



# **Building a Future Together**

## **The Downtown Eastside Community Revitalization Program**

October 1, 1998

**BUILDING A FUTURE TOGETHER**

**THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PROGRAM**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Downtown Eastside has always accommodated more than its fair share of people with problems, including physical or mental disabilities, and addiction to alcohol and drugs. However, the last few years have been especially difficult for the area and its residents. A rampant drug trade fueled by the introduction of cocaine, the highest concentration of bars and beer parlours in the City, and deinstitutionalization of mentally disturbed persons to the area, have combined to create an untenable situation for the residents. All-night cafes and convenience stores, often fronts for the active drug trade, have replaced legitimate retailers. The drug trade has attracted outsiders – fully half of those arrested for criminal activity in the Downtown Eastside live outside the area.

Action is required. **Building a Future Together: The Downtown Eastside Community Revitalization program** proposes to restore the Downtown Eastside to a vital, safe community. There is no quick fix. The community, private sector, and governments need to commit to a long term program of community development, and specific, targeted actions to solve problems in the area. It has been said that the community lacks a common vision. Yet, everyone wants to be able to walk the streets in relative safety, everyone wants to see a lively street scape with active businesses and services, and everyone wants the opportunity to make the best of their lives. These areas of consensus provide a basis for community development work which will lead to quick successes, a feeling of accomplishment and a foundation on which to develop strategies to tackle more difficult issues.

Vancouver has a supportive community, willing to take part in shaping its future. Vancouver's Coalition on Crime Prevention and Drug Treatment, a group formed in 1997 by Mayor Philip Owen, Chief Constable Bruce Chambers and the community is prepared to play a major role. The Coalition was formed to help neighbourhoods and communities to join together and take action to prevent drug use and related crimes, and to improve drug treatment.

The City has proposed several actions, some immediate, others which will require more time and cooperation from senior governments and the private sector. The actions are contained in a volume of six reports given to Vancouver City Council in July of this year. We believe that a process of crime prevention through community development is appropriate to address the immediate issues and manage the longer term proposals.

The National Crime Prevention Program supports the type of community development process planned in the Downtown Eastside Community Revitalization Program. During the first year the grant will fund a management and support network for community development, work on targeted activities with immediate payoff, and work toward a five year municipal-provincial-federal Urban Development Agreement.

Projects in the many activity streams will progress at different speeds, but hold several things in common: they involve the community in seeking innovative solutions, they are based on research and benchmarking, they will have measurable outcomes, and they will all focus on the long term success of the program.

The Downtown Eastside may seem far removed from Ottawa and the challenges facing Parliament. However, the issues facing the Downtown Eastside exist in varying degrees in many cities and towns

across the country. The Downtown Eastside Revitalization Program is based on active community participation and is universal; it could easily be adapted to Toronto or Winnipeg, Halifax or Kamloops and address a variety of community development issues.



The City and Vancouver’s Coalition on Crime Prevention and Drug Treatment are making application for funding from the National Crime Prevention Program, Safer Communities Initiative, Crime Prevention Investment Fund. The funding sought is significant, \$1.25 Million dollars each year for five years. It will be augmented by a large municipal and hopefully, provincial commitment both in the first year and through the Urban Development Agreement. The National Crime Prevention Program funding will be used for the program support component, comprised of facilitation and mediation, research, training and education, measurement and evaluation, communications, and program management. A mix of hired staff and consultant services will be utilized to provide the required skills and manage the program. In addition, staff support will be solicited from both the federal and provincial governments to work with municipal staff on the various projects. A steering committee of elected officials from all three levels of government, meeting quarterly, will oversee the program, which will be directed by a team of senior staff.

Taken in context of the size of the problem, this cost is reasonable. There are currently over 200 service agencies operating in and around the Downtown Eastside who spend hundreds of millions of dollars annually, provided by the three levels of government. A successful community revitalization program will translate into reduced service demand, more efficient service delivery and significant cost savings for all levels of government. The National Crime Prevention Program funding will be used to support the community development process, as well as the work in the many activity streams.

This is a local issue, but it is also a provincial and national issue that has garnered international attention. Vancouver is downtown British Columbia, and the problems in the Downtown Eastside affect the entire

province. Vancouver is also Canada's Asia-Pacific gateway: for tourism, commerce, and regrettably, drugs. We must focus national attention on the Downtown Eastside Revitalization Program. What we learn from the Downtown Eastside Revitalization Program will have national importance and value, and together we can make a difference.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Vancouver is one of the most beautiful, vibrant cities in the world, and the heart of trade and commerce for western Canada. Voted one of the most liveable cities in the world, it is noted as a safe community with an enviable range of amenities and services for its residents. Businesses from around the world have offices and use Vancouver as a hub of trade. The Port of Vancouver is the busiest seaport on the west coast.



**The Downtown Eastside**

The community immediately adjacent to the port, the Downtown Eastside, is also the oldest community in the city. It has been a stable community for most of this century, comprised mainly of older, single men, immigrants and urban First Nations people. The Downtown Eastside has always accommodated more than its fair share of people with problems. The area also holds the City's highest concentration of licensed liquor establishments and social services. In spite of all that, the Downtown Eastside maintained a healthy sense of community. People cared for each other and visitors felt safe, if not entirely comfortable, on the streets.

However, the last few years have been especially difficult for the area and its residents. The streets have been taken over by a younger, rougher, meaner crowd, attracted by a very active drug trade. Fully half of those arrested for criminal activity in the Downtown Eastside reside elsewhere. The drug of choice is increasingly cocaine, a drug that requires its hyper-active victims to shoot up twenty times a day or more.

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The new drugs and associated crime have brought with them new problems. Increased injection drug use and needle sharing have contributed to an HIV and Hepatitis C epidemic. Stores have closed, buildings have been boarded up and left vacant. Those that remain are occupied by businesses that primarily support the drug trade.

The area is quickly becoming isolated from the rest of the City and its residents are feeling increasingly under siege. Adding to the sense of unease is new development encroaching into the area. New investment will assist with the revitalization of the Downtown Eastside, yet some see it as conflicting with the neighbourhood's traditional role as a place for the less advantaged.

Although still a community of many strengths, the Downtown Eastside is in a downward spiral which severely threatens the continued health and safety of the neighbourhood. It is important that the root causes of the problems in the community be addressed now, while the situation can still be reversed.

**Building a Future Together: The Downtown Eastside Community Revitalization Program** presents an action plan to restore the Downtown Eastside to a vital, safe community. There is no quick fix. Instead, the community, private sector, and governments need to commit together to a long term program of community development and specific actions to solve problems in the area. Building incrementally on modest, widely supported actions, the program will work to develop consensus on policies for area revitalization.

The City has proposed several actions, some of which are being acted on immediately and others which will require cooperation from senior governments and the private sector. The program will be supported by funding from the National Crime Prevention Centre, Crime Prevention Investment Fund. During the first year of the program, the emphasis will be on crime prevention through community development, with action in specific areas where quick consensus can be achieved. As the program progresses through its five year life span, actions to upgrade the quality of life, enhance street activity, address drug trade issues, upgrade housing, and create economic activity will restore the neighbourhood.

During the first year, the basis for a federal-provincial-municipal five year Urban Development Agreement will be established. The Federal Government has begun consultation with both the City and the Province on the feasibility of targeted and coordinated government and private sector initiatives under that Agreement providing the long term resources and actions the community needs.

### **What is a Viable Community**

The design of the Downtown Eastside Community Revitalization Program is similar to “safe community” or “healthy community programs” being promoted elsewhere in Canada and the United States. A viable community is one working to become clean and safe, with a physical environment and ecosystem that is sustainable. It strives to provide a thriving economy, quality education system, opportunities for individual and business growth, and adequate provision for public health, safety and



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other essential needs of its population. The process of promoting change, as well as the ultimate outcome of that process, is emphasized. Projects, process and outcomes are inextricably linked.

