housing.

Legal

Section 206(1)(a) of the *Vancouver Charter* authorizes Council to make money grants to charitable institutions with an affirmative vote of at least 2/3 of all Council members.

CONCLUSION

This report seeks Council approval of a \$200,000 grant to Lookout Housing and Health Society and a \$200,000 grant to First United Church Community Ministry Society in order that they can maintain providing critical shelter, health and other services to the community while they each are redeveloping their existing sites.

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