



VANCOUVER DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

PLANS, POLICIES, PROGRAMS, PROJECTS, AND PROPOSALS

A SYNTHESIS

JULY 2010

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Building Community Society report is to present a synopsis and comparison of the various City and Community plans and policies that have been prepared in the past ten years or so regarding the Downtown Eastside (DTES). It is hoped that this report will serve as a useful framework for informed discussion between the various parties, aid problem solving and lead to the development of shared goals for the benefit of all concerned.

The City of Vancouver, the Province, the Federal Government, and many community groups and individuals have partnered to produce plans, policies, programs, projects and proposals aimed at improving conditions in the Downtown Eastside. Some of these have been implemented, some are in progress, and some are presently under discussion.

In March, 2008, the City of Vancouver Planning Department released a report (10 Years of Downtown Eastside Revitalization: A Backgrounder), which outlines the City's overall philosophy (Revitalization without Displacement) and the ten key directions the City is pursuing to resolve issues in the Downtown Eastside. This report also provides details on the accomplishments, the actions that have been taken, and the challenges that remain.

This Building Community Society report highlights the principal responses from 27 Government and Community reports and studies to the health, crime, safety, and housing urgencies in the Downtown Eastside and then identifies the shared outlooks and differences of opinion regarding these responses.

There are shared outlooks on a number of the responses. Chief among these are the acceptance of the four pillars approach to dealing with health, crime and safety concerns; the minimum level of social housing in the Downtown Eastside; and at least agreement in principle for community participation in any strategies affecting particular neighbourhoods and the area as a whole.

There are differences of opinion on a number of key issues. These include the question of whether or not there should be a maximum number of social housing units in the Downtown Eastside; what the proportion of market to non-market housing should be; and what is the appropriate level of social services for the area.

In spite of the fact that City Council has approved the Historic Area Height Review, there are different opinions on the new regulations. Some groups object to the implementation of the height regulations until a study of the social-economic impacts has been done. Other groups are not totally satisfied with the new regulations because they are too limiting.

While a great deal of research has been done on the Downtown Eastside, there are still significant information gaps and areas requiring further policy development and community dialogue. These gaps and areas requiring further work are listed later in this report.

This report references many plans and policies, but the status of these various plans and policies, that is to say whether or not they have been acted on and whether or not they have been assessed as to their degree of success, was not investigated and is beyond the scope of this report. Such information would be helpful and would be an appropriate subject for follow-up research.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Building Community Society report is to present a synopsis and comparison of the various City and Community plans and policies that have been prepared in the past ten years or so regarding the Downtown Eastside (DTES). It is hoped that this report will serve as a useful framework for informed discussion between the various parties, aid problem solving and lead to the development of shared goals for the benefit of all concerned.

The Downtown Eastside (DTES) was the site of the first Vancouver downtown, including the early retail core, City Hall and main library. Low-income and working class residential neighbourhoods developed around this retail core. Strathcona was home to low-income families, particularly Chinese and other immigrant groups, with the rest of the DTES dominated by low-income singles, primarily men, living in residential hotels.

For low-income people, the Downtown Eastside has traditionally provided housing, jobs, retail services, social, recreational, health, cultural services and amenities reflective of the population. Many of these have not come easily. In the 1960s-70s residents of Strathcona, Chinatown and Grandview/Woodlands campaigned successfully to defeat a free-way through the heart of the district and to preserve Strathcona as a historic residential area. Programs were developed to ensure fire and health standards were enforced in single residency occupancy hotels, to reduce the number of licensed liquor outlets, to preserve and re-open the Carnegie library building as a community centre, to develop a waste area into the Strathcona Community Gardens and to create a waterfront area now known as C.R.A.B. Park.

At the same time, the challenges in the Downtown Eastside have grown related to poverty, affordability, homelessness, drug abuse, mental health and crime. In the early 1990's, conditions began to deteriorate rapidly due to a surge in the incidence of drug misuse, overdose deaths, HIV infection, and crime. As well, there are issues stemming from the de-institutionalization of mental health patients, the loss of Single Room Occupancy units (SROs), the intolerable conditions of such units when standards were not fully enforced, and the influx of market housing into the area. The seriousness of the deteriorating conditions, along with mounting concerns about housing affordability and homelessness, led to a number of initiatives to address the respective urgencies.

The Downtown Eastside is roughly bounded by Richards Street on the west, the Waterfront on the north, Clarke Drive on the east and a number of streets including Pender, Prior and Malkin Avenue on the south.



Source: City of Vancouver, 10 Years of Downtown Eastside Revitalization: A Backgrounder

There are eight zoning and planning sub-areas as shown in the above map. These areas do not, nor are they intended to, reflect neighbourhood boundaries which are perceived differently by the diverse communities that live and work in this part of the city.

RESPONSES TO THE URGENCIES

The City of Vancouver, Senior Governments, low income organizations and community stakeholder groups such as the Gastown Heritage Area Planning Advisory Committee, Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee, the Strathcona Revitalization Committee, the Carnegie Community Action Project and the 2010 Winter Games Housing Table, produced numerous reports and made decisions aimed at dealing with the challenges in the Downtown Eastside.

A brief history of the principal responses to the urgencies would include the following:

The Office of the Chief Coroner of B.C. issued the *Report of the task force into illicit narcotic overdose deaths in British Columbia*, otherwise known as the Cain report (1994). This report proposed treatment, education and harm reduction measures to protect the lives of drug users and is notable for its introduction of the idea that drug abuse should be treated as a health issue, not a criminal issue.

The Mayor's Coalition (1996) was aimed at dealing with crime prevention and drug treatment. It focused on three pillars: prevention of drug misuse, treatment for drug misuse, and enforcement of anti-drug laws. It did not include harm reduction, which was introduced later.

The City issued a package of six reports in 1998 to address various aspects of Downtown Eastside issues. These reports are: *Downtown Eastside: building a common future*; *A program of strategic actions for the Downtown Eastside*; *Background paper on drug treatment needs in Vancouver*; *Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside (adopted in Oct. 2005)*; *Victory Square Policy Plan (adopted 2006)*; and *Gastown Heritage Management Plan (adopted 2002)*.

In addition to providing for drug treatment and strengthening law enforcement, these reports enunciated three principles: (a) housing for existing residents will be maintained and upgraded, (b) diversity of housing will be encouraged, and (c) the entire community will be encouraged to participate in the revitalization of the Downtown Eastside.

In March, 1999, the City of Vancouver approved a five year comprehensive *Downtown Eastside Revitalization Program* with the broad goal “to create a safe and healthy community”. The initiatives under this program included engaging senior governments and community groups to address housing, economic development, public order, crime prevention, drug misuse treatment, and other issues as they arose.

In March, 2000, the City, the Province and the Federal government entered into the *Vancouver Agreement*. The three components of the Agreement, which initially covered the period from year 2000 to 2005, were: (a) community health and safety, (b) economic and social development, and (c) community capacity. The objectives of the health and safety category were to support primary health, substance misuse, safety and justice initiatives. The objectives of the economic and social category were to support local business development, job creation/training initiatives, public space beautification and safe affordable housing. The objectives of capacity building were to foster better communications and public consultation processes. The Vancouver Agreement was subsequently renewed to year 2010.

In the Spring of 1999, low income individuals and organizations, fearing that their voices would not be heard during the Downtown Eastside Revitalization Program, banded together to discuss how the City should involve residents in the planning and development of their community. They produced a document titled, *Downtown Eastside/Strathcona Community Directions: mobilization and community organizing process*. This coalition became known as Community Directions. A key conclusion of the Community Directions is that planning for the Downtown Eastside “should not be based on negative stereotypes and fears, but rather must recognize and build on existing strengths of the community members”. The City accepted the Community Directions approach by funding the Community Direction process as part of the Downtown Eastside Community Development Project and hired a community organizer to work on it.

The City produced the report, *Revised Framework for Action: A four pillar approach to drug problems in Vancouver – prevention, treatment, enforcement, harm reduction*. The approach outlined in this report is based on the notion that drug addiction is a health issue and broadened the concept of public safety to include harm reduction for drug users themselves. The City approved the recommendations of the Revised Framework report in Spring 2001, even though the provision for harm reduction was initially opposed by a coalition of thirteen business and property owners called the Community Alliance.

The City adopted the Gastown Heritage Management Plan in 2002. The Plan envisages that Gastown's historic character, buildings and built form would be preserved for present and future generations; that the area would accommodate a broad range of uses; that the economic viability of the area would be assured and would become a safe, liveable, attractive and inspirational place; and that the area would be the home of a vibrant and diverse community, containing a mixture of businesses, housing and income levels and be a good place to visit, work, live and conduct business. The Plan outlines six primary goals and associated actions to achieve this vision (see the Plan for details).

While the Plan is focused on the conservation of the physical structures in Gastown, it recognizes that overall social and economic conditions must be improved in order to attain the long run revitalization of Gastown. The Plan recommends that the City continue to monitor the situation and may need to develop programs to provide resources needed to retain the stock of low income housing.

In 1999, the City initiated the *Chinatown Revitalization Program* as part of the Downtown Eastside Revitalization Program. The goal for the project was to bring together community members to address such issues as safety and economic growth. The Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee was formed in 2001 to facilitate collaboration between the community and the City in order to develop short term revitalization initiatives and a long term vision for Chinatown.

The Vancouver Chinatown Revitalization Committee produced a document called *Chinatown Visions Directions*. It was intended that the Vision statement be used as the founding principles for a sub-area plan for Chinatown. City Council approved the Visions document in 2004 and in 2005, approved a three year action plan and work program to develop and implement a Chinatown Community Plan as the second phase of the Chinatown Revitalization Program.