In addition, a safe, viable community demonstrates an element of inter-connectedness, linking private, public and non-profit sectors to address the underlying root causes of poor quality of life and health. Project participants represent the full range of interests and roles that make a community work. Effective solutions link citizen, environmental, economic, physical and design factors to build safer, more viable communities. By including all sectors, the Downtown Eastside Community Revitalization project will create comprehensive solutions to the underlying causes of crime, drug addiction, and poor quality of life.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Downtown Eastside is shared by diverse communities, living in neighbourhoods with overlapping boundaries. It includes geographically distinct places such as Gastown, Chinatown and Strathcona. Low income people who live throughout the area view themselves as part of the community. The Downtown Eastside Revitalization program, and in particular, the community development process, will recognize that many residents and business people identify more closely with specific neighbourhoods and communities of interest.

### **A Statistical Picture of Downtown the Eastside**

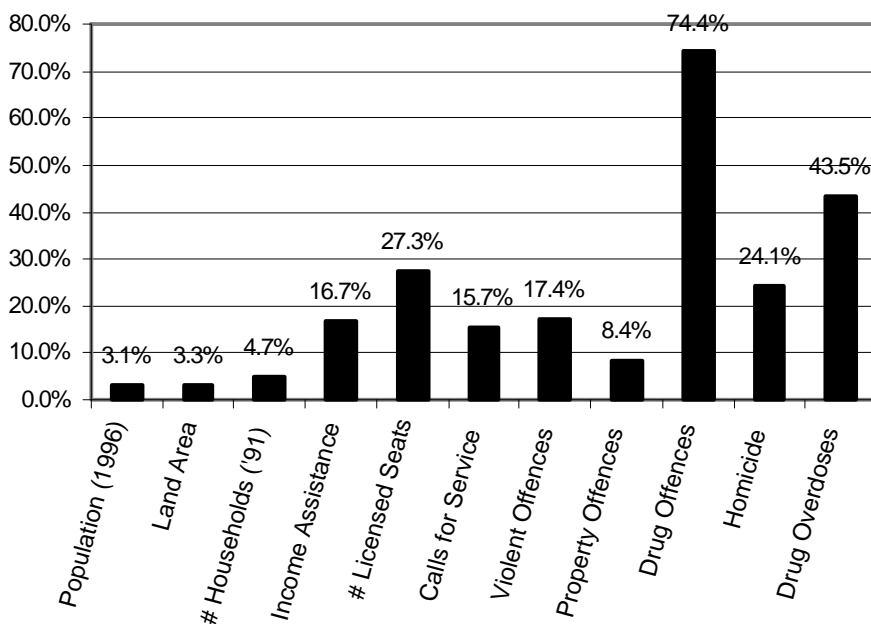
#### Poverty

According to Statistics Canada, the Downtown Eastside is home to the postal code with the lowest per capita income in Canada. The median income for the Downtown Eastside in 1990 was one-third that of the City of Vancouver and the incidence of low income in the area was 73.4%. The child poverty rate has been estimated to be as high as 52%. For a population of approximately 16,000, over half are presently receiving income assistance and a great majority are living in rental housing. Poverty in the Downtown Eastside, combined with drug and alcohol addictions, has led to an unacceptably high level of criminal activity.

#### Crime

Over the years, the Downtown Eastside has generated an increasingly disproportionate amount of criminal activity and demand on police services relative to the rest of the City. Although the Downtown Eastside covers only 3.3% of the total area of the city and houses approximately 3% of the population, in 1997 it generated 15.7% of all police calls for service, 17.4% of all violent crimes, and 8.4% of all property crimes.

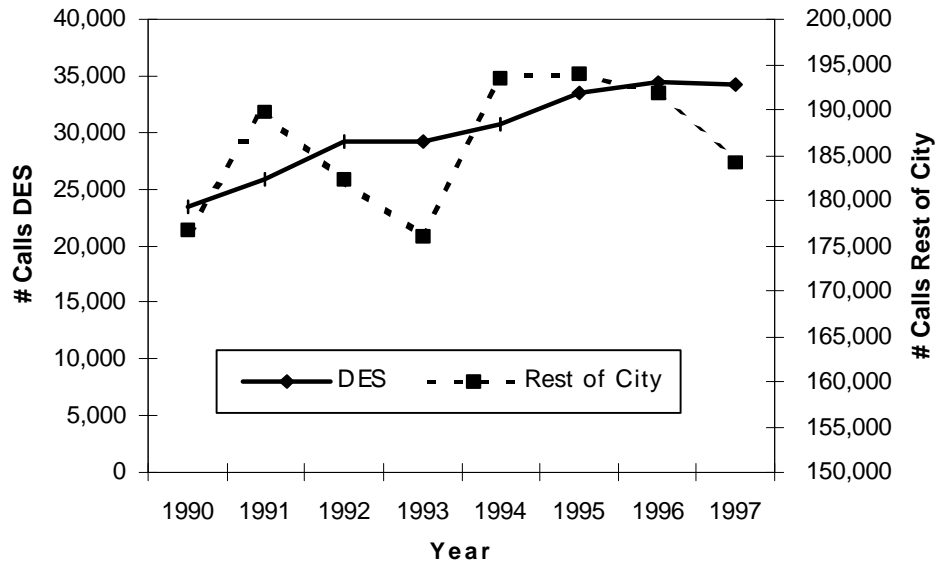
### **Downtown Eastside as a Percentage of the City of Vancouver (1997)**



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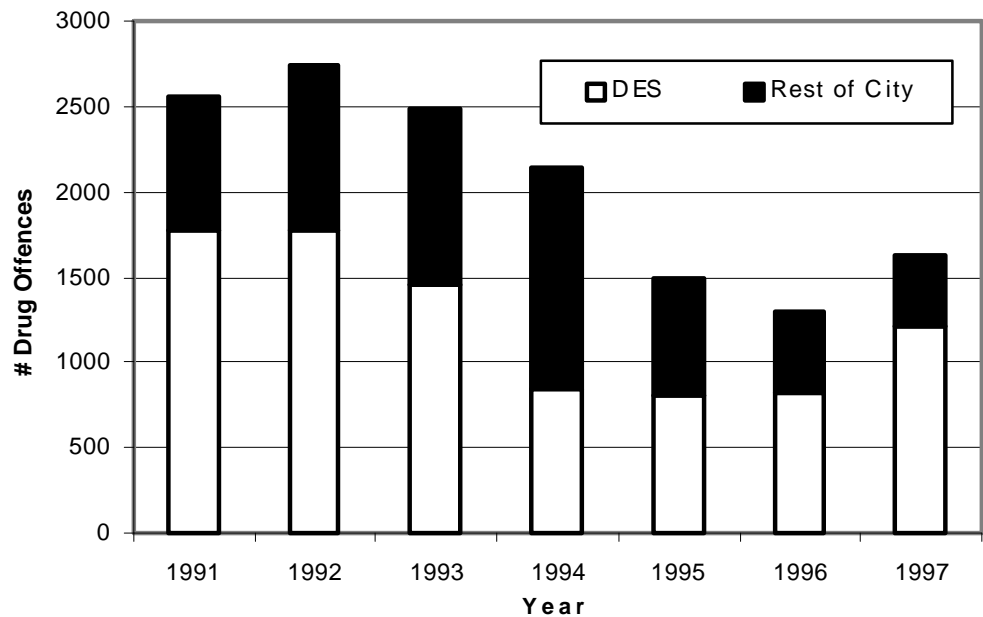
Calls for service in the Downtown Eastside have grown dramatically over the past eight years, from 23,450 in 1990 to over 32,200 in 1997, an increase of over 46%. In contrast, calls for service for the city during the same period rose a mere 4.2%, from 176,800 to 184,200. In fact, city-wide calls for service have been on the decline since 1994. If the present trend in the Downtown Eastside is allowed to continue, the situation, already considered to be drastic, will only deteriorate.

**Calls for Service  
(1991-1997)**



The high concentration of licensed liquor establishments and the thriving drug trade in the Downtown Eastside have been the driving forces behind the high incidence of crime. Without adequate treatment available, addicts see no option but to resort to crimes such as robbery, theft from auto, and breaking

**Drug Offences  
(1991-1997)**

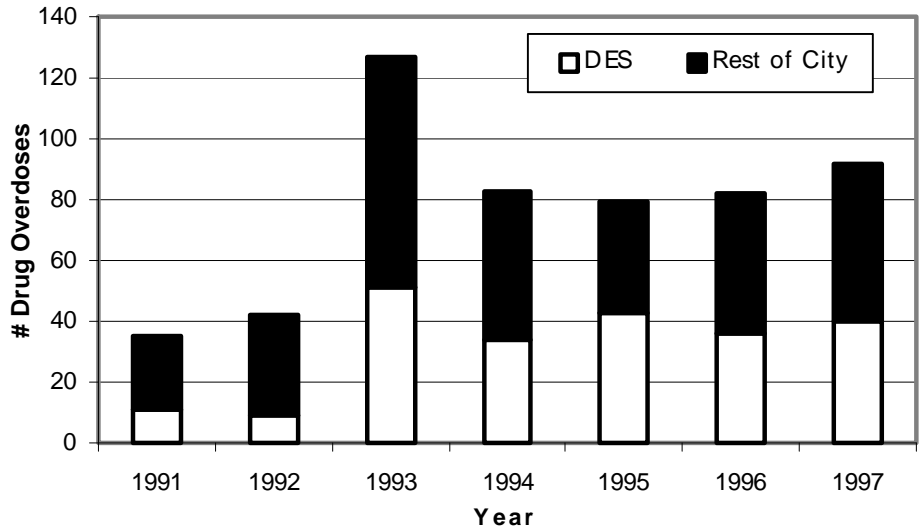


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and entering to support their addiction.

This addiction problem is evidenced by the number of drug offences taking place in the Downtown Eastside (approximately 75% of all drug offences in 1997), and, of greater significance, by the number of people dying from drug overdose in the Downtown Eastside.

**Number of Drug Overdoses Leading to Death (1991-1997)**



Approximately one-fifth of all deaths requiring police response (homicide, drug overdoses and sudden deaths) occur in this tiny area of Vancouver. Specifically, one-quarter of all murders and over 40% of all drug overdoses leading to death occur in the Downtown Eastside.

## **COMMUNITY RESPONSE**

The cost to taxpayers for maintaining and enhancing services in the Downtown Eastside is staggering. It has been estimated that there are over 200 services being provided in the area. The City supports two community centres, resource and drop-in centres, low income housing projects, outreach programs and other direct services to the Downtown Eastside community. The federal and provincial governments provide millions of dollars in direct servicing to the area. Alcohol and drug programs, health programs, income assistance programs, justice and police initiatives are but some of the direct services provided.

Crime problems throughout the City, and in particular, in the Downtown Eastside, have led to a number of responses. The declaration of an HIV/AIDS epidemic in the area in 1997 raised the profile of the problem significantly, and all levels of government are concerned about the worsening conditions. Several initiatives by Health Canada and the provincial Ministry of Health have been designed to address the problem. In 1998, the City committed over \$3 million in new initiatives and extra police.

### **Vancouver's Coalition for Crime Prevention and Drug Treatment**

In October 1997, Mayor Philip Owen and Chief Constable Bruce Chambers joined with the larger community to form Canada's first Coalition for Crime Prevention and Drug Treatment. The 45 Coalition members include the Vancouver School Board, the Vancouver Park Board, Vancouver Board of Trade, Vancouver Port Corporation, Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia, United Way, the Vancouver Foundation, VanCity Credit Union, the Insurance Corporation of BC, and many other businesses, groups and clubs.

The Coalition believes strongly in the community development process and the involvement of citizens in identifying problems and determining the solution to those problems. City staff and Coalition partners are actively working to assemble land for a new drug treatment centre, to put more police officers on the street in the Downtown Eastside, to improve drug awareness and prevention programs in schools, to enhance safety programs for women, to develop legislative reform and to deliver community crime prevention seminars and other public education programs for interested citizens. In June, 1998, the Coalition sponsored Vancouver's International Symposium for Crime Prevention and Drug Treatment, a forum for discussion and education about crime prevention and drug treatment options. Many worthwhile activities are underway and many more are in the planning stages.

Vancouver's Coalition for Crime Prevention and Drug Treatment is a co-applicant for National Crime Prevention Program funding. A full list of Coalition members, action highlights and further information on the Coalition and the symposium are included in Appendix (A).

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### **Recent City Programs**

In July of this year, Vancouver City Council received 6 reports on the Downtown Eastside, outlining the community issues. The reports detail the history of the area and problems, a program of strategic actions, and draft plans for housing and land use in the area. The reports are comprehensive and form the basis for planning strategies and processes for success in rejuvenating the area. The reports outline an array of projects and initiatives that should be undertaken, with the key component being community development. This application for funding recognizes that, and much of the work planned for the first year of the program deals exclusively with community development.

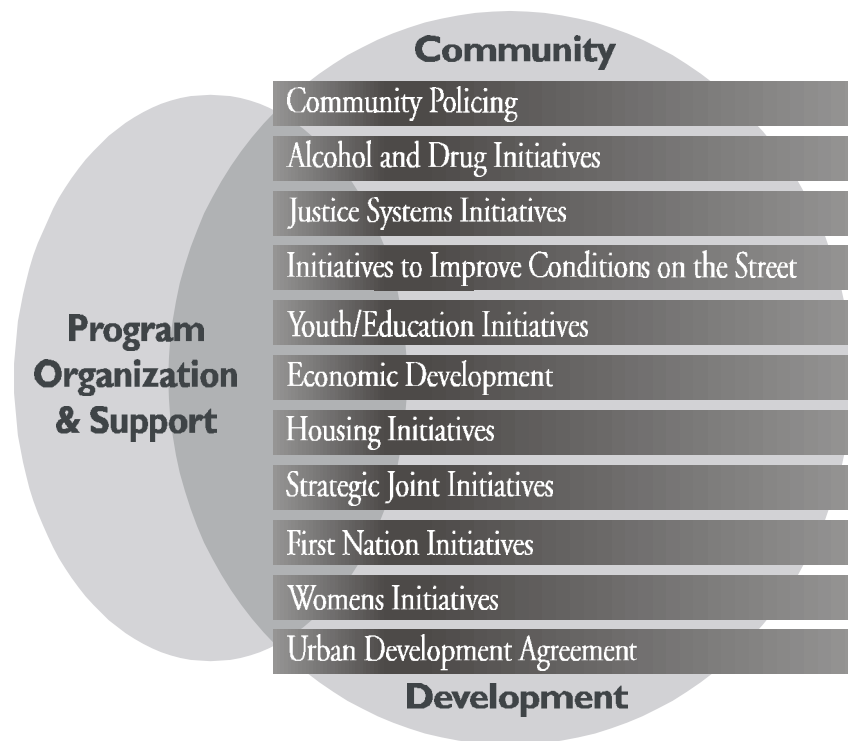
In addition to compiling the reports, City staff have been working with senior levels of government on several programs to alleviate the issues facing the area. The programs include:

- Focussed police attention and directed enforcement. The number of police officers on the beat in the area has been increased from 16 to 36 over the past two years; they have focussed on creating a safe environment in the area.
- Enhanced street and lane clean-ups. Lane clean-ups have been increased, extra trash containers and extra park clean-ups have been implemented. As well, street people have been used to assist in cleaning up the area, providing them with extra income and a sense of ownership of the problem.
- The City and VanCity Credit Union created 50 housing units for street youth. The City has committed \$2 million to purchase land for drug and alcohol treatment and education facilities in the area.
- The City is working with the Vancouver/Richmond Health Board and the Province to develop a Sobering Centre in the Downtown Eastside. The cost is estimated at one million dollars.