On the housing front, the City produced three major reports: (a) *Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside* (2005), (b) *Homeless Action Plan* (2005), and (c) *Supportive Housing Strategy* (2007). These reports proposed targets for the development of social and supportive housing, as well as addressing the root causes of homelessness.

All these reports echo the City's philosophy of "Revitalization without Displacement", but the Housing Plan also encourages new market housing. The development of market housing is a source of tension between various stakeholders in the Downtown Eastside, as will be discussed later in this report.

Probably as a response to the changes occurring and the conditions prevalent in the Downtown Eastside, the Strathcona Revitalization Committee prepared a report titled, *Strathcona 2010: A Clear Vision for our Community* (June, 2008). The stated intent of the document is to guide and direct the regeneration of the neighbourhood and builds on the vision articulated in the 1992 Strathcona Community Plan.

This report makes several proposals related to improving the Downtown Eastside and Strathcona in particular. Two of the proposals: (a) the building of more market housing, and (b) maintaining the level of social services at current levels only, are the subject of serious debate and disagreement between the Carnegie Community Action Project group and the Strathcona Revitalization Committee.

In 2002, the four partners to the Inner City Inclusive Commitment Statement (City of Vancouver, Provincial and Federal governments and the Vancouver Organizing Committee or VANOC) pledged to work together to ensure that the legacy of the 2010 Winter Games created direct benefits and managed potential adverse impacts for Vancouver's Mount Pleasant, Downtown South and Downtown Eastside neighbourhoods. In terms of housing, this pledge was conveyed as a series of five commitments:

- Provide an affordable housing legacy and start planning now.
- Protect rental housing stock.
- Provide many alternative forms of temporary accommodations for Games visitors and workers.
- Ensure people are not made homeless as a result of the Games.
- Ensure that residents are not involuntarily displaced, evicted or face unreasonable rent increases as a result of the Games.

Following the award of the Games to Vancouver, the partners directed the Vancouver Agreement Housing Task team to work towards implementation of the commitments. The team came to be known as the Housing Table and produced a report titled, *Housing Legacy of the 2010 Winter Games*, which was released in February 2007. It contains 24 recommendations aimed at meeting the commitments the five commitments. The overarching goal of the Housing Table is to eliminate homelessness in the City.

The Olympic bid partners (VANOC, City of Vancouver, Provincial and Federal Governments) issued a report, “Joint *Partner Response to the Inner-City Inclusive Commitments, Housing Table Report*” (November, 2007), in response to the Housing Table Recommendations. Their report provides a summary of the progress made with respect to each of the Housing Table report recommendations (pages 2-4 of their report).

Between August, 2007 and April, 2008, the Carnegie Community Action Project (CCAP) conducted a series of visioning sessions with Downtown Eastside residents. The process involved residents completing a one-page questionnaire about their community. The results are summarized in their July, 2008 interim report, *Nothing About Us Without Us*. The report concludes that residents want to maintain a primarily low-income community with better affordable housing, incomes and health services. They also want outsiders to recognize the dignity and spirit of the Downtown Eastside and they want a voice, proportional to their numbers, in what happens to their community.

In July 2009, Carnegie Community Action Project released the results of their community mapping project, which is contained in their report, *Our Place and Our Words*. This mapping project was a process that brought together local residents to share local knowledge and experience in order to create maps that represented the community they know and care about. The purpose of the community mapping project is to inform the City how low income residents think about the Downtown Eastside in order that the City, when formulating plans for the Downtown Eastside, will appreciate the need to build on the assets and needs of the existing community.

According to CCAP's survey of local residents, the principal assets in the DTES are:

- The sense of community is strong;
- Residents feel accepted and at home;
- Residents have empathy for people with health and addition issues;
- Residents feel connected to a rich and authentic cultural heritage;
- Arts practices and programs involve many community members;
- Green spaces help residents make a connection to nature and are spiritually important;
- Residents put in thousands of hours of volunteer work to build and maintain their community;
- Necessities are cheap or free and nearby;
- Health and social services are close, needed and appreciated;
- Many residents work for social justice;
- Social housing provides a stable base for thousands of residents.

The results of the mapping project showed which sites residents consider meaningful, which housing they like best, which places they like best for shopping and food and why. These sites are regarded by residents as community assets. The project also showed sites that residents consider uncomfortable, unsafe or unwelcoming and why.

One of the main conclusions of the mapping project is that increased market housing threatens low income community assets. This position is at odds with the view of the Strathcona Revitalization Committee, who argues for more market housing development as a way to support local retail businesses and to facilitate a safer street environment.

The author of this report has made every effort to identify all the major plans, policies, programs, projects and proposals that respond to the urgencies in the Downtown Eastside. However, it is possible that not all relevant reports have been included and if so, the author would be pleased to be advised of any omissions.

The above synopsis is for the purpose of painting the big picture only and is not intended to replace a full reading of the original documents.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

The City of Vancouver has actively worked for many years to improve the quality of life in the Downtown Eastside. To this end, the city has undertaken many plans, policies, programs and projects in partnership with residents, businesses, non-profit groups and other levels of government. In March, 2008, the Planning Department released a report, 10 Years of Downtown Eastside Revitalization: A Backgrounder, which brings together the results of these collaborations. The intent of the report was to provide a single, brief document summarizing the philosophy and directions the City has been pursuing over the past ten years in the Downtown Eastside.

The philosophy and directions were derived from a number of adopted plans and decisions of City Council, (these documents are listed in the Bibliography). In addition to philosophy and directions, the Backgrounder also contains a listing of selected accomplishment/actions and continuing challenges that Staff sees as important for each direction. *The full version of the City's report is attached as Appendix A.*

The City's overall philosophy in the Downtown Eastside is “Revitalization without Displacement”. The City says this means:

- “The future community will include people with diverse social and economic backgrounds, with the same number of low income residents as now, but living in affordable and supportive housing, joined by new moderate income residents, businesses, and workers.
- The residents will have access to the health, social service and economic development supports that they need, which will be provided through partnerships among the community, existing service providers, the private sector, and relevant levels of government.
- There will be a good level of safety and security for all, including less street disorder and a much reduced drug trade.
- The new residents and workers will provide a base to support existing and new businesses and retail outlets, resulting in tenancing of vacant store fronts and buildings. At the same time, the low income residents will have access to the inexpensive goods and services that they need.
- Civic facilities and services such as parks, community centres, libraries etc., in or near the area, will meet the needs of the diverse population.
- The individual neighbourhoods within the Downtown Eastside will retain their different identities.
- The diverse elements of the community will enjoy mutual acceptance and respect, with less internal conflict than in the past”.

SHARED OUTLOOKS AND DIFFERENCES OF OPINIONS

City Staff identified ten key directions for the Downtown Eastside, which work toward the overall philosophy of “revitalization without displacement”. While there appears to be general agreement with the overall philosophy of Revitalization without Displacement, there is no unanimity on all of the ten directions. Each direction will be discussed in terms of shared outlooks and differences of opinion.

The reader is encouraged to look at the full version of the Backgrounder in Appendix A for details on each of the ten directions and the achievements/actions and challenges associated with each. The comments under each of the ten directions are those of the author of this report and not of City Staff.

- 1. Ensure that the future Downtown Eastside provides the same number of low income singles housing units as 2005 – about 10,000 - with particular efforts to house the homeless; and develop more social housing outside the Downtown Eastside.**

There is broad consensus among both government and community groups that the level of low income singles housing should not fall below 10,000 units and that a 1:1 replacement ratio be applied to SRO (single residency occupancy) units with better quality non-profit housing.

However, there is difference of opinion as to whether or not the level should exceed 10,000 units. The Carnegie Community Action Project believes that the number of units should be at a level that fulfills community needs and therefore can find no reason to cap the number at 10,000. The Strathcona Revitalization Committee affirms the principle of no displacement and the policy of 1:1 replacement of SROs, but effectively advocates a cap by proposing an increase in the percentage of market housing in Strathcona. The Housing Table supports protecting the stock of low income housing, but is silent on whether or not a cap of 10,000 units should be applied to the Downtown Eastside. Instead, their report comments that the specific mix, size, and location of the target number of 800 social housing units (Homelessness Action Plan) in each of four years is to be determined.

- 2. Encourage new market housing, including housing that is affordable for moderate-income households.**

Carnegie Community Action Project believes that gentrification in the form of market housing will drive up prices for both residential and business properties, thus eventually dislocating low income residents and the businesses that serve them (Our Place and Our Words). Moreover, Carnegie Community Action Project believes that the juxtaposition of low income and market housing residents is socially incompatible (Nothing About Us Without Us and Our Place and Our Words).

CCAP believes that a comprehensive plan to preserve community assets and secure tenure for existing residents must be in place before the City encourages new market housing and upscale businesses. The Strathcona Revitalization Committee emphasizes maintaining tolerance for those with social problems, but it highly favours new market housing on the grounds that it will help support retail businesses and bring a “healthy social presence” to the streets.

- 3. Address the crisis in public order and public health caused by problematic substance use through the “Four-Pillar Approach”: prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement.**

There now appears to be general acceptance of the four pillars approach. The adoption of a holistic approach to drug/crime problem, wherein drugs are not seen as the only problem, led to the view that there is a need to look at root causes such as poverty, homelessness, and mental health. Thus, drug misuse came to be treated as a health issue, not a criminal issue and this opened up helpful ways to deal with the problem. Similarly, the concept of public safety was expanded to include the principle of harm reduction. The initial opposition to this concept by the Community Alliance was tempered in the Chinatown Vision Directions document, which proposed partnering with other neighbourhoods to work on social issues faced by the community

and to enhance public education on social issues. City Council approved harm reduction in Spring 2001, under its Revised Framework for Action.