## **THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PROGRAM**

### **Overview**

Much activity by many individuals and groups is directed toward developing a safe, viable community in the Downtown Eastside. All levels of government, business and the community have invested a great deal of human and financial resources in the Downtown Eastside. The intent of the program being proposed is not to recreate or supplant the work that is already underway, but to coordinate, organize and particularly to build on that work, using a sound community development model as a basis. The program mission is to rebuild a viable community through targeted short and long term actions, developed and managed through a community development process. Program goals are to address issues in the community using existing and enhanced partnerships with governments, community groups, businesses and the non-profit sector through an Urban Development Agreement, and creating a process blueprint which can be adapted to similar circumstances in other cities across Canada.



The community development work will be facilitated through a Program Support group working in the background to coordinate and support the various projects, building incrementally on success and consensus toward more difficult and long range endeavors.

## **THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

It has been said that the community lacks a common vision. Yet, everyone wants to be able to walk the streets in relative safety, everyone wants to see a lively street scape with active businesses and services, and everyone wants the opportunity to make the best of their lives. These areas of consensus provide a focus for the intense community development work during the first year, which will lead to some quick successes, a feeling of accomplishment and a base on which to develop strategies to tackle more difficult issues. In subsequent years of the program the emphasis will gradually shift to one of empowerment, reflecting the communities ability to assist in shaping its own destiny, and meeting the goal of sustainability.

The profound pressures on the Downtown Eastside have resulted in considerably different visions and priorities as people from different income and ethnic groups struggle to survive or prosper under very difficult conditions. On issues related to housing and development plans, opinions differ widely (and passionately). Extended community development work will be required to reach agreement on these larger questions. Some results can be expected to be achieved very quickly and will serve to inspire work on more difficult problems. The constant in all activity streams will be the influence of the Community Development process, which will identify areas of consensus where action can be taken, and work to establish new agreement on larger and more controversial issues.

An evaluation of the community and the most effective methods of involving the community in identifying problems and solutions is required, including an inventory of:

- neighbourhood characteristics, strengths and weaknesses
- opportunities for quick response
- economic and employment opportunities
- public and private services available
- shortfalls in service requirements
- crime and disorder issues
- opportunities for citizen involvement

### **Facilitation / Mediation Support**

Because of the intense pressures on the area and the variety of community interests, facilitated meetings and workshops will be extensive during the first year. Examples are: initial information sessions to take the program to the community; training and education sessions to assist all members of the community understand the diverse nature of the area and the issues; community building workshops between the diverse communities, and between the communities, police, Coalition members and government staff; and project preparation workshops to review the activity streams and the array of projects ongoing within the streams.



## ACTIVITY STREAMS



In each of the activity streams there are things that are currently being done, initiatives or projects that are being planned and new initiatives and projects that will be developed through work group members. As well, activities in the various work groups will spawn new activity streams as the program develops. The current Activity streams are:

### Community Policing

Recent actions the City has taken:

- Chinatown Community Police Centre (CPC) opened 1992
- Gastown CPC opened 1995
- Downtown Eastside CPC opened 1995
- increased number of police walking beats from 16 to 26 in 1996, and to 36 in 1998
- formed Downtown Eastside Integrated Services Team to deal with problem premises
- require business plans and “Good Neighbour” agreements from area businesses
- relocated a property use inspector to the area to deal with problem premises
- increased interdepartmental cooperation to deal with problem second hand stores and pawn shops

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Further actions required:

- develop and enhance recruitment programs for Community Police Centres
- develop training programs for volunteers
- investigate the possibility of introducing a program similar to the “City Guard” program in the Netherlands
- projects that raise the level of interest of residents in crime prevention and intervention activities
- with the police, develop strategies that increase positive interactions between police and residents
- research and develop innovative crime prevention programs in conjunction with the BC Ministry of Attorney General, the Vancouver Police Department and the community

This is a high priority area, with high potential for early results.

## Alcohol and Drug Initiatives

Recent actions the City has taken:

- formed Vancouver’s Coalition for Crime prevention and Drug Treatment
- hosted the International Symposium on Crime Prevention and Drug Treatment
- joint City, Regional Health Board, Province team began work on a Sobering Centre in the Downtown Eastside
- working with Health Canada in addressing joint issues

Further actions required:

- research into “best practices” in alcohol and drug treatment
- research innovative methods for drug and alcohol treatment, such as acupuncture
- complete the Sobering Centre
- secure funding for a program to transport intoxicated persons to needed services
- develop a Detox service for intravenous (IV) drug users
- establish residential treatment and outpatient programs for IV drug users
- develop the programming objectives, location criteria and public process for the proposed Resource Centre for IV drug users
- develop drug and alcohol prevention programs for schools and public awareness campaigns
- ensure the effective integration of activities of all three levels of government and the accessibility of these activities by the residents

## Justice Systems Initiatives

No community revitalization program can be successful in an atmosphere of violent crime and drug abuse. Law enforcement officials and the criminal justice system must, therefore, first “weed out” the street criminals and drug traffickers who terrorize the neighbourhood. Drug traffickers and violent

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criminals, once arrested, are often immediately returned to the streets to continue their illegal activities. Despite the best efforts of police and criminal justice personnel, there is often a lengthy delay between arrest and disposition. Moreover, even when such cases are resolved, the criminal often serves little, if any, time in a correctional facility.

### Actions required:

- develop a coordinated, government strategy to reduce the importation and sale of illicit drugs
- develop a comprehensive, multi-agency strategy to control violent crime, drug trafficking and drug related crime in the neighbourhood
- develop recommended methods of strengthening the Federal Immigration Act to ensure the quick deportation of criminal refugee claimants involved in the illicit drug trade
- negotiate with federal and provincial law enforcement officials, the Crown and probation services to establish new protocols and policies aimed at dealing more effectively with criminals operating in the area
- develop common goals between law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system, including:
  - speedy removal of offenders from the street (the effectiveness of this removal process must be made apparent to the public)
  - offenders dealt with quickly by the criminal justice system
  - offenders serve the requisite time in a correctional facility
  - coordinate existing federal, provincial and municipal government and private initiatives, and redirect those initiatives to effectively combat crime in the Downtown Eastside

Again, this is a high priority, targeted for early action and significant public involvement – achievements in this area must be apparent and encourage more effort.

## Initiatives to Improve Conditions on the Street

### Recent actions the City has taken:

- held lane-cleaning days, employing street people to clean area laneways
- used interdepartmental resources to improve the security of vacant buildings
- removed graffiti from buildings in the area
- hired local artists to paint murals on hoarding around construction sites
- increased clean up and litter removal in area parks

### Further actions required:

- develop and support community projects which enhance the appearance of the community and contribute to community development including,
  - community clean up events
  - street art initiatives
  - park pride events

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- develop an adopt-a-street revitalization project, using the support of the business partners assisting members of the community
- develop a comprehensive, multi-agency strategy to reduce the number of licensed premise seats by at least 1000 in the Downtown Eastside
- develop a similar strategy to control the sale of high alcohol beverages, such as rice wine, in the Downtown Eastside

An early part of the community development process will be directed to this stream of activity. Many of the activities will be developed with the community and early progress should be possible. While most of these activities will not address the major issues in the area, they are an early sign of action and an important statement to the community.

## Youth/Education Initiatives

Recent actions the City has taken:

- created Civic Youth Strategy, designed to strengthen the support base for youth
- developed Immigrant Youth Buddy program to foster integration of development of social network for immigrant youth
- collaborated with Provincial AG's office and several other Coalition partners in developing the City Wide Youth Initiative and Youth Action Teams
- partnered with Vancouver School Board to facilitate a Partners at Work job experience program

Further actions required:

- develop ways for youth to access and participate in the Community Development Process
- develop a Community Accountability program to work with troubled youth identified through the police, schools or courts, teaching them to accept responsibility and accountability
- develop programs specific to First Nations adolescent boys who are displaying violent behavior
- develop new, and enhance existing youth diversion programs
- develop an East Vancouver Sporting Opportunities Action Plan to offer sports leagues to youth who cannot access minor league sports due to poverty, language barriers, etc.
- work with federal and provincial governments to develop job training programs for disadvantaged people and youth

## Economic Development

Recent actions the City has taken:

- City staff in consultation with the Downtown Vancouver Association (DVA), the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (DVBIA), and the Vancouver Economic Development Commission (VDEC) are developing a strategy to bring business back to the Downtown Eastside.

Further actions required:

- Develop strategies for the community to participate through the Community Development Process
- Set up an advisory group comprised of Coalition members, DBA, DVBIA, VDEC and local, provincial and federal government staff
- Develop strategies to attract businesses to the Downtown Eastside, in particular the Hastings Street corridor
- Develop strategies to encourage local business into the area.
- Develop innovative strategies for government to purchase leases or buildings and lease out at subsidized rates for a fixed period of time to allow businesses to establish in the area.
- work with federal and provincial heritage programs to maintain the commercial viability of heritage buildings

Some of these activities can be locally based, and implemented early in the program. Some residents suggest economic development activities may result in gentrification, and give rise to community concern, requiring extended consultation to reach agreement. Heritage and cultural support programs may assist with economic development. New development in adjacent areas, including the convention centre and hotel, may provide the opportunity for significant job training activity supported by government programs.

## Housing Initiatives

Recent actions the City has taken:

- significantly increased the number of joint inspections to provide early warning for health, building code and other violations, and to promptly close unsafe premises
- committed \$5.4 million to help develop social housing units to replace SRO hotel rooms closed or converted to other use

Further actions required:

- involve the community, through the Community Development Process, in problem solving housing requirements
- enhance enforcement of Standards of Maintenance by-law in SRO hotels

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- assist SRO owners in providing better management
- have senior governments expand the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program for SRO building upgrade
- develop agreement on a short term plan of action to maintain and improve housing stock for existing residents
- continue to work on development of an accepted, viable long term housing plan for the area which is generally acceptable to the communities involved
- ensure that low income housing and housing for people with special needs are provided throughout the City and region
- evaluate the potential for SRO demolition control
- develop alcohol and drug free housing initiatives

### Strategic Joint Initiatives

Some of the most ambitious and exciting projects will cut across several activity streams. They will require a great deal of coordination and cooperation and will result in tremendous rewards if they are successful. They will typically take months of negotiations and involve many government departments, as well as private partners. The projects outlined below address some of the more obvious problems in the Downtown Eastside and, if achieved, will go a long way towards building a safer community.

#### **Coordinated Enforcement**

##### **The “Weed and Seed” Concept**

There has been world wide support growing for an approach in which law enforcement, policing and prosecution, as well as social development and prevention together, form the basis of a balanced strategy. In the United States, the federal Department of Justice has supported a major initiative in the field known as “Weed and Seed”. This strategy takes advantage of the trend towards increasing policing capacity, including community policing in this province, as well as the potential strength of communities to combat crime in their own neighbourhoods. The Downtown Eastside community will be a key component of all activities related to this concept.

The provincial and federal governments must be a key partners in initiatives designed to deal quickly and effectively with offenders and have the offenders serve the requisite time in correctional facilities. Evidence of these cooperative initiatives can be seen in the Crime Prevention / Community Policing and Justice activity streams.

The drug problem in the Downtown Eastside is arguably the worst in the country, and a considerable amount of extra resources has already been allocated to the problem. Throwing even more resources at the problem without a good plan may not be the best solution. In jurisdictions in the United States faced with similar circumstances, the solution of choice in the past has been police saturation of the area for a period of time. The problem with that approach is that it is very costly and lasts only as

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long as the increased police presence, which is often short lived. Unless attention is paid to the underlying cause of the problem and all the needs of the community, anything the police are able to do will be seen at best as a band-aid solution.

In the Downtown Eastside Community Revitalization Program, enforcement will be approached in a fashion similar to the other parts of the process. A management team will be put together by the City Manager and the Chief Constable, in consultation with the Attorney General, to review all issues related to enforcement in the Downtown Eastside. As in other activities, the community will play an active role in identifying problems and working on solutions, in a true community policing model. Although more police officers may be required, rather than simply saturating the area with police officers, a wider process will be used taking full advantage of existing resources. The enforcement process will include the following:

### **Research**

- to determine methods used and innovative approaches tried in other jurisdictions,
- to review the law and find appropriate remedies for consideration by Judges and Crown Counsel,
- to review and make recommendations for Charter changes, Statute changes and By-law changes
- research innovative approaches such as installing video monitoring in the area
- the best use of police resources
- research the benefits to additional private security in the area
- other innovative approaches

### **Coordinated Response**

Work with the Attorney-General of BC and the Federal Justice Minister to develop a specialized response to the crime issues in the area, including:

- dedicated prosecutors for drug and drug-related offences
- dedicated courts
- training for police officers and prosecutors
- training for Corrections personnel re release provisions
- develop appropriate release and sentencing conditions

### **Street Enforcement**

The key to success in the enforcement plan will be to make the best use of existing resources, work with the community through the Community Development Process, seek innovative solutions and measure success by outcomes, adding additional resources only as a last resort. To accomplish this, the following steps will be taken:

- determine the most effective use of existing police resources
- determine extra police resources required
- set up enforcement team of police, City inspectors, BC Liquor Branch inspectors,

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- Ministry of Human Resources (welfare) inspectors, Health Board inspectors, etc.
- plan targeted enforcement activities, based on research, designed to have the greatest impact on the problem
- determine the most effective use of City building inspectors and target problem operations
- plan for a maximum number of Show Cause hearings before City Council to deal with bad businesses
- coordinate with other service providers to relocate residents displaced because of a hotel being closed down through enforcement
- determine methodology for measuring the effectiveness of different approaches
- set target objectives that are measurable, then meet the objectives
- continue or suspend initiatives based on measured success

### **Property Purchase Initiative**

One such project that will be examined closely over the next few months involves hotels in the area with large licensed premises. The Downtown Eastside has the largest concentration of licensed premise seats in the province and quite likely in the country. Much of the criminal activity in the area takes place in or around the hotel bars, pubs and beer parlours. In addition, many of the those hotels have difficulty maintaining a reasonable standard of maintenance and operation and have an inordinate amount of police and City attention paid to them.

The most expeditious and effective method of dealing with the issue is to create a public-private consortium to identify and purchase some of the more problematic properties, remove the licensed portion and refurbish the hotel to provide services that would revitalize the community. Amenities such as subsidized housing, treatment facilities, women's and First Nations centres, and other public attractions and small businesses are all possible and would all contribute to improving the health of the community.

The complexity of the project is obvious. Agreements will have to be struck between many departments of federal, provincial and municipal governments, private partners secured, sound business cases developed and major funding sources identified; all in a time of tight budget constraints. The challenge is exceeded only by the reward of success!

### **Drug Court Project**

A pilot project to establish a Drug Court in Vancouver is being considered by Justice Canada, with City and Provincial representatives on a working committee to develop the project. The project involves innovative alternatives to incarceration in a correctional facility for those convicted of drug-related offences. A range of treatment options would be developed, including residential treatment, and judges would given a broader list of sentencing options from which to choose, as well as a broader range of remand options prior to trial.



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A great deal of coordination, cooperation and support will be required in reaching agreements, finding partners, and developing the business case and funding model. The impact of such a program would be significant and felt immediately in the community. Initiatives taken through the project would also be transferrable to other jurisdictions experiencing similar problems. A similar project is underway in Toronto and an interesting comparison could be made between the two projects as they progress. Recent actions the City has taken:

### First Nation Initiatives

- provided funding for a First Nations Youth at Risk worker
- supported a First Nations Seniors group
- provided land for a First Nations organization to develop housing in the inner city
- supported liaison work between the First Nations community and the Vancouver Police Department

Further actions required:

- develop mechanisms that enable First Nations people and organizations to participate in the planning of services for First Nations people
- develop of culturally appropriate alcohol and drug services for First Nations residents
- develop of First Nations cultural, educational, social, and recreational programs
- develop of employment programs for First Nations residents

Recent actions the City has taken:

### Womens Initiatives

- provided financial support six inner city childcare programs
- worked with Crabtree Corner daycare to provide outreach and community programs for women and children
- provide funding for the Downtown Eastside Womens Centre
- developed family and youth programs in Downtown Eastside community centres
- supported organizations working with street involved youth at risk
- supported organizations working with street involved women
- participated in the development of housing for women in the neighbourhood

Further actions required:

- continue to work with the other levels of government to create detox and drug treatment for women and women with children and specifically First Nations women.
- develop capacity for organizations to better work with women in the community
- develop programs that encourage women to learn skills

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The problems facing the Downtown Eastside developed slowly over a long period of time. Consequently, any successful resolution to the issues will take a sustained, long term, coordinated effort by all levels of government, business and the community. While some accomplishments can be made early in the program, and community development will reap great rewards, ultimately a coordinated approach by the federal, provincial and municipal governments will have to be developed to address the social and economic needs of the area.

### Urban Development Agreement

City staff are currently conducting preliminary work with Western Economic Diversification and Health Canada on developing the concept of an Urban Development Agreement. Similar Urban Development Agreements are currently in place in Winnipeg and Edmonton and provide a framework for tripartite agreements and support sustainable, long term development. It is that type of government framework that will lead to a safe, sustainable community in the Downtown Eastside.

Preparing the basis for an Urban Development Agreement will be a significant component of the work effort. It must, by its nature, involve all three levels of government; but for it to be truly effective, the private sector and the community must be fully involved.

The purpose of the cooperative framework is to design a process whereby the parties can develop a common and focused approach to future development. The goals would be to assist people access job opportunities and purposeful activities, create a safe and healthy community, and create long term sustainable viability. All of the elements described above could be incorporated.

There are several possible themes which could incorporate these elements within an Urban Development Agreement for Vancouver, including:

1. Community Development (economic development, community building, facilities development, urban safety, community revitalization, etc.) Examples could be renew infrastructure of buildings that provide public services, heritage preservation, improving SRO's and housing mix, assist new businesses, crime prevention projects, youth programs community arts projects, innovative court operation projects
2. Labour Force Development (job access and training, innovative pilot and demonstration projects, innovative and preventive child and family service expansion). Help difficult to employ people through training, work experience programs and other innovative programs; literacy and job-readiness projects; youth job strategy development; urban aboriginal strategies related to training, small businesses, etc.; work release projects; innovative and preventive child and family services expansion.
3. Strategic Investment Programs (tourism, transportation downtown revitalization, heritage resource incentives, other strategic resources). There are many opportunities in this theme, such as a downtown historic railway, Downtown Eastside university campus, employment training facility, etc.

## **INTENDED OUTCOMES**

### **Year 1**

Year 1 outcomes will be significant and set the stage for the entire program. At the end of the first year we can expect to see:

- elements of the program, project organization and the business blueprint fully defined and project information shared with other communities across the country
- the community more aware of issues and a greater willingness to work together on common goals
- community development initiatives well underway, setting the ground work for future activities and projects
- coordinated enforcement activities will result in less crime and disorder on the streets, a greater feeling of security and will encourage the residents to take part in the process
- a great deal of work will have been done in the Crime Prevention/Community Policing stream and some projects, such as the Sobering Centre, will have been completed
- projects to improve conditions on the street will have been identified and started, and some modest successes will have been achieved
- the framework of an Urban Development Agreement will have been developed

### **Years 2 and 3**

The second phase of the program, years 2 and 3 will see much activity in all the activity streams and definite changes in the area as a result. The community will be joining staff groups in tackling more challenging problems and building on earlier successes. At the end of years 2 and 3 we can expect to see:

- reductions in all measured incidents - crime, drug offences, drug overdoses
- greater community involvement in project work
- agreement on long term goals for the community
- more legitimate street activity, less observable crime and disorder
- a shift from heavy police enforcement toward order maintenance
- some real progress in major inter-governmental projects, including drug treatment facilities, a drug court, revisions to remand and sentencing conditions, and new partnerships being formed between the community, private sector and government
- new businesses coming to the area
- implementation of some elements of the Urban Development Agreement

## **Years 4 and 5**

The final phase, years 4 and 5, will see a transition in the community toward sustainability. There will be a noticeable shift toward partnership with the government as the community becomes more cohesive. Along with that shift may come a realignment of government services and potential efficiency gains through amalgamation of services. At the end of years 4 and 5 we can expect to see:

- significant reductions in measured incidents - crime, drug offences, drug overdoses
- more treatment facilities in the area and in the region
- a community police model in place
- a viable business community
- completion of the objectives of the first phase of the Urban Development Agreement
- a safe, sustainable community which continues to strive for better living conditions
- agreement on a further five year Urban Development Agreement if warranted

## **PROGRAM ORGANIZATION AND SUPPORT**



### **Program Organization**

The focus of the community development portion of the program is through the project work in the various activity streams. The program organization supports the grass roots work on the projects, while also focusing on the higher level work required for the Urban Development Agreement.

### **Policy Steering Committee**

The Policy Steering Committee will have two elected representatives from the Federal, Provincial and City governments, and will be chaired by the City of Vancouver. The Steering Committee will act on matters of policy and broad program objectives forwarded to them from the Management Committee. The principal roles of the Steering Committee will be one of expediting agreements between the levels of government and to have political accountability for the program. It is expected that the Steering Committee will meet quarterly, and report to the governments on overall project progress.

### **Management Committee**

The Management Committee will have two senior staff members from each of the three levels of government and a senior representative of the National Crime Prevention Program. The Committee

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Chair will be from the Vancouver City Manager's Office. The Management Committee will be responsible for the progress of work in the activity streams, coordinating and facilitating inter-governmental initiatives, giving policy advice to project teams. The Management Committee will also be responsible for the overall program measurement and evaluation. It is expected that the Management Committee will meet monthly.

### **Operations Team**

A larger team, the Operations Team is comprised of all activity stream managers, with a full time project manager in charge. The team will be responsible for coordinating all activities and projects in the various activity streams and assisting project teams where required. They will be responsible for meeting all deadlines, matching expected outcomes and the successful implementation of projects. The Program Support Group will be attached to the Operations Team, as will a broad based Community Advisory Panel. The Operations Team will meet much more frequently and have a direct role in the activities underway.

### **Project Teams**

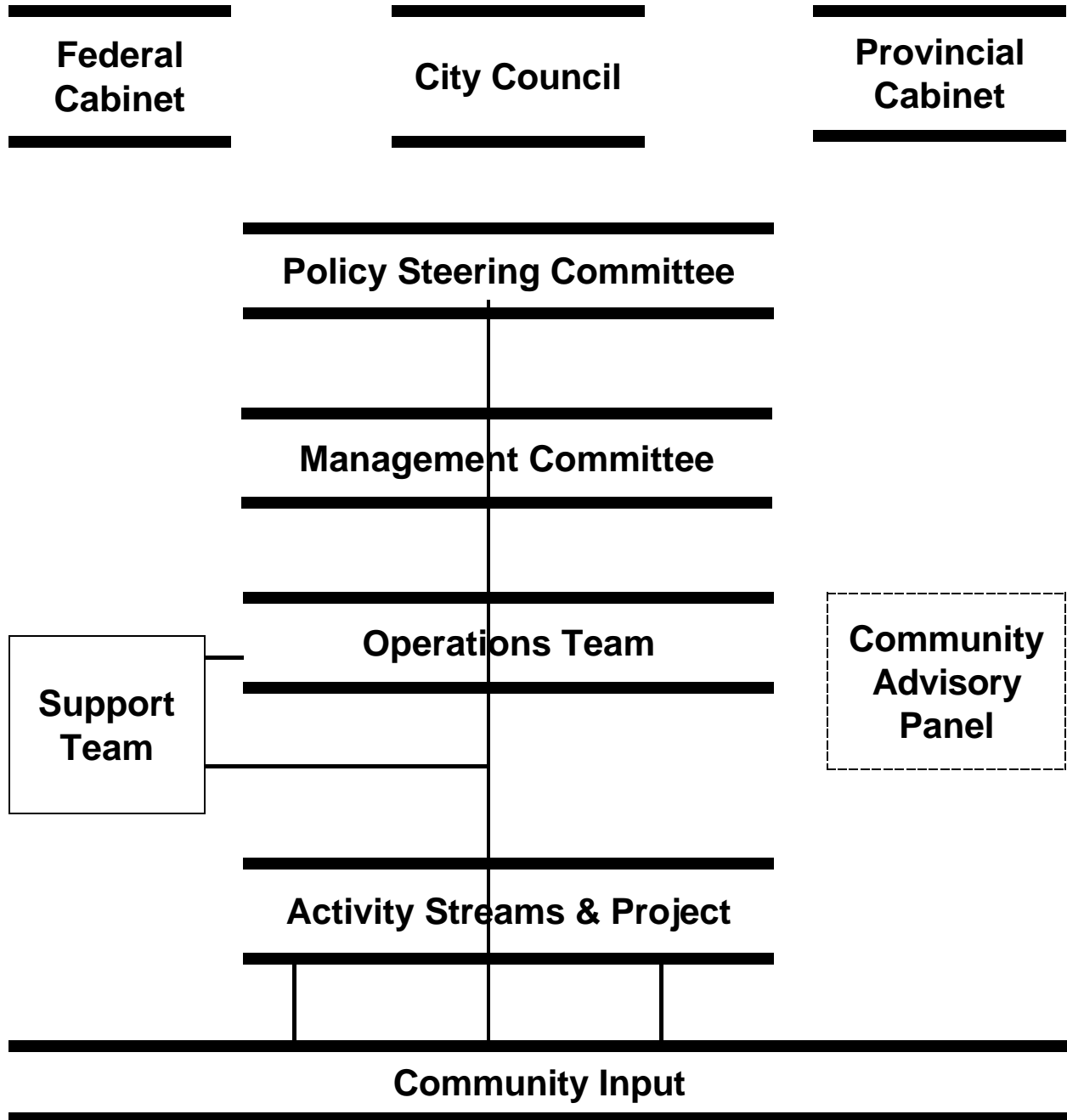
Each Stream of Activity will have a senior government staff member as manager. Each Stream could have several projects underway at the same time, with individual project teams having a different mix of staff, community, private sector and non-profit members. Projects will address issues with varying levels of difficulty, progress with differing schedules, and use a variety of tools to meet objectives. Community members will be involved in as many projects as possible. Project teams will be fully responsible for management of their projects, including budgeting completing reports to the governments. Facilitation, research and other support will be available and the activity stream managers will monitor progress on the projects and assist where necessary.

### **Community Input/Community Advisory Committee**

Broad community input will take place through the all the activities and projects in the program. The Community Development Process will initially focus on small, achievable projects and work through to the more difficult activities as the program progresses. Recognizing that community involvement is already taking place in many areas, the program will coordinate activities and assist the community in understanding the complex nature of the issues and in taking a more active role in the project work.

Toward the end of the first year, a more formal committee of community leaders, the Community Advisory Committee, will be formed to assist the members of the Operations Team and the project teams. The Community Advisory Committee will assist in bridging between the community and staff as the future of the community takes shape.

**Program Organization**



## **WORK DESCRIPTIONS AND PROJECTED BUDGETS**

The budget allocations shown here are preliminary, and are conservative. The allocations between areas will shift as the program is more fully developed. Estimates are based on a mix of employed and consultant resources.

### **Management and Office Support**

This complex, multi-agency program will require significant management effort. This figure includes provision for a program manager, secretarial support, and an office. Other management support will be provided by stream managers and facilitation/mediation resources.

To properly support the many concurrent activities and connect with the residents of the area, an office will be set up in one of the buildings in the heart of the Downtown Eastside the Operations Team and Project Support. The office will be the home of the researchers, community based facilitators and City staff. It will have small and large meeting spaces to handle some of the many group sessions.

Year 1

**\$400,000**

### **Research Component**

As an initial step in the Community Development Process, much of the following initial information gathering and research will be required (much of this information is available in existing reports, but some will require further data collection and analysis):

- an evaluation of the community and the most effective methods of involving the community in the Community program
- Neighbourhood characteristics – business, resident characteristics
- opportunities for quick success
- economic and employment opportunities
- educational and religious institutions
- an inventory of public and private services available
- shortfalls in service requirements
- crime and disorder issues
- public health issues

As the process evolves into project work in the individual Streams of Activity, research will be required in each of the streams, in order to:

- locate and evaluate programs of best practices
- set base lines in preparation for later evaluation of processes and projects
- produce background papers and options papers to assist project work groups in beginning work



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- on the various projects. This is particularly important in the Community Development process for those members of the community entering the process for the first time
- the degree and depth of research will differ according to the relative difficulty of the projects and the project participants. For example, research into economic agreements and business development agreements are more complicated and require more research assistance than some activities related to improving conditions on the street.
  - there will be a large research component associated with the Measurement and Evaluation process
  - elected officials and government staff will also require a specific research component dealing with the processes leading up to the signing of an Urban Development Agreement

Some of this work will be carried out within the activity streams by existing government personnel. As in the rest of the program, the research component will be further developed as the program develops and expands.

Budget Estimate: Research - Year 1

**\$200,000**

**Facilitation/Mediation Support**

General Facilitation for the Community Development Process

Intense facilitation will be required initially to bring the diverse groups together, focusing on specific issues. In fact, more facilitation will be required for Community Development than any other single component of the program. This is not uncommon, as the community is typically the one sector out of all the partners least prepared to take a meaningful role in multi agency work groups endeavoring to shape the future. While most members of the community are familiar with the issues affecting them, few are aware of the many ways available to address those concerns and even fewer are able to effectively lobby for change.

Facilitation will be required for the following activities in the Community Development process in preparation for the activity stream project workshops:

- Initial information sessions to take the program to the community. These sessions to be conducted in various locations in the Downtown Eastside and in the languages of the neighbourhood residents.
- Training and education sessions to assist all members of the community understand the diverse nature of the Downtown Eastside community, the complex nature of the issues facing the community, the Safe Community program and the various activity streams in the program, in preparation for active roles in future project workshops.
- Community building workshops between the diverse communities, and between the communities, police, Coalition members and government staff.

## **Project Facilitation**

The Community Development process is based on having members of the community take an active role on a number of projects in the activity streams. Community Development projects will be selected based on the following criteria: relative ease of implementation, quick and significant payoff, sustainability and ability to be replicated in different parts of the community or different communities.

Specific project facilitation requirements include:

- facilitation for staff work groups implementing those decisions and agreements
- facilitation to assist work group members, from a diverse range of experience and backgrounds, focus on specific issues, innovative approaches and creative solutions
- facilitation between work groups working on projects that overlap within and between Activity streams
- facilitation to assist in resolving cultural issues

## **Mediation Support**

Similarly to facilitation support, mediation assistance will be required throughout the various Activity streams. However, it is expected the requirement for mediation will be the greatest in the Community Development process. The degradation of the Downtown Eastside took place over many years and many of the concerns and prejudices held by residents are deeply rooted. Although much can be expected from the facilitation process, the availability of mediation assistance when required will ensure the process evolves with a minimum of difficulty for all those involved.

Some mediation assistance will most likely also be required throughout the project work in the activity streams. The Healthy Communities concept is also new business for governments and the private sector. Working together toward common goals can be difficult, especially when it means a radical departure from the way we normally do business. Again, facilitation will take the process a long way toward success. However, there will be occasions where mediation services will be required to deal with more difficult situations.

Budget Estimate: Facilitation/Mediation - Year 1

**\$300,000**

## **Training and Education Support**

There are three components to Training and Education Support - the training and education required for the Community Development process, education for the broader community and documentation to support Training and Education as well as the Measurement and Evaluation component

## **Community Development**

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We can expect some training of area residents will be required, prior to the process going into the project phase. Although much of the requirement for this component may be addressed in the facilitation process, there will be some requirement for specialized training. The communities that make up the Downtown Eastside are at varying stages of preparation for project work, and the complexity of the community suggests the need for localized training and education may be greater than anticipated.

### **Education for the Broader Community**

There is a valuable education component in what has happened in the Downtown Eastside and the steps taken in the Downtown Eastside Community Revitalization Program, that can be taken to the rest of the City, the region, and indeed to the rest of the country. There are many communities experiencing problems similar to those that led to the urban decay in the area. Much attention has been focused on the problems experienced in the area. A similar focus on the revitalization will serve as beacon of hope and a valuable teaching aid for other communities.

There are lessons to be learned by politicians, bureaucrats and citizens. A considerable effort focused on the educational component for the broader community will pay off large dividends in the future. Urban environments all over the country are in a state of change. In most instances the change is planned, anticipated or at least understood. No one planned or anticipated the extent of the problem that has occurred in the Downtown Eastside, and we are still working hard to try to understand it. Through a broad education program there is hope that what occurred in the Downtown Eastside can be avoided, and the revitalization program can be used as an example for other communities.

### **Documentation**

Documentation is a different type of requirement than the other education components, but was included in this section because it complements the education components, as well as Measurement and Evaluation.

A documented history of the area, the program and progress made as the program matures will serve everyone well in the future. We have the opportunity to see the area as it now exists and follow the program, detailing projects that are successful and those that are not so successful.

An example of such a documented history is contained in the work of “Odd Squad Productions”, a non-profit group of seven Vancouver Police officers assigned to Downtown Eastside beat teams. The group have been meticulously compiling a pictorial profile of the area and its people for the past several years and have a fascinating portfolio, which is used in high school education programs. The group could be funded to carry on their work and expand it to compile a documentary over the life of the project. Abbreviated versions of the work could be used to develop training videos for other communities who desire to enter into a similar program. A final version could be considered by an organization such as the National Film Board.

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Both of the major universities in the area have expressed an interest in taking part in the Downtown Eastside Community Revitalization Program. The Educational components are one natural vehicle for such participation.

Budget Estimate: Training and Education - Year 1 **\$125,000**

**Measurement and Evaluation**

The effectiveness of the Downtown Eastside Healthy Community Program will be evaluated both in terms of outcome and in terms of development and implementation strategies. While the general evaluation plan is laid out in this document, details specific to the process and various activity streams will be developed along with the rest of the program.

**Outcome Evaluation**

The purpose of the evaluation plan is to:

- determine the extent to which the program has achieved its stated goals in terms of:
- eliminating violent crime, drug trafficking and drug-related crime,
- creating a safe environment for law abiding citizens to live, work and raise their families
- create an environment that encourages small business
- create a viable mix of housing
- create effective treatment and service delivery models that are also cost effective
- determine the extent to which individual projects achieve success in addressing program goals

**Process Evaluation**

While the evaluation of outcomes is an important component of measurement and evaluation, the evaluation of process has an equally important role. The process evaluation will examine the development, implementation and operation of the various parts of the program. Particular attention will be paid to the Community Development Process.

The process evaluation will involve interviews with key Coalition and community partners/stakeholders, as well as focus group sessions with project work group members. The process evaluation will also involve a review and content analysis of project and program materials, including grant applications, progress reports committee minutes and policy memorandums.

Budget Estimate: Measurement and Evaluation - Year 1 **\$100,000**

**Communication Support**

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One of the most important parts of Management and Support, communications support will have several key internal components. Separate communications plans will be developed for:

- the Downtown Eastside Community Revitalization Program Overview
- the Community Development Process
- the individual activity streams

As well, the communications plan will link with other communications plans within the federal, provincial and local governments, and the private sector, ensuring the work being done has the widest possible network of support. Communications will have to include a component to address the multi cultural make-up of the Downtown Eastside. Community Development sessions will have to have translation capabilities in Chinese dialects as well as Vietnamese and Spanish. Simultaneous translation service for larger meetings and specific focus groups will be required.

The Training and Education component has a large segment dealing with education of the broader community. The Communications component will have to be closely linked with the Training and Education component to ensure the mandate of information sharing is fulfilled. An important component of the communications plan will be the production of a series of progress reports that can be shared with other communities across the country interested in what is being done, or taking part in similar programs. Sharing valuable information quickly and broadly will be a key strategy.

It is estimated the Communications budget will be split roughly equally between the local community process and educating the broader community and program information sharing.

Budget Estimate: Communications Support - Year 1

**\$125,000**

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**SUMMARY OF BUDGET ESTIMATES - YEAR 1**

<b>Project Management, Support, Office</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>
<b>Research</b> Project Initiation, Community Development, Project Activities	<b>\$200,000</b>
<b>Facilitation/Mediation Support</b> Community Development, Project Activities	<b>\$300,000</b>
<b>Training and Education Support</b> Community Development, Project staff	<b>\$125,000</b>
<b>Measurement and Evaluation</b> Project Initiation, Community Development, Project Activities	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>Communication Support</b> Project Initiation, Community Development, Project Activities	<b>\$125,000</b>
<b><i>Total - Year 1</i></b>	<b>\$1,250,000</b>

(The amounts shown above reflect the allocation of the requested grant. In addition to these amounts, City staff and programs costed at well in excess of \$1 million will be allocated to the program. Additional line staff from the provincial and federal governments are expected to participate in the activity streams.)

## **CONCLUSION**

Action by all levels of government is required in the Downtown Eastside now, to reverse the loss in safety and livability. A significant (but modest in context) grant through the National Crime Prevention Program will provide the management and linkage capability to achieve this change. After an initial year of community and program development and specific targeted activities, a proposal for an Urban Development Agreement will be presented which will confirm the program activities for an additional five years. The focus on community development will be maintained.

A partnership between governments, not-for-profit organizations, the private sector, and the community will make it possible to achieve short term results which will make a significant difference, and move toward broad agreement on long term community goals. An urban Development Agreement and action by all parties will achieve those goals.

The Program is ambitious. Not all the activities identified in this report will be pursued, and some will fail despite solid efforts. However, many lessons will be learned. The global objective of a safe and viable community can and must be achieved.