4. Improve conditions on the street to provide safety, liveability and amenity for all.

There is overall support for this direction, although there may be issues about how much improvement is needed. The Carnegie Community Action Project surveys found that many residents felt safe in the Downtown Eastside because they knew people and people knew them, but at the same time, some residents fear violence from drug and alcohol related crimes.

5. Work with the community and other levels of government to ensure the health, social service, and economic supports needed by the community are available.

It is an issue as to what level of services is appropriate in the Downtown Eastside. Carnegie Community Action Project found that Downtown Eastside residents need and appreciate the services that are available and presumably, as needs increase, so should the level of services. The Strathcona Revitalization Committee did not talk about health and economic supports, but argues that the proportion of people in Strathcona who are addicted or mentally ill is already too high for a healthy and balanced community and therefore, there should be a moratorium on the building of new social service facilities. These opposing points of view are confused by the City's statement under this Direction to "Facilitate development, relocation or expansion of key health and social services needed by Downtown Eastside residents, *while ensuring that there is not an undue concentration of them*" (author's italics).

6. Preserve and enhance the heritage and cultural legacy of the neighbourhoods.

There is overall support for this Direction. In particular, the reuse and rehabilitation of the heritage building stock and the optimization of the heritage character of neighbourhoods will support the heritage legacy and measures to ensure the area fulfills its role as the historical and cultural focus for the Aboriginal, Chinese and Japanese communities will support the cultural legacy.

7. Business and employment development in the area and its neighbourhoods.

There is overall support for this Direction. The Strathcona Revitalization Committee proposal to increase the percentage of market housing in Strathcona is predicated on the desire to strengthen existing retail businesses and to stimulate new retail development along East Hastings St. They also advocate retaining the industrial lands north of East Hastings for existing and new light industries and associated businesses. The Building Opportunities with Business (BOB), a non-profit organization, is likewise dedicated to the goal of supporting local business development and increasing job opportunities for inner city residents. Information on their purpose and programs may be accessed at their web site (www.buildingopportunities.org).

8. Ensure that the retail goods and services needed by all sectors of the community, including low income residents, are available.

There is overall support for this Direction. The Carnegie Community Action Project mapping project names specific stores and food service establishments residents consider as important neighbourhood assets and need to be protected. However, the Carnegie Community Action Project reports that some residents are worried that gentrification will cause land prices, rents,

and taxes to rise to the point where stores catering to low income people will not be able to continue operating. The Chinatown Visions Directions expressed the need to protect and enhance existing retail businesses and this objective is one of the motivating forces for supporting residential intensification in the area. As mentioned earlier, the Strathcona Revitalization Committee is pressing for more market housing as a way to support existing retail stores and to encourage the development of new ones.

9. Provide access to the civic facilities and services (e.g. parks, community centres, library, childcare) needed by all the community residents.

There is overall support for this Direction.

10. Work with all sectors of the community in revitalization, encouraging acceptance and mutual respect, and building community capacity.

There is agreement in principle with this direction. Ever since the Community Directions coalition pressed for adoption of community planning principles that: (a) recognize and build from strength, and (b) actively mobilize residents to participate in the planning process, there has been a major shift in the City's approach. For example, the City funded the Community Directions process and hired a community organizer.

Although there is agreement in principle, the Background report comments that a challenge will be the “continuing differences of perspective between segments of the community, and between them and the City, on approaches to key issues such as 'soft conversion' of SROs, role and pace of market housing, development of low income housing, and provision of services for low income residents”.

Additional stakeholder comments are attached as Appendix B.

RECENT INITIATIVES

Subsequent to the release of the documents outlined above, five important initiatives have been undertaken that are relevant to the Downtown Eastside.

FOCUSED ON THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

In February, 2009, the Vancouver Police Department prepared a report titled, *ProjectLockstep: A united effort to save lives in the Downtown Eastside*. Their report is viewed as a working document intended to facilitate discussion and to build toward consensus on how to collectively improve the lives of the most vulnerable people in the Downtown Eastside. The Vancouver Police Department's hope is that while their report presents a model of how it may be possible to move forward in achieving success, further discussion will bring forth additional ideas for improving their model and/or new ways of moving forward in a collaborative environment. Highlights of the Vancouver Police Department initiative are contained on pages 2 and 3 of their report.

The Vancouver Police Department recognizes that despite the efforts of numerous agencies and all levels of government, the most vulnerable people in the Downtown Eastside still face a number of critical issues, but these issues are larger than can be addressed by any single organization. Hence, there is a need to work together at the highest levels, where top decision makers in each organization have the authority to take action and commit their resources to bring about change. ProjectLockstep makes four recommendations:

- Establish a collaborative Steering Committee with top level decision makers with adequate support staff and community involvement.
- The Steering Committee should facilitate an information sharing process between agencies to identify those individuals who are most in need and then work to improve the lives of those individuals.
- The Steering Committee should further devise and implement strategies to significantly improve life in the Downtown Eastside based on the report's guiding principles.
- Evaluation and accountability must be an integral part of the framework established by the Steering Committee.

NOT FOCUSED ON THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

In 2006, Vancouver City Council adopted the Project Civil City goals which include eliminating homelessness. To help achieve this goal, the Civil City Commissioner focused on three broad themes, one of which is to support homeless and vulnerable populations. In pursuit of this objective, Project Civil City, Vancouver initiated an innovative collaboration among a broad range of Vancouver's institutional and community stakeholders committed to addressing the issues of mental health, addiction and homelessness. This project is called *Collaboration for Change*.

The Collaboration believes that there are four critical components for achieving transformative changes. These are: political leadership, a role for the community, initiating change with early action, and the process must be inclusive. The Collaboration believes that the next steps in their project are to focus on these four components.

Work done to date include the creation of a two-level structure: a group of experts to do the substantive work necessary to describe the problem and propose concrete policy responses, and an oversight committee of community leaders who would have the ability to assist in the implementation of a new plan and to oversee progress. To seek expert opinion, the Collaboration commissioned Dr. Julian Somers of the Simon Fraser University Faculty of Health Sciences, who prepared a paper titled, *Collaboration and Change: Evidence Related to Reforming Housing, Mental Health, and Addiction Care in Vancouver (July, 2008)*. The stated purpose of the paper is “to provide evidence based guidance to improve the clinical and public health response to people whose needs substantially involve housing and the treatment of severe addiction and/or other mental illness (SAMI) within Vancouver”. The paper identifies the scope of the problem, gaps in services and presents a potential model for service delivery, drawing on successful experience in other jurisdictions.

In February, 2008, the Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction (CARMHA) of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Simon Fraser University, produced the report, *Housing and Support for Adults with Severe Addictions and/or Mental Illness in British Columbia*.

The CARMHA research concluded that, excluding capital costs, the cost of providing supported housing and other health services to the population of adults with severe addictions and/or mental illness (SAMI) is lower than the cost incurred through use of emergency departments, the corrections system, and emergency shelters when they are homeless. Also, without adequate housing and support, people with SAMI who are homeless often cycle through the streets, prisons and jails, and high cost health care settings such as emergency wards and psychiatric impatient units, which is ineffective and costly in both human and financial terms.

Based on their findings, the report proposes a number of key actions related to the need for strategic investments in “evidence-based housing and support services” for B.C.'s SAMI population. These proposals are listed and described in detail on pages 13 and 14 of their report.

The StreetoHome Foundation was established in 2008 in response to the growing crisis of homelessness in Vancouver. The Foundation is a partnership between the Vancouver Foundation, the City of Vancouver and the Province of B.C. Its overall goal is to tackle the problem of homelessness in the City by creating safe, decent, affordable housing for those on the streets and those at risk.

StreetoHome report, *A High Price to Pay, Community Action on Homelessness: StreetoHome 10-year plan for Vancouver*, is the result of extensive research and consultation with public and private service providers, community stakeholders, business leaders, governments and the philanthropic community. The Plan lists three goals for dealing with the homelessness problem:

- Provide permanent stable housing with appropriate support services.
- Prevent people who are most vulnerable from becoming homeless.
- Build broad public support and commitment for permanent solutions to homelessness.

The Plan identifies eight strategies and eighteen actions aimed at reaching these three goals. These are described in detail in their full report.

In his inaugural address, given on December 8, 2008, Mayor Gregor Robertson stated that ending homelessness was Council's single most important priority. He said the problem will be attacked in three stages (short, medium and long term). The first stage will involve ensuring that there are enough shelter beds and increased outreach and services. The second stage will be to use City By-laws to protect and maintain the affordable rental housing stock and to ensure that treatment for addictions and mental illness is available to all those in need. The third stage is to spur the creation of new affordable housing by leading development, unlocking vacant stock, using zoning and tax incentives, and accelerating investment from other levels of government.

HISTORIC AREA HEIGHT REVIEW

As a follow up to the EcoDensity Initial Actions program, Council, in June, 2008, directed staff to “include consideration of additional density and corresponding height in suitable locations in Gastown, Hastings, Chinatown and Victory Square, as part of the Historic Precinct Height Study.” With increased interest and pressure for new development and building rehabilitation in the Historic Areas, the question arises as to how development activities in the neighbourhood can be done so as to benefit the entire community and bring about changes that are inclusive, respectful and at a pace that is manageable.

Staff undertook a detailed technical analysis of urban design, height, density and forms of development in the Historic Area, including garnering input from a number of outside consultants. Staff also conducted an extensive public consultation process on these issues. Based on inputs received, staff prepared a report to Council essentially recommending that:

1. That the appropriate building heights for the Historic Area be generally between 50 and 120 feet.
2. That mid-rise development continue to be the primary form for new development complementing heritage building rehabilitation in the Historic Area.
3. Moderate pattern height increases should be permitted in Chinatown and the Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District sub-area 1 (Main and Hastings).
4. That a maximum of three additional higher buildings as “high points of the pattern” (maximum of 150 feet) be proposed. *Council later only approved two additional higher buildings (the Keefer triangle site was excluded).*

In addition to the formal public consultation process conducted during April and May, 2009, Council received a number of letters and position papers regarding the heights review.

- The Building Communities Society argued that no action should be taken on the Heights Review until a local area planning program is underway.
- The Carnegie Community Action Project similarly argued that no further action should be taken on the Height Review until a low-income resident driven plan for the Downtown Eastside is done.
- The Urban Development Institute argued that the City's general heights proposals should be approved, but still do not go far enough.
- The Vancouver Chinatown Merchants Association and the Vancouver Chinatown Business Improvement Association expressed support for the proposed heights and density relaxation.
- The Alliance for the Conservation of Historic Chinatown expressed support for increased density in Chinatown and towers on adjacent lands, but opposes towers in historic Chinatown.
- The Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee submitted a letter outlining draft urban design criteria for three higher buildings in the Historic Area.

COUNCIL DECISION

Vancouver City Council (January 26, 2010 Special meeting) considered Staff's report on the Historic Area Height Review, along with public input received and decided to stand behind its policy of protecting the City's view corridors. Essentially, this decision resulted in support for only two additional higher buildings (a third proposal for the Keefer triangle was not supported) and allows for increased density and taller buildings in certain areas of Chinatown and another heritage area in the Downtown Eastside. A motion that a decision on building heights be delayed pending a social-economic review of the impacts of higher densities was defeated. However, Council directed that such a study be undertaken, but completion is not a condition precedent to their decision on the Heights Review report. No specific completion date for the review has been

set. As part of their approval, Council also directed that staff proceed to update the Chinatown Community Plan to incorporate the new height regulations.

Perhaps in anticipation of concerns about the height recommendations, Staff commented on the social and economic implications as follows:

- Based on this particular set of recommendations, the existing growth capacity of 3.3 million square feet and doubling of population in the Historic Area over the next 20-40 years may be realized. Staff will monitor potential impacts from the proposed height increases on overall land values and costs of heritage rehabilitation and affordable housing delivery.
- The recommendations put forward aim to secure a social and cultural fabric by providing more certainty about the role that the Historic Area plays within the broader context of Vancouver as a whole. Further, with the Woodward's development project, it behoves the City to undertake a post-occupancy evaluation of the project in order to understand the social and economic impacts that this project brings to bear on the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood.
- Throughout the public consultation process, it was clear that the height issue in the historic area is only one part of a broader public discussion about how to manage change in the neighbourhood. For example, the issues related to the income mix for the Downtown Eastside have been raised by the community. The current policy direction for the Downtown Eastside includes the creation of a viable and dynamic mixed-income community with a strong low-income emphasis, but the mix proportions are less clearly defined. In addition to the delivery of affordable housing, there are other public amenities that need to be addressed and prioritized with Downtown Eastside community groups in order to develop a community benefits strategy for the area, especially with the anticipated population growth in the future.
- Many of these issues cannot be addressed through the Height Review process, and require a broader and comprehensive community strategy for the Downtown Eastside with its diverse communities. In 2010, with completion of the Historic Area Height Review and Chinatown Community Plan, some of the Downtown Eastside planning staff resource will be focused on starting a community dialogue process to scope a possible local area planning program for the Downtown Eastside. A lot of work has been done by various community groups in visioning and planning for their own communities within the Downtown Eastside. Staff will build on those community efforts during the scoping process.

On the latter point, Council, on January 26, 2010, resolved that, "subject to a diverse array of community groups agreeing to a facilitated planning process, staff report back on methods and budget for all relevant city departments to be engaged to achieve an integrated community strategy for the Downtown Eastside. This process would consider all existing plans and strategies for the area and would include a robust community engagement process".

INFORMATION GAPS AND AREAS REQUIRING FURTHER POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Although a great deal of research has been done in all the plans and reports dealing with the Downtown Eastside, there is still a significant amount of information that needs to be gathered. The information gaps include:

There seems to be some confusion about the data surrounding the need for low income housing. Specifically, what is the:

- Current unmet need for various types of low income housing throughout the region and the city.
- Projection of future needs for various types of low income housing.
- Capacity of the Downtown Eastside for absorbing more low income housing units above the 10,000 baseline.
- Feasibility of meeting unmet low income housing need elsewhere in the city.
- Agreed upon criteria and data base regarding the housing stock numbers and rate of change in the stock.

The City's Backgrounder Report outlines a number of unresolved questions that require further policy development and community dialogue (see the list of challenges in that report).

- There is no mechanism for managing the pace of housing development in the Downtown Eastside.
- The Downtown Eastside Housing Plan did not propose a particular mix of population for the area and this is a concern among existing residents about what the ultimate mix will be. Carnegie Community Action Project is concerned about gentrification, while the Strathcona Revitalization Committee says there should be a higher proportion of market housing. The balance between non-market and market housing is a key question that should be addressed as part of a local area plan.
- There is no social infrastructure plan and an overview of services for the Downtown Eastside. This is required in order to determine what facilities are needed and where.
- While some steps have been taken such as the Community Court, there is no comprehensive, systematic and well funded approach to the treatment of mental health and addictions.
- There are conflicting opinions about the appropriate range, location, and number of support services for residents with health and social challenges.
- There is no assessment of the projected demand for retail space along Hastings, Powell and some other streets. The concern is that there are still many vacant storefront spaces along these streets, which may indicate there is too much capacity. There may also be the problem that continuing street disorder will discourage businesses from staying, expanding and/or locate in the area.
- A lot of attention has been given to affordable housing and heritage, but there are no comprehensive facilities and services assessment or strategy for the Downtown Eastside.

BCS SUMMARY OF THE KEY ISSUES

The number of low income singles housing units in the Downtown Eastside.

- There is overall consensus that the number should not fall below 10,000 units, but it is an issue whether or not the number should exceed 10,000 units.

The proportion of market to non-market housing.

- It is an issue whether or not an increase in the number of market housing units should be permitted until low or no income housing needs are met.
- It is an issue whether or not the proportion of market housing should be increased in order to reduce the disproportionate number of people with health and social issues.
- It is an issue whether or not increased market housing will help support existing businesses and attract new ones.
- It is an issue whether or not residents of market and non-market housing can be socially compatible.

The level of social services.

- It is an issue what the appropriate level of social services in the Downtown Eastside should be. Some stakeholders feel that the level of services should be adequate to meet the needs of the population, while other stakeholders believe that the level should be capped so as not to attract more people from other areas with health and social difficulties.

Building Heights in the Historic Area

- It is an issue whether or not building height/ density regulations for the historic area (e.g., Chinatown, Gastown, Oppenheimer) should be finalized until a study is done on the social economic impacts of such regulations.
- It is an issue whether or not the building regulations are too limiting.

Accessible Information

- It is an issue that there is an absence of an agreed upon data base program which monitors the characteristics of changes in the Downtown Eastside.

STATUS OF PLANS AND POLICIES

This report references many plans and policies, but the status of these various plans and policies, that is to say whether or not they have been acted on and whether or not they have been assessed as to their degree of success, was not investigated and is beyond the scope of this report. Such information would be helpful and would be an appropriate subject for follow-up research.

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List of adopted plans and decisions of Vancouver City Council which form the basis for the philosophy and directions the City has been pursuing in the Downtown Eastside over the past ten years or so:

- Downtown Eastside Community Development Project
(1999 to 2004)
- Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Vancouver's Drug Problems
(May 2001)
- Gastown Heritage Management Plan
(2002)
- Chinatown Vision Directions
(July 2002)
- Heritage Building Rehabilitation Program
(July 2003)
- Downtown Eastside Economic Revitalization Plan
(Vancouver Agreement: February 2005)
- Homeless Action Plan
(June 2005)
- Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside
(October 2005)
- Victory Square Policy Plan
(2006)
- Downtown Eastside Public Realm Program Plan
(July 2006)
- Project Civil City
(starting December 2006)
- Vancouver Homelessness Funding Model
(March 2007)
- Arts and Culture Strategic Framework and Investment Plan
(March 2007)
- Supportive Housing Strategy
(June 2007)
- Collaboration for Change
(starting 2008)

It should be noted that some of the above referenced initiatives are not solely focused on the Downtown Eastside, but are city wide in scope (e.g., the Homeless Action Plan, Vancouver Homeless Funding Model, the Supportive Housing Strategy, Project Civil City and Collaboration for Change).

APPENDIX A

10 YEARS OF DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE REVITALIZATION: A BACKGROUNDER

**10 YEARS OF DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE REVITALIZATION:
A BACKGROUNDER**

Planning Department
Community Services Group
March 1, 2009

DTESDirectionsOverviewMar1.doc

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3. Address the crisis in public order and public health caused by problematic substance use through the “Four-Pillar Approach”: prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement	
4. Improve conditions on the street to provide safety, livability and amenity for all.	
5. Work with the community and other levels of government to ensure the health, social service, and economic supports needed by the community are available.	
6. Preserve and enhance the heritage and cultural legacy of the neighbourhoods.	
7. Support business and employment development in the area and its neighbourhoods.	
8. Ensure that the retail goods and services needed by all sectors of the community, including low income residents, are available.	
9. Provide access to the civic facilities and services (e.g. parks, community centres, library, childcare) needed by all the community residents.	
10. Work with all sectors of the community in revitalization, encouraging acceptance and mutual respect, and building community capacity.	

INTRODUCTION

Intent of the Backgrounder

The City of Vancouver has been actively working to improve the quality of life in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) for many years, but the past 10 years have seen more intensive efforts. Many policies, plans, programs and projects have been undertaken in partnership with residents, businesses, non-profit groups and other levels of government. These often focus on a specific topic—housing, substance use, economic revitalization—although they have significant overlap in their recommendations or directions.

There has been no single, brief document that summarizes the philosophy and directions which the City has been pursuing. This document is intended to meet that need, acting as a handy backgrounder for the information of staff, Council and the broader public. It will also be useful in future planning in the Downtown Eastside.

It contains:

- A sketch portrait of the DTES
- The overall philosophy the City has in the DTES
- The 10 directions being followed together with selected accomplishments or actions, and the continuing challenges.

The philosophy and directions are derived from the adopted plans and decisions of City Council, listed below. The Backgrounder takes a high level perspective in an attempt to get the big picture, and does not replace the full, formally adopted versions of these documents. The accomplishments and actions are not intended as a complete list, but rather the highlights. The challenges are those which staff of the Community Services Group sees as important to the particular direction, noting that others may have other perspectives.

Major Plans, Policies and Programs

Downtown Eastside Community Development Project (1999 to 2004)

Framework for Action: A Four Pillar Approach to Vancouver's Drug Problems (May 2001)

Gastown Heritage Management Plan (2002)

Chinatown Vision Directions (July 2002)

Heritage Building Rehabilitation Program (July 2003)

Downtown Eastside Economic Revitalization Plan (Vancouver Agreement: February 2005)

Homeless Action Plan (June 2005)

Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside (October 2005)

Victory Square Policy Plan (2006)

DTES Public Realm Program Plan (July 2006)

Project Civil City (starting December 2006)

Vancouver Homelessness Funding Model (March 2007)

Arts and Culture Strategic Framework and Investment Plan (March 2007)

Supportive Housing Strategy (June 2007)

Collaboration for Change (starting 2008)

The City's Role and Partnerships

Many of the aspects of the DTES that need attention are within the jurisdiction of senior governments. Nevertheless, Vancouver residents feel the impacts at the local level. They want their civic government to take action, and to press the senior governments to take action, as well.

One of the main steps taken to address this situation was the formation in March 2000 of the Vancouver Agreement (VA), collaboration with the Federal and Provincial governments directed at improving conditions in the inner city, in which the City is a leader and active participant. The VA was renewed for a second term, and expires in March 2010. The VA has supported many of the initiatives referenced in this Backgrounder.

The increased intergovernmental cooperation that was "kick started" by the VA, has been essential to many of the achievements listed, particularly in the areas of housing, substance abuse ("Four-Pillars"), and social and health services.

Responding to needs in the DTES would be impossible without the involvement of the many local residents and non-governmental organizations that are active in the area. The 2005/06 Downtown Eastside Community Monitoring Report listed over 50 non-government social, health, food, or other service providers. There are many other community organizations involved in arts and culture, and other areas, as well.

A SKETCH PORTRAIT OF THE DTES

Geography

For the purposes of revitalization efforts, the City considers the DTES to be quite a large geographic area. It comprises a number of individual neighbourhoods including Victory Square, Gastown, Chinatown, Thornton Park, Oppenheimer, Strathcona, Hastings Corridor and the Industrial area.

While each neighbourhood has its own characteristics, they have some similarities in their history, and are all affected to a greater or lesser degree by the social and economic challenges in the area.



Urban History

The DTES was the site of the first Vancouver downtown, including the early retail core, City Hall and main library. Low-income and working class residential neighbourhoods developed around the commercial core. Strathcona had low income families, particularly Chinese and other immigrant groups, with the rest of the DTES dominated by low-income singles, primarily men, living in residential hotels. Many were resource workers who lived in the DTES between stints in the woods, mines or fishing. From an early date, the DTES was the primary low-income neighbourhood in the city and region.

The commercial centre of gravity of Vancouver began moving from the DTES to the Georgia and Granville area early in the 20th century. However, it was not until the 90's those structural changes in the region and the retail industry, as well as the

demographic change in the community, culminated in the closing of Woodward's department store and high vacancy levels in storefronts in the area generally.

Meanwhile, the downtown peninsula outside of the DTES has been the focus of major residential development with 18,000 units completed between 2001 and 2006. Some of this has occurred within the DTES (e.g. Gastown, Chinatown, Victory Square) through renovation of older buildings, and some in new neighbourhoods nearby (e.g. International Village, CityGate). There has been a mix of market and non-market housing, with most being market units.

Demographics

The area is home to about 18,000 residents, almost 70% of whom live in the Oppenheimer and Strathcona sub-areas. Population growth (1996 - 2006) was just over 12%, about the same as for Vancouver overall. Most of the growth was in the Oppenheimer, Chinatown, and Gastown sub-areas. Strathcona experienced a 6% decrease.

As historically, there are more males (60%) than females. Of the sub-areas, only Strathcona has a similar 50/50 mix as Vancouver.

In the DTES, 46% of people in private households live alone. This type of household accounts for 70% of the households. The figures for Vancouver as a whole are 17% and 39%. The Strathcona subarea is more similar to Vancouver than the other subareas.

For those 15 years of age and older, unemployment in DTES declined from 28% in 1996 to 12% in 2006, but unemployment remains significantly higher than the rate for Vancouver overall, which declined from 10% to 6%. The DTES has a large low income population, as defined by Statistics Canada. In 2006 the figure was 64%, compared to 27% in Vancouver overall. This has not changed significantly since 1996.

Overall, 59% of the DTES population is Canadian-born, compared with 51% Vancouver-wide. The proportion of Canadian-born is lower in Chinatown and Strathcona sub-areas (less than 47%) than in the others. For just over 64% of DTES residents, English is the home language. Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese) is next, and with these residents focused in Chinatown and Strathcona. About 10% of the DTES population identify themselves as Aboriginal, compared with 2% for Vancouver as a whole. Approximately 15% of the total Aboriginal-identified population of Vancouver lives in the DTES.

Housing

In terms of low income housing, contrary to what many believe, the number of low income units in the DTES has not changed significantly. However, the type of low income units has changed. In 1971 there were 9200 SRO units and 500 non-market units, while by 2006 the figures were 4600 SROs and 5200 non-market units.

Another important change has been that the DTES has become a more significant low income area relative to the City and region. Whereas in 1971 there were a significant number of low income units in other areas of the city and region, this is no longer the case.

Issues

Some aspects of the DTES have been a public concern since WWI. Community health was an issue prior to WWII, urban renewal in the 60s, and fire and building safety in the 70s.

However, the challenges now facing the area have their origins in some significant more recent changes affecting the country, the province and the region as a whole:

- the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill in the 80s;
- the change in the drug situation in the late 80s, with a switch from injection heroin to crack cocaine, and development of a large open drug market in the DTES;
- The loss of inexpensive housing in other neighbourhoods in the City and region, and increasing costs of housing in the City, generally.

The approximately 5000 DTES residents living in social housing generally live stable lives, are proud of their community, and have a great volunteer ethic. However, the DTES also has a high number of residents who are socially and economically marginalized. Often these residents are mentally ill, or addicted to alcohol or drugs, and/or homeless. Some are collecting, or would be eligible for, social assistance. Some supplement their income through binning, pan handling, drug dealing, involvement in the sex trade, and various forms of acquisitive crime. These residents are the most vulnerable and easily victimized, and are also the source of much of the street disorder and illegal activity that affect other residents and businesses.

THE CITY'S PHILOSOPHY IN THE DTES: "REVITALIZATION WITHOUT DISPLACEMENT"

The City's overall philosophy in the DTES is "Revitalization without Displacement". This means:

- The future community will include people with diverse social and economic backgrounds, with the same number of low income residents as now joined by new moderate income residents, businesses and workers.
- The residents will have access to the health, social service, and economic development supports that they need, which will be provided through partnerships among the community, existing service providers, the private sector, and the relevant levels of government.
- There will be a good level of safety and security for all, including less street disorder and a much reduced drug trade.
- The new residents and workers will provide a base to support existing and new businesses and retail outlets, resulting in tenancing of vacant storefronts and buildings. At the same time, the low income residents will have access to the inexpensive goods and services that they need.
- Civic facilities and services such as parks, community centres, libraries etc., in or near the area will meet the needs of the diverse population.
- The individual neighbourhoods within the DTES will retain their different identities.
- The diverse elements of the community will enjoy mutual acceptance and respect, with less internal conflict than in the past.

THE 10 KEY DIRECTIONS

The following 10 key directions have been distilled from the reports, plans, policies and programs of the last 10 years. They all work toward the overall philosophy of “revitalization without displacement”.

The following pages address each direction in turn, elaborating each with a few key specifics. A partial list of accomplishments and actions related to the direction is provided. Lastly some of the current challenges are mentioned.

It is important to note that the directions are closely-related. While many of the accomplishments and actions contribute toward more than one direction, for the sake of brevity they are only listed under the one or two that are most relevant.

1. Ensure that the future DTES provides the same number of low income singles housing units as 2005—about 10,000—with particular efforts to house the homeless; and develop more social housing outside the DTES.
2. Encourage new market housing, including housing that is affordable for moderate-income households.
3. Address the crisis in public order and public health caused by problematic substance use through the “Four-Pillar Approach”: prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement
4. Improve conditions on the street to provide safety, livability and amenity for all.
5. Work with the community and other levels of government to ensure the health, social service, and economic supports needed by the community are available.
6. Preserve and enhance the heritage and cultural legacy of the neighbourhoods.
7. Support business and employment development in the area and its neighbourhoods.
8. Ensure that the retail goods and services needed by all sectors of the community, including low income residents, are available.
9. Provide access to the civic facilities and services (e.g. parks, community centres, library, childcare) needed by all the community residents.
10. Work with all sectors of the community in revitalization, encouraging acceptance and mutual respect, and building community capacity.

1. Ensure that the future DTES provides the same number of low income singles housing units as 2005—about 10,000—with particular efforts to house the homeless; and develop more social housing outside the DTES.

- Maintain 10,000 low income singles housing units in the DTES, through “1 for 1” replacement of SRO units with better quality non-profit housing.
- In the intervening period, develop programs for improved SRO maintenance and management, looking both at education and enforcement.
- Recognize securing housing as part of efforts to address a person’s mental illness and/or addiction.
- In the City overall, develop supportive housing to address the needs of mentally ill and/or addicted residents. The target for the City as a whole is 3800 units of supportive and transitional housing for the 10 years 2005 to 2015.
- Advocate to senior governments regarding fulfilling their role in the above, particularly funding for replacement housing, and for the shelter allowance to be raised to appropriate levels.
- Encourage provision of affordable housing elsewhere in the city, region and province.

Accomplishments/Actions

- *The City has taken the lead in developing policy for housing and homelessness: Homeless Action Plan (June 2005), Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside (October 2005), Vancouver Homelessness Funding Model (March 2007) and the Supportive Housing Strategy (June 2007).*
- *Between 2003 and early 2008, the 1 for 1 SRO replacement goal is very close to being achieved, and looking forward to the end of 2010 will be more than met.*
- *The City is providing sites at no cost, and expediting approvals, for 15 supportive housing projects (1500 units) to be built by the Province and operated by non-profit housing organizations. The projects will house low income singles with mental illness and/or addiction issues. Four of the projects are in DTES, one immediately adjacent, and the other 10 providing housing options elsewhere in the City.*
- *The City is meeting its target of acquiring at least 1 affordable housing site per year.*
- *The City is contributing \$5 million to the Province to assist with the upgrading of 10 SRO hotels. Since 2007 the Province has purchased 17 SRO hotels and the City has purchased 2 hotels, securing close to 1,100 units. Renovations are underway.*
- *The SRA Bylaw was adopted in 2003 to control the rate of loss of SRO rooms.*
- *The City has prioritized enforcement of standards for SROs including more frequent inspections.*
- *The City, with the Vancouver Agreement, has established an SRO Management Course, and is developing a plan for further efforts to stabilize the private SRO hotel stock.*
- *The StreetoHome Foundation has been established to engage the community and private sector philanthropists in supporting initiatives to address homelessness.*
- *The Province is building over 1,250 housing units and 250 homeless shelter and care beds in other Metro Vancouver municipalities. The Province has signed MOUs to develop social and supportive housing with Surrey, Maple Ridge, Victoria, Kelowna, Nanaimo and Abbotsford as well as Vancouver.*

Challenges

- *The number of homeless has increased, with many having mental illness and/or addictions. This means a greater need for housing and services in the city and region.*
- *Throughout Vancouver, increased housing demand, rising land costs and high construction prices are making it difficult to provide affordable housing.*

- *Rising land prices are making it more difficult to acquire future housing sites, while unpredictable future senior government participation makes it important for the City to be ready with sites when “opportunity knocks”.*
- *Shelter rates, while improved, remain at a level which does not allow private SRO operators to upgrade, maintain and operate appropriately. Small SRO hotels with fewer than 50 units are particularly challenged.*
- *The “soft conversion” of SRO hotels occurs through increases in rental rates and changes in market focus, e.g. to student housing.*
- *Some parts of the DTES Housing Plan have not yet been implemented: the investigation of a mechanism to manager the pace of development; updating of estimated housing capacity; and review of the DEOD/M-1 zoning areas.*

2. Encourage new market housing, including housing that is affordable for moderate-income households.
 - Encourage market residential in heritage buildings through heritage incentives.
 - Look at incentives for secure market rental housing such as parking relaxations, allowing smaller suites, density, and height relaxations.
 - Ensure that zoning for market housing does not compromise the ability to achieve 1 for 1 replacement for SRO units.

Accomplishments/Actions

- *The City developed and adopted the Housing Plan for the Downtown Eastside (October 2005)*
- *From 2003 to beginning of 2008, 813 market housing units were added to the DTES, with 1180 market units anticipated by 2010.*
- *The City actively supported the redevelopment of the Woodward's site, with a significant component of market housing which sold very well.*
- *The Heritage Building Rehabilitation Program has assisted with new housing, with 22 major heritage renovation projects approved, mainly for market residential.*
- *Market condo units in the DTES are more affordable than similar units elsewhere.*

Challenges

- *Notwithstanding the note above regarding the relative price of market condo units in the DTES, they are not affordable to moderate or middle income households. (In 2008, one recent project was selling for \$300,000+ for 1 bedroom, and \$450,000+ for 2 bedroom plus den. A \$300,000 unit requires a household income of \$78,000 to \$82,000.)*
- *Market rental units have generally not been built because the development economics do not allow it. However, an estimated 40% of new downtown units are rented.*
- *The DTES Housing Plan forecast that 100 - 120 units per year of market housing would be built, but no policy on controlling pace was adopted. The pace of market development has been faster than predicted. There is concern about the impact on land prices, and hence on the ability to acquire necessary social housing sites.*
- *The DTES Housing Plan did not propose a particular mix of population for the area. There is concern among existing residents about what the "ultimate" mix will be, from various perspectives. Some worry that higher income residents will be intolerant of the lower income community; others that there will be too high a proportion of low income residents. It is also difficult to plan what types of services and facilities will be needed without a better idea of the ultimate mix of population.*

3. Address the crisis in public order and public health caused by problematic substance use through the “Four-Pillar Approach”: prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement
 - Take a comprehensive approach, pursuing all four pillars together.
 - Pursue a coordinated approach with other levels of government and regional health authority
 - Focus on the most marginalized populations with the most serious issues of mental health, addictions and limited access to primary care services both in the DTES and citywide.

Accomplishments/Actions

Many of the following are achievements of Vancouver Coastal Health, the Vancouver Police Department, the Province, and/or the Federal Government with advocacy and support of the City of Vancouver and active involvement of various non-profit service providers.

- *The City developed of the Four Pillars Drug Strategy, and led ongoing dialogue on the complexity of mental health and addictions.*
- *Harm reduction through expansion of low threshold services for mental health and addictions problems: Health Contact Centre, LifeSkills Centre, InSite, (supervised injection site), OnSite, (detox/transition beds above InSite); expansion of Downtown Community Health Clinic and Pender Community Clinic.*
- *Improved addiction treatment services: Access 1 dedicated phone line for intake into the system; Burnaby Centre for Mental Health and Addictions (100 beds); residential youth treatment centre outside of Vancouver; the Community Transition Care Team; the North American Opiate Medication Initiative clinical trials of heroin assisted treatment;*
- *Expansion/reorganization of existing addiction treatment services: increased access to methadone; withdrawal management programs; implementation of Decentralization of Addictions Services; transfer of mental health, addictions and HIV services to regional health authorities; decentralized needle exchange; decentralization of addictions services and integration with primary services throughout Vancouver*
- *Development of a provincial mental health and addictions plan.*
- *Expanded prevention initiatives: the City’s prevention strategy: Preventing Harm from Psychoactive Substance Use; the School Aged Child and Youth Prevention Program; the Vancouver Prevention Network partnership between VSB, VCH, City of Vancouver and community serving organizations; and the City’s Four Pillars Supported Employment Program*
- *Enforcement initiatives: implementation of the Beat Enforcement Team; strategic projects targeting the infrastructure of the drug market including: Project Raven and Project Haven; and Implementation of the Downtown Community Court*

Challenges

- *The number of residents with mental illness and/or addictions has increased, along with related implications for public health and public order.*
- *There is still a significant shortage of: mental health services and beds for those with concurrent disorders; mental health and addictions services for women and aboriginal women; services for sex workers*
- *There remains a need for better integration and coordination of mental health and addiction services, and systemic reorganization to better address individuals with multiple diagnoses*

- *There is extremely limited access to primary care services and methadone maintenance treatment in the DTES.*
- *Need for development of appropriate services in surrounding municipalities*
- *There is still a major open drug market, and few alternatives other than moving it from one place to another.*
- *Ongoing coordination and dialogue continues to be required among agencies about what enforcement actions to pursue.*

4. Improve conditions on the street to provide safety, livability, and amenity for all.

- Improve levels of cleaning of streets and lanes.
- Undertake public realm improvements on key streets for both amenity and social/behavioural results.
- Address issues associated with vacant storefronts and premises.
- Support community safety and crime prevention programs.

Accomplishments/Actions

- *The City has supported United We Can, including regular lane cleaning programs employing local low income residents.*
- *The City Initiated the DTES Clean Streets Project in March 2008 as a one year project involving multiple civic agencies, as well as United We Can, focussed on the blocks around Hastings and Columbia.*
- *Lighting improvements have been completed in Gastown, Chinatown and Strathcona.*
- *The City has approved the Carrall Street Greenway design and construction is underway.*
- *A new site and facility has been achieved for WISH, a safe drop-in facility for sex workers.*
- *The Safety for All initiative has been started as part of relocation of WISH facility*
- *The Open Windows project in Oppenheimer area improves appearance and security of vacant storefronts.*
- *The DTES Public Realm Program Plan was completed by the Park Board and City, working with community members to introduce arts and culture programming into 10 public places in the DTES.*

Challenges

- *The number of people with mental illness and/or addictions has increased, which has resulted in more difficult street behaviour, and which means a greater need for services in Vancouver and the region.*
- *There is still too small a market for retail, resulting in continuing high levels of vacant storefronts.*

5. Work with the community and other levels of government to ensure the health, social service, and economic supports needed by the community are available.

- Continue to provide Community Services Grants to support community capacity building not funded by senior levels of government.
- Continue to support the role of the Carnegie Centre and Evelyne Saller Centre in providing services to DTES residents.
- Facilitate development, relocation or expansion of key health and social services needed by DTES residents, while ensuring that there is not an undue concentration of them.
- Assist people who are eligible to gain access to Income Assistance, and advocate that rates be adjusted to keep pace with increases in the cost of living.

Accomplishments/Actions

- *The City has assisted in site acquisition, and/or in approving relocation for: WISH, Phil Bouvier Child Development Centre, Lifeskills Centre, Contact Centre, Pender Community Health Clinic, Downtown Community Health Clinic, and Sheway. (For additional items related to substance abuse, see Direction 3 above.)*
- *The City and Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance (now Ministry of Housing and Social Development) started the Vancouver Homeless Outreach Pilot Project directly linking homeless individuals with welfare (and housing). This has now become an ongoing Provincial program with one of the outreach teams based at the Carnegie Centre and another provided through Raincity.*
- *In 2008, the City provided \$1 million in grants to organizations delivering services in the DTES. This is about 20% of the total annual grants administered by the Social Development Department. Grants were allocated from the Community Services, Childcare, and Social Responsibility Fund programs. Every dollar provided generates \$10 to \$12 in funding from other sources and volunteer time.*
- *The Province significantly raised Income Assistance (and shelter allowance) rates in 2007, although not to the level that would have covered inflation since the rates were introduced in 1991.*
- *The Vancouver Agreement funded various projects: WISH drop-in centre operational funding; Mobile Access Project (MAP); a van providing services to street-based sex workers; Living-in-Community (LIC), a coalition of business, sex workers, social services, residents, and VPD to address the issue of how to live together in the same community.*
- *Scoping for a Social Infrastructure Plan for the City has been completed, and work is being undertaken to provide an overview of services in the DTES.*

Challenges

- *Until a Social Infrastructure Plan and an overview of services for the DTES is completed it is difficult to address which facilities should be approved where.*
- *There are conflicting opinions about the appropriate range, location and number of support services for residents who have held and social challenges.*
- *As yet there is no mechanism for regular inflationary adjustments in Income Assistance rates or for the minimum wage.*
- *Many residents, particularly the more marginalized, and those with concurrent mental health and addiction problems, do not have access to adequate health care including a range of primary care services, mental health and addiction treatment, HIV treatment, and treatment for other serious acute and chronic medical conditions.*
- *Access to nutritious food, a basic need, is a challenge for low income people generally and particularly for those whose health is already compromised.*

6. Preserve and enhance the heritage and cultural legacy of the neighbourhoods.

- Emphasize the reuse and rehabilitation of heritage building stock, and optimize heritage character of neighbourhoods, as a critical and unique asset.
- Ensure the area fulfills its role as the historical and cultural focus for the Aboriginal, Chinese, and Japanese communities of the City.

Accomplishments/Actions

- *The Gastown Heritage Management Plan completed in 2002.*
- *The Heritage Building Rehabilitation Program (HBRP) was approved in 2003 as a 5 year program. It introduced additional incentives including a higher level of density bonusing, façade grants, and property tax relief.*
- *Through the HBRP 22 major heritage projects, and 6 additional façade improvements, have been approved. This represents \$513 million direct investment in the area, of which \$427 million is private investment and \$104 million is the value of HBRP incentives.*
- *Chinatown Vision Directions were adopted in 2002 leading to initiation of the Chinatown Revitalization Plan (underway).*
- *Chinatown Millennium Gate, and Chinatown Memorial commemorating role of Chinese Canadians in building the CPR and two World Wars, have been installed.*
- *Major research and community development work related to the Chinatown Society Buildings has been completed, culminating in adoption of Chinatown Society Buildings Feasibility Grant Program (correct title). Five societies are currently preparing rehabilitation plans for their buildings.*
- *Victory Square Policy Plan (2006), and related zoning changes, were completed.*

Challenges

- *The HBRP was approved as a 5 year program, and is currently under review. One of the challenges is the amount of bonus density that is being placed in the Transfer of Density "bank".*
- *The Chinatown Revitalization Plan remains to be completed.*
- *The Historic Precinct Height Study, investigating what maximum heights might be considered for developments, remains to be completed.*
- *The Strathcona neighbourhood has not had local planning attention since the early 90's.*

7. Support business and employment development in the area and its neighbourhoods.

- Increase demand for DTES products and services through taking advantage of economic drivers, and improving the area's appeal to potential customers and investors through dealing with street disorder.
- Strengthen the capabilities of local suppliers by reducing barriers to business expansion, attracting new businesses, and improving business readiness of suppliers.
- Assist in improvement of training and employment opportunities for the low income community (noting this is primarily a Provincial and Federal area of responsibility.)
- Understand and optimize the role that the arts and culture sector plays and could play in the economic revitalization of the area.

Accomplishments/Actions

- *Agreements have been reached to include DTES employment (with associated training) and procurement from major projects (Edgewater Casino; Woodward's; SEFC/Olympic Village).*
- *The City has undertaken the Drug Policy Supportive Employment Pilot Project*
- *Support has been provided for completing and implementing business and marketing plans for Chinatown, Gastown, and Strathcona BIAs, to assist with business development and "branding" their areas.*
- *The Woodward's project will redevelop and occupy a full block of formerly vacant frontages, acting as an anchor for Hastings Street revitalization.*
- *The Woodward's project will provide space for SFU contemporary arts program, reinforcing the role of the arts in the area.*
- *Approved development projects will improve many building frontages and result in an upgraded street front. The HBRP review has estimated that for heritage projects along, 42 building frontages totalling 2300 linear feet will be improved.*
- *Street front retail rental rates on Water Street are now comparable to Hamilton Street in Yaletown (2007).*
- *EMBERS - Microenterprise Development Program, Entrepreneur Training-was established.*
- *BOB (Building Opportunities for Business Inner City Society) was established in 2005 to identify investment opportunities, increase capacity of local businesses, and maximize job opportunities for local residents. BOB's core operations are: Business clusters in Tourism and Hospitality, Creative Industries, and Construction; Social Purchasing Portal linking businesses with inner City suppliers; Management of Community Benefit Agreement on behalf of the City; Business mentoring and loan program*
- *An Arts and Culture Strategic Framework and Investment Plan, commissioned by the City, was approved in March 2007*

Challenges

- *The Hastings Corridor business and marketing plan is still to be completed.*
- *There are still many vacant storefront spaces along Hastings, Powell and some other streets. There may be too much retail capacity for the projected demand in some areas.*
- *Continuing street disorder problems stand in the way of businesses wishing to remain, expand, and/or locate in the area.*

8. Ensure that the retail goods and services needed by all sectors of the community, including low income residents, are available.

Accomplishment/Actions

- *The Woodward's project actively sought and successfully recruited a grocery store and drug store as anchor tenants.*
- *Various studies have been commissioned related to the retail capacity and demand in the area.*
- *Development projects in Gastown and elsewhere are seeing new types of retail tenancies.*

Challenges

- *The types of retail locating in the new and renovated buildings will not provide the low cost retail and services needed by the low income residents.*

9. Provide access to the civic facilities and services (e.g. parks, community centres, library, child care) needed by all the community residents.

Accomplishments/Actions

- *Rehabilitation of Victory Square was completed with major community involvement.*
- *A community atrium space and non-profit group space has been included in the Woodward's project through floor space bonusing.*
- *The Park Board has completed design and committed funding for a major rehabilitation of Oppenheimer Park and its field house which houses many programs, including arts and education programming provided by the Carnegie Centre for seniors, children, single adults and the homeless. Construction will start in 2009.*
- *The City has provided support for child care centres at Woodward's and Phil Bouvier Child Development Centre*
- *The City has provided funding toward the DTES Neighbourhood House through City Community Services Grants.*
- *The Vancouver Public Library is committed to ensuring a new branch library. The City has purchased a possible site, and VPL remains in discussion with community groups, the Province, and the school board regarding other possible locations.*

Challenges

- *There has been a lot of attention to affordable housing and heritage—two categories of public benefit that are priorities in the DTES. However, no comprehensive facilities and services assessment and strategy has been developed for the DTES.*
- *Conventional approaches to providing recreation and other services do not meet the needs of low income families and residents who are marginalized.*

10. Work with all sectors of the community in revitalization, encouraging acceptance and mutual respect, and building community capacity.

- Inform, consult and/or partner with all relevant sectors of the community in development of plans and policies, and in the review of development proposals.
- Facilitate respectful communication among those holding differing points of view.
- Continue to incorporate community capacity-building within city work being done in the DTES.

Accomplishments/Actions

- *Extensive consultation programs have been integral to all the major plans and policies prepared for the DTES; as well as the major projects like Woodward's and the Carrall Street Greenway.*
- *The City actively assisted in the creation of the Chinatown Revitalization Committee, bringing groups together to work on the common future for the area, as well as undertaking capacity-building with the Chinese Societies related to rehabilitation of their buildings.*
- *Rezoning and development permit applications in the DTES customarily include a broader notification of community groups than is the case elsewhere.*
- *With respect to projects that are controversial, City staff undertakes numerous open houses and meetings with individual groups.*
- *City staff working in the DTES maintains ongoing contact with various DTES groups to a much higher degree than in other areas of the City.*

Challenges

- *Continuing differences of perspective between segments of the community, and between them and the City, on approaches key issues such as "soft conversion" of SROs, role and pace of market housing, development of low income housing, and provision of services for low income residents.*

APPENDIX B

STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

The Carnegie Community Action Project (CCAP) made the following comments:

With regard to the City's philosophy of 'Revitalization without Displacement', CCAP commented that “There needs to be a critique of whether you can have revitalization (more condos) without displacement – it is not enough to just state it and assume the “without displacement” part is happening especially when displacement is happening”.

With regard to a statement made by the Olympic Bid Partners on page 1 of their report, “Joint Partner Response to the Inner-City Inclusive Commitments (ICI) Housing Table Report”, wherein it is stated that, “The partners have made good progress toward meeting the housing-related Inner-City Inclusive Commitments since 2003, when the Games were awarded to Vancouver, and look forward to building on this work as the Games approach”, CCAP commented that, “The report may have stated that good progress has been made, but that is not true. The ICI housing table wanted 3200 units of new housing for low income people in the inner city by the end of 2007; the 250 units at athletes village to be 40 % deep core, 40% core and 20% low end of market; and it wanted welfare rates raised 50% and the 2002 barriers to getting on welfare ended. None of these have been achieved”.

APPENDIX C

ABOUT BUILDING COMMUNITY SOCIETY

About the Building Community Society of Greater Vancouver

THE SOCIETY

The **Building Community Society** has been formed by a group of volunteers who share a personal desire to contribute positively to the future of the Downtown Eastside.

ITS FOCUS

Building Community Society focuses on supporting the communities that make up the Downtown Eastside in their efforts to build on their many strengths and to address the current issues of poverty, homelessness, addictive and mental illnesses, and crime.

SEEKING PARTNERSHIPS

Building Community Society believes that effective solutions will only occur when those most affected are fully involved in developing those solutions. Therefore we will always seek community partnerships and listen carefully to the advice we receive.

BUILDING BRIDGES

Building Community Society assists those activities that build bridges and collaboration among groups and organizations within the community, and between the Downtown Eastside and the city as a whole.

TAKING ACTION

Building Community Society works with local and other organizations in planning, designing and implementing actions that build local capacity and strengthen the community through arts and culture, education, training, employment, health and social supports, and local enterprise development. An important component of that product is to develop multi- purpose building projects with an emphasis on affordable and supportive housing.

DEVELOP UNDERSTANDING

Building Community Society undertakes research and programs that help to develop understanding of the issues and the policies, programs and actions needed to resolve them.

COMMUNICATING WITH GOVERNMENT

Building Community Society communicates with all levels of government to assist their understanding and support for policies and programs that lead to improvements in the Downtown Eastside.

FUNDING

Building Community Society helps to secure funding for projects and for its own administrative costs and expenses but does not make direct financial contributions.

APPENDIX D

ASSOCIATES OF BUILDING COMMUNITY SOCIETY



Board Members

Milton Wong, Honorary Chair

Mike Harcourt, Chair

Jacque Forbes-Roberts

Tim Pringle

Joe Wai

Building Community Society Participants

Milton Wong C.M.

Milton Wong is a leader in business, volunteer service, health research, culture and sports. He has a gift for gathering together those who are passionate and talented. People with this potent combination work hard and long to bring about meaningful change. Milton is committed to the revitalization of the Downtown Eastside. His family left the Downtown Eastside only when the City denied them permission to renovate their home. Hence his conviction that change has to be community based and has to reflect the needs and aspirations of that community rather than those of others. Milton received an honorary doctorate from Simon Fraser University. In 1997, he was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada and in 2003 received the Order of British Columbia.

Larry Beasley C.M.

Larry Beasley is recognized as an authority on urban development and urban issues. As the Co-director of Planning with the city of Vancouver, he played a leading role in transforming the downtown core into a vibrant, liveable urban community. He is recognized as having a participative and socially responsible approach to zoning, planning and design, which has become known internationally as the "Vancouver Model". Larry is an adjunct professor at the University of British Columbia in the School of Community and Regional Planning and lectures widely elsewhere. In 2004, Larry was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada.

Ian Chang

Ian Chang is a second generation Vancouver native. He has over thirty years experience in city planning work with Canada Mortgage and Housing, the City of Richmond and in private consulting. He is strongly committed to the goal of seeing the Downtown Eastside become a vibrant neighbourhood again and that the low income working and non-working residents benefit from the pending growth of the area.

Michael Clague C.M.

Michael Clague has worked for all three levels of government and has been Executive Director of Britannia Community Services Centre, the Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria, the Social Planning and Research Council of BC and the Carnegie Community Centre. Michael has said his experience at Carnegie was the most challenging and rewarding of his career for all he learned about community and the miracles that people with very little means can accomplish for themselves individually and collectively. In 2007, Michael was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada.

David Eaves

David Eaves is an expert in negotiation and public policy. As a negotiation consultant David develops and implements collaborative strategies that enable organizations to maximize the value they generate with community members. He has worked with leading companies in North America, Europe and Africa and in a range of industries such as financial services, health-care, information technology, energy, and telecommunications. David also works and volunteers with community groups, non-profits and government agencies.

Jacque Forbes-Roberts

Jacque Forbes-Roberts is recently retired from her position as General Manager of Community Services for the City of Vancouver. She was responsible for wide range of planning, development, social and cultural services. She is a former Co-Director of Planning for the City and has served as Vancouver's Heritage Planner. Jacque has many years of experience working with the public and private sectors, non-profit agencies, and community groups in the delivery of policy, projects and services. She brings expertise in organizational change, policy development, strategic planning and conflict resolution.

Maggie Geiser

Maggie Geiser is an advocate and community volunteer. Maggie has served as a Neighbourhood House board member, initiated and undertaken fundraising campaigns and is an activist with Citywide Housing Coalition. Maggie has many years of experience running an office in both non-profit and health care environments, including Harbour Light Detox. She now runs her own consulting business.

Mike Harcourt

Mike Harcourt has travelled from storefront lawyer in Strathcona, to city councillor, to mayor of Vancouver, to Premier of British Columbia. Mike's commitment to the environment and sustainability helped BC earn its reputation as one of the most liveable places in the world and has also contributed to the transformation of cities and communities around the world. Mike continues to be approachable, enthusiastic and supportive of the community in which he started in politics. Mike has received many awards, including the University of British Columbia has awarded him the Alumni Achievement Award of Distinction for contributions to British Columbia, Canada and the world.

Terry Howard

Terry Howard works with BC Persons With Aids (Prison Outreach) and has done so for over 8 years. Terry's direct experience with this group of individuals who are often discharged from prison with no home to go to and no support services in place, has evolved into his current community based research. The aim is to identify health care services which impact directly the needs of the most disenfranchised of our community. Terry has recently graduated from Simon Fraser University's new Masters of Health Sciences program.

Ken McFarlane

Ken McFarlane is a lawyer who has a wide range of professional experiences in the public, private, non-profit and university sectors. He has served in three federal government departments including being chief of staff to a cabinet minister and as a consultant to several Canadian royal commissions. Ken was the founder and principal of The Katalysis Group Inc., a company specializing in economic and business development projects in various parts of the world. As a volunteer he has served on the boards of numerous arts, cultural and social service agencies. Currently Ken volunteers at the First United Church shelter in the Downtown Eastside.

Michael Mortensen

Michael designed the "Tools for Talking" Excel spread sheet and currently works in the development industry and was previously a planner with the City of Vancouver and Canada Mortgage and Housing. He writes and teaches in community planning.

Tim Pringle

Tim Pringle is primarily concerned with preserving the heritage of the past and at the same time protecting the future, through conservation of the environment and support for changing communities. Tim believes in the importance of reflecting on how wealth is created and there is a responsibility to return wealth to the land. In addition to funding projects through the Real Estate Foundation, Tim takes a personal interest in each project and is generous with his time and expertise.

Ray Spaxman

Ray Spaxman, architect and planner, has over 40 years of international experience in planning and urban design. Currently president of the Spaxman Consulting Group, Ray advises private and public sector clients on planning, urban design and development issues. As Director of Planning for the City of Vancouver between 1973 and 1989 he led the work in establishing public participation and community engagement in planning and initiated the City's unique development approvals processes.

Paul Sullivan

Paul Sullivan was the western editor of The Globe and Mail, and managing editor of The Vancouver Sun; he also worked in television and radio before launching Sullivan Media in 1998 to provide communications products and services. Sullivan Media works with a wide array of corporate and institutional clients across North America to create effective communications. Clients include non-profits, including a number from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

Joe Wai

Joe Wai has helped shape the way Strathcona, Chinatown and the Downtown Eastside appear today. Joe has designed 22 social housing projects, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Gardens; the Chinese Cultural Centre Museum; the Chinatown Parkade, and the Millennium Gate. The restoration of the Chinese Freemasons Building received a Special Jury Award from the Architects Institute of British Columbia in April 2008. Joe is a passionate advocate for the Downtown Eastside and believes he has a greater insight into his own surroundings through living in Europe and visiting and experiencing different communities and cultures.

Gerry Zipursky

Gerry Zipursky has over 35 years of committed strong leadership and expertise in organizational development and community work in the field of social, community and social enterprise services. Gerry's experience in fund development has enabled him to secure millions of dollars for capital, operational and endowment funds through major fundraising and event planning. Gerry has overseen a wide variety of large projects including, major construction, international events, as well as video and film productions. Gerry is a committed community member with extensive board and committee involvement with a variety of municipal, national and international organizations